

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

## AGENDA



Thursday 22 June 2023

at 4.00 p.m.

in the Council Chamber,  
Civic Centre, Hartlepool.

MEMBERS: CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

Councillors Cowie, Harrison, Holbrook, Lindridge, Little, Moore and Sharp.

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).

Parent Governor Representative: Martin Pout.

Six Young Peoples Representatives.

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

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

### 2. TO RECEIVE ANY DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST BY MEMBERS

### 3. MINUTES

- 3.1 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2023 (*previously circulated and published*).

### 4. PRESENTATION

- 4.1 The Role of the Children's Services Committee – *Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*

#### 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.

**5. BUDGET AND POLICY FRAMEWORK ITEMS**

No items.

**6. KEY DECISIONS**

- 6.1 Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block 2023/24 – *Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*

**7. OTHER ITEMS REQUIRING DECISION**

- 7.1 To Nominate a Local Authority Representative to serve on the Governing Body of Grange Primary School – *Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*
- 7.2 To Nominate a Local Authority Representative to serve on the Governing Body of Fens Primary School – *Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*
- 7.3 North East Fostering and Recruitment and Retention Pathfinder – *Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*

**8. ITEMS FOR INFORMATION**

- 8.1 Inspection of Local Area Arrangements for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities - *Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*
- 8.2 Annual Fostering Report 2022-2023 and Statement of Purpose March 2023 - *Executive Director of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services*

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

FOR INFORMATION

Date of next meeting – Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 4.00 pm in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool



**CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE****22 JUNE 2023**

**Subject:** DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT – HIGH NEEDS  
BLOCK 2023/24

**Report of:** Executive Director, Children's and Joint  
Commissioning

**Decision Type:** Key CJCS 135/23

## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

<b>Hartlepool will be a place:</b>
- where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.
- where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.
- of resilient and resourceful communities with opportunities for all.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To seek approval for special school funding model within the High Needs Block. The High Needs Block forms part of the Dedicated Schools Grant.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A report "Dedicated – High Needs Block 2023/24" was presented to Children's Services Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2023 and members approved the budget set out in this report with the exception of the special school funding model. A broad idea of costs for special schools was presented however it was agreed that further work was needed and the model to be presented to committee once the work had been completed.
- 3.2 There continues to be significant pressure on the High Needs Block due to increasing SEND needs. A High Needs Block review has been carried out and is currently being implemented. It is important that we continue to work hard across the system to provide education in Hartlepool provision for our children with SEND. This funding model supports our special schools to provide high

quality education enabling our children to go to school within their own community.

#### 4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

##### 4.1 **Proposed Top up rates**

Finance officers within the local authority and Springwell and Catcote have worked together to develop top up rates for each pathway based on the needs of the children on different pathways.

The proposed top up rates for Springwell AY 2023/2024 based on the three needs based pathways are set out as follows:

Team	Top-up Proposed	Pupils AY 2023/24	Proposed Cost
Africa	£29,725	23	£683,675
South America	£20,273	27	£547,371
Asia	£9,672	42	£406,224
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>92</b>	<b>£1,637,270</b>

##### 4.2 The proposed top up rates for Catcote Academy for AY 2023/24 (pre 16 only) based on three pathways are as follows:

Team	Top-up Proposed	Pupils AY 2023/24	Proposed Cost
Yellow	£28,947	22	£636,834
Blue	£17,278	34	£587,452
Red	£11,323	96	£1,087,008
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>152</b>	<b>£2,311,294</b>

- 4.3 Additional income such as government grants (teachers' pay and pension, 3.4%, supplementary grant and pupil premium), along with other relevant income that contributes towards costs has reduced the top-up amounts (i.e. special schools are not being double funded).
- 4.4 Place funding at £10,000 per place will continue to be paid direct by ESFA to each school on the basis of the latest place numbers – 134 Catcote and 88 Springwell. As both special schools are above number, place numbers will be increased in the ESFA Place Change Notification process (PCN) in November 2023. The increase would be effective from the following academic year starting September 2024.
- 4.5 Once place numbers are increased, the proposed top-up amounts will reduce as the net cost of each team will be less once special schools receive £10,000 per place for the additional places. However, although top-up payments would reduce, the amount of place funding deducted

(recouped) by ESFA will increase so the change is cost neutral to the High Needs Block budget.

- 4.6 The proposed costs presented in the tables above compare with the following amounts paid to special schools in the financial year 2022/23. These figures include place funding as well as top-up amounts.

School	FY 2022/23 Funding	AY 2023/24 Proposed Funding	Increase %
Catcote Academy	£2,943,233	£3,651,294	24%
Springwell Academy	£2,069,378	£2,517,270	22%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£5,012,611</b>	<b>£6,168,564</b>	

- 4.7 The budget available in 2023/24 to fund special school top-ups is £3.762m.
- 4.8 The budget for financial year 2023/24 will need to fund the April to August interim request of £1.354m along with 7 months pro-rata of the new cost model basis (£2.303m). This gives a total budget requirement of £3.657m against the budget available of £3.762m.
- 4.9 New commissioning agreements will need to be put in place to commission based on places needed on each pathway to ensure that the funding model meets the needs of the children in Hartlepool.

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	There is a risk that if we do not appropriately fund special schools they become unsustainable and more children with SEND will need to be educated outside of Hartlepool.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The High Needs Block Review highlighted a number of funding implications which will place pressure on the High Needs Block leading to an overspend. There is a three year plan in development, to implement changes across the system to enable this budget to break even at the end of Year 3.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The SEND Code of Practice sets out the legal framework that we are expected to work within for children and young people with SEND.

<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	No specific considerations - All children and young people with SEND will be supported.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	No specific considerations - All children and young people with SEND will be supported.
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	None
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	Schools Forum are fully involved with the High Needs Block Review and are consulted on all proposals. Schools Forum are meeting on 13 <sup>th</sup> June and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting on the 22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2023.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 For members to approve the special schools funding model as set out in section 4.

## 7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To ensure that children and young people can be educated in high quality provision in Hartlepool.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None

**9. CONTACT OFFICERS**

Danielle Swainston, Children's and Joint Commissioning Services,  
[Danielle.swainston@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:Danielle.swainston@hartlepool.gov.uk), 01429 523732

Sign Off:-

Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 07 June 23
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 07 June 23

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

22 JUNE 2023



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

**Report of:** Executive Director, Children's and Joint Commissioning Service

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

**Hartlepool will be a place:**

- Where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To consider a nomination for the Local Authority Governor position on the governing body of Grange 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. An application has been received for a forthcoming vacant position at the above school, 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. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The report seeks the committee's decision on the application for nomination as Local Authority Governor on the governing body of Grange Primary School

#### 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	There are no risk implications.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no financial considerations.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no legal considerations.
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	There are no child and family poverty considerations
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no equality and diversity considerations
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no staff considerations
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no asset management considerations
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no environmental, sustainability and climate considerations.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	Discussions have taken place between the applicant, Co-Chairs of Governors and Head teacher regarding the skills the applicant can contribute to the Governing Body. The application received in respect of the vacancy is from a serving Local Authority Governor on the Governing Body, whose term of office will expire in September 2023

**6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

**7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 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

**8. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 8.1 There are no background papers

**9. CONTACT OFFICER**

Ann Turner  
Children's and Joint Commissioning Services  
Email: [ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk)  
Telephone: 523766

Sign Off:-

Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 11 June 2023
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 9 June 2023

### VACANCIES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

SCHOOL	VACANCY	APPLICATION RECEIVED	NOMINEE RECOMMENDED FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPOINTMENT BY GOVERNING BODY
<p><b>GRANGE PRIMARY SCHOOL</b></p> <p>The applicant is currently a serving member of the governing body in the position of Local Authority Governor. The applicants and term of office in this position will expire in September 2023,</p> <p>The applicant is a member of a skilled and effective governing body and, is keen to continue to serve as a Governor. The applicant currently holds the position of Vice Chair and, her financial background and HR knowledge through her employment is a strength which the school wishes to retain.</p>	One vacancy	One application has been received	The applicant is recommended for appointment

**CONTACT OFFICER:**

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Ann Turner, Governor Support Manager, Children's and Joint Commissioning Services, Telephone 523766 Email: [ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk)

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

22 JUNE 2023



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

**Report of:** Executive Director, Children's and Joint Commissioning Service

**Decision Type:** Non-Key.

## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

**Hartlepool will be a place:**

- Where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To consider a nomination for the Local Authority Governor position on the governing body of 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. An application has been received for the vacant position at the above school, 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. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

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

#### 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	There are no risk implications.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no financial considerations.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no legal considerations.
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	There are no child and family poverty considerations
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no equality and diversity considerations
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no staff considerations
<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no asset management considerations
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no environmental, sustainability and climate considerations.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	The governing body undertakes regular audits and reviews of governor skills to identify where there may be gaps in the overall skills set of the governing body. They use this information in recruiting new governors to fill vacancies on the governing body. Discussions have taken place between the applicant and head teacher around the skills the applicant can contribute to the governing body. Information has been shared with the governing body who have indicated that in their opinion the applicant has skills that will help strengthen the governing body.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

## 7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 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

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 There are no background papers

## 9. CONTACT OFFICER

Ann Turner  
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Telephone: 523766

Sign Off:-

Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 11 June 2023
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 9 June 2023

## VACANCIES FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNORS ON SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES

SCHOOL	VACANCY	APPLICATION RECEIVED	NOMINEE RECOMMENDED FOR CONSIDERATION AND APPOINTMENT BY GOVERNING BODY
<p><b>FENS PRIMARY SCHOOL</b></p> <p>The applicant is an experienced governor with 16 years of governance in a number of education settings. They have performed the role of chair and vice-chair and have experience of a number of Ofsted inspections, re-structures and appeals panels. The governing body is keen to recruit experienced governors who can offer support and challenge to a relatively new headteacher and school leadership team and strengthen the knowledge of the governing body. They have also identified safeguarding and SEND as skills areas that require strengthening and from discussions with the Headteacher it is felt that the applicant can contribute towards these skills.</p>	One vacancy	One application has been received	The applicant is recommended for appointment

**CONTACT OFFICER:**Email: [ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk)Ann Turner, Governor Support Manager, Children's and Joint Commissioning Services, Telephone 523766 Email: [ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:ann.turner@hartlepool.gov.uk)

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

22 JUNE 2023



**Subject:** NORTH EAST FOSTER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION PATHFINDER

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

**Decision Type:** Non-Key

## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

**Hartlepool will be a place:**

- where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To provide Children's Services Committee with details of the North East Foster recruitment and retention pathfinder and seek approval for Hartlepool Borough Council to participate in this pilot.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Earlier this year, the government published its response to the independent review of children's social care. Stable Homes: Built on Love sets out ambitious plans for the reform of children's social care. Under the pillar of *'putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care'* the government outlined its intention to invest in an ambitious fostering recruitment and retention programme and selected the North East region to pilot this work.
- 3.2 The Government is investing over £24 million to introduce regional support hubs and an investment of over £3 million has been provided for the creation of a North East Pathfinder. Sunderland City Council is leading the Pathfinder in partnership with Together for Children and the twelve local authorities have committed to working collaboratively to roll out the pathfinder in the region.

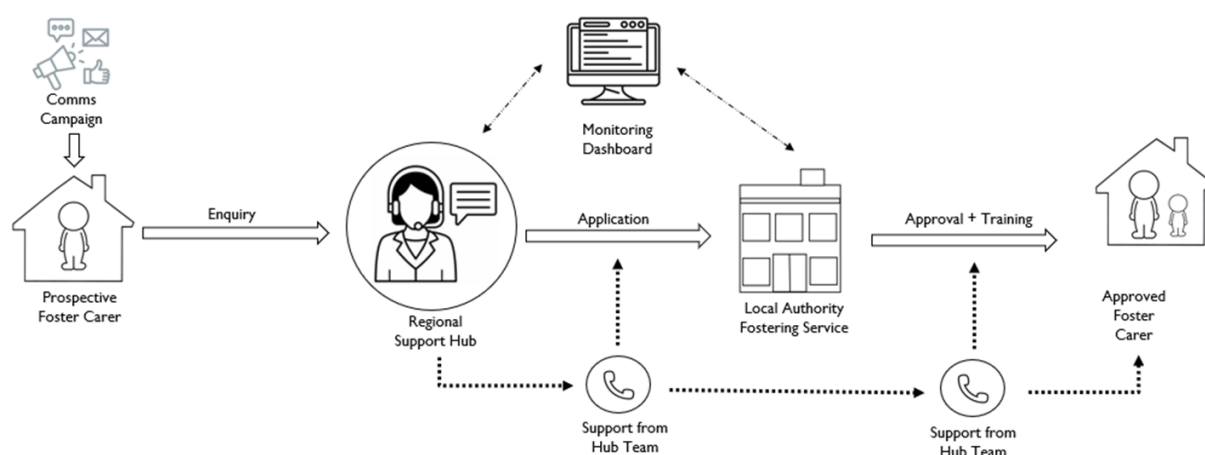


Work has commenced with the Department for Education (DfE) to co design a regional support hub that provides:

- Support to those interested in applying to foster from their initial enquiry to approval,
- Facilitates targeted communications; and
- Improves retention with the evidence based Mockingbird Family Model.

#### 4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The overarching aim of the work is to increase the number of foster carers who are approved, thereby increasing the choice of placements for fostering service providers, improving matches and preventing placement breakdowns for children in our care.
- 4.2 A Collaboration Agreement is in the process of being agreed by each of the 12 regional local authorities and the pathfinder is on track for the Support Hub to become operational soon. A testing period will start prior to the Hub being fully operational in September. At the same time a DfE led communication campaigns will begin to generate enquiries from prospective foster carers.
- 4.3 The diagram below shows how the regional support hub will work. Prospective foster carers can make initial enquiries about becoming a foster carer with regional support hub and the hub will provide them with advice and assistance to apply to become foster carers. Upon application, the prospective carers are referred to the local authority in which they live for training and approval and, if successful, will become foster carers for that local authority and supported on the same basis as existing in house foster carers.



- 4.4 A regional communications campaign will support marketing activity across the region and look to ensure it is targeted and effective. The campaign will be led by the DfE working in close partnership with the north east authorities. It will be designed and targeted to meet the specific needs and gaps in fostering provision in the region. While DfE will deliver a central campaign which will

drive traffic to the support hub, there is also the expectation that individual local authorities continue their own communications plans (where appropriate) but in doing this consider directing traffic/audiences to the support hub.

- 4.5 A regional communications campaign would aim to:
- Increase completed fostering applications from target groups, which will broaden the demographic of carers and help those children/young people who may be most difficult to place such as teenagers, those with the greatest needs and unaccompanied asylum seeking children. Information from the support hub will look to address misconceptions about who can foster and different fostering options;
  - Increase the number of quality enquiries ensuring those who progress through to application have the skills and appropriate intentions to enter into foster caring;
  - Increase the conversion rate from initial enquiry to application, given the increased volume of enquiries, measured by data gathering and evaluation; and
  - Regional collaboration to set a consistent and coherent narrative, and to lay the groundwork for regional care cooperatives in the longer term.
- 4.6 The final strand of the pathfinder is the expansion of Mockingbird Family Model with additional funding provided to each local authority to expand the number of constellations. Hartlepool will use this funding to meet the costs associated with creating a second Mockingbird constellation.
- 4.7 The delivery of the regional work is coordinated through a Project Board including representatives from each of the 12 north east local authorities. The work of the Project Board is supported by Data, ICT, Mockingbird and Communications sub groups.

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	<p>The risk to Hartlepool of participating in the pathfinder is low. The funding has been provided by the DfE for 12 months to invest in a regional support hub for prospective foster carers, underpinned by a communications campaign.</p> <p>Not participating in the pathfinder may mean that Hartlepool could miss out on prospective foster carers to provide placements for children in our care.</p> <p>Hartlepool Borough Council is represented on and participates in the governance arrangements of the pathfinder.</p>
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<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no financial considerations arising from this report, the pathfinder is being funded for delivery by the DfE and costs incurred will be met through this grant funding.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	Hartlepool is being asked to sign a Local Authority Collaboration Agreement setting out arrangements for the Regional Fostering Support Hub Pathfinder Project. Legal Services have scrutinized this Agreement and are assured it is satisfactory for the organisation.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to approve the participation of Hartlepool Borough Council in the North East Foster Recruitment and Retention Pathfinder.

## 7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Children's Services Committee is required to approve all policy decisions made in relation to the work of Children's Services. Participation in the pathfinder will benefit children in our care by increasing foster care capacity.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

## 9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Sign Off:-

Director of Finance, IT and Digital	Date: 11 June 2023
Director of Legal, Governance and HR	Date: 07 June 2023

# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

22 JUNE 2023



**Subject:** INSPECTION OF LOCAL AREA ARRANGEMENTS  
FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL  
NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

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

**Decision Type:** For information

## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

### Hartlepool will be a place:

- where people are enabled to live healthy, independent and prosperous lives.
- where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.

## 2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 2.1 To report to Children's Services Committee the findings from the inspection of the Local Area Arrangements for Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The local area SEND arrangements came into force through the publication of the SEND Code of Practice in 2014. The most recent Inspection Framework came into force in January 2023 and Hartlepool was amongst the first tranche of local areas to be inspected under this framework.
- 3.2 The SEND inspection covers local area arrangements and is a joint inspection undertaken by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Inspections evaluate how well members of a local area partnership work together to improve the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND. The term 'local area partnership' refers to those in education, health and care who are responsible for the strategic planning, commissioning, management, delivery and evaluation of arrangements for children and young

people with SEND who live in a local area, i.e. the geographic footprint of a local authority.

- 3.3 Inspections evaluate arrangements for all children and young people with SEND aged 0 to 25 covered by the SEND code of practice, including those who have an education, health and care (EHC) plan and those who receive special educational needs (SEN) support.
- 3.4 There are three possible full inspection outcomes, leading to different subsequent inspection activity:
  - The local area partnership's SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed. (Annual engagement meetings and full inspection usually within 5 years);
  - The local area partnership's arrangements lead to inconsistent experiences and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The local area partnership must work jointly to make improvements. (Annual engagement meetings and full inspection usually within 3 years); and
  - There are widespread and/or systemic failings leading to significant concerns about the experiences and outcomes of children and young people with SEND, which the local area partnership must address urgently. (Annual engagement meetings, submission of priority action plan and monitoring inspection usually within 18 months, full re-inspection usually within 3 years).
- 3.5 Under the old inspection framework, the Hartlepool local area was inspected in October 2016 when the local area was required to produce a Written Statement of Action in response to four areas of weakness identified by the inspection. A re-inspection was undertaken in January 2019 when it was determined that the local area had made sufficient progress in relation to two areas of weakness but further work was required to address the remaining two areas. The implementation of the Accelerated Progress Plan was monitored by the Department for Education and following review in February 2021, it was confirmed that the local area had made clear and sustained progress and further monitoring was not required.

#### 4. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The report of the Hartlepool Local Area SEND Inspection is attached at **Appendix One** to this report. The inspection judged that the local area partnerships arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed to be. This is the highest judgement outcome.
- 4.2 The inspection reports on what the local area is doing that is effective and where it needs to do better. The report makes recommendation for three areas of improvement as follows:

- Leaders across the partnership should ensure that they continue to make rapid improvements to the EHC assessment and review process to ensure that all children and young people receive the support they need in a timely manner.
- Leaders across the partnership should collaborate with school leaders in schools and academies to collect and analyse regular information on all children and young people receiving SEND support to check for trends.
- Leaders across the partnership should ensure that plans to target the reduction in waiting times for speech and language and neurodevelopmental assessments contain accurate targets and ambitious timescales for improvement.

These areas for improvement were identified within our self-assessment prior to the inspection and reflected work that was ongoing to drive continuous improvement.

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	There are no risk implications arising from this report. The findings from the inspection are positive and therefore do not create risk for the Council.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no financial considerations arising from this report.
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no legal considerations arising from this report, Ofsted and the CQC carry out joint inspections of local areas at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	There are no specific child and family poverty considerations arising from this report, however, effective local area arrangements to support children and young people with SEND will improve the life chances of vulnerable children who are experiencing poverty.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	Children and young people with SEND have protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010.
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no specific staffing considerations arising from this report. However those staff working with children and young people with SEND and their families should be recognised for their hard work and the achievements that are reflected in the inspection report.

<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no environment, sustainability or climate change considerations arising from this report.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	Through the inspection process, consultation was undertaken by Ofsted and CQC with key stakeholder within the SEND system and in particular children, young people with SEND and their parents and carers. The feedback from these stakeholders is included within the body of the inspection report.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Members of Children's Services Committee are asked to note the findings of the inspection of local area arrangements for children and young people with SEND and the positive outcome achieved.

## 7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Children's Services Committee is responsible for quality of services provided under the statutory and regulatory framework governing children's services and should receive reports from inspections.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None

## 9. CONTACT OFFICER

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## Area SEND inspection of Hartlepool Local Area Partnership

Inspection dates: 13 to 17 March 2023

Date of previous inspection: 3 to 7 October 2016

### Inspection outcome

The local area partnership's arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The local area partnership is taking action where improvements are needed.

The next full area SEND inspection will be within approximately 5 years.

Ofsted and the CQC ask that the local area partnership updates and publishes its strategic plan based on the recommendations set out in this report.

### Information about the local area partnership

Hartlepool Borough Council and NHS North East and North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (ICB) are jointly responsible for the planning and commissioning of services for children and young people with SEND in Hartlepool. This is a small local authority where partnerships are well established. Communication between partner agencies, including the parent carer forum 1 Hart, 1 Mind, 1 Future, and voluntary organisations is strong.

The local authority commissions alternative provision for secondary-aged children and young people through their pupil referral unit (PRU), Horizon School. The PRU includes provision for pupils whose health needs have led to extensive periods of non-attendance at mainstream secondary schools. Additionally resourced provision in mainstream schools provides support for primary-aged pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs. There are limited places available in these settings. Work has recently begun on a new free school for pupils with SEMH which is due to open in 2024. A small number of children and young people with SEND, who need to study from home due to their physical and mental health needs, have access to online alternative provision.



## **What is it like to be a child or young person with special educational needs and/or disabilities in this area?**

Children and young people with SEND are at the very centre of decision-making in Hartlepool. Local area partners work to a combined vision that 'these young people are our young people'. This vision shines through all collaboration and decision-making. Through opportunities such as the youth partnership forum, young people with SEND make their voices and opinions heard.

Children's needs are accurately identified at an early stage by the health visiting team. Health visitors make timely referrals to medical partners for more specialist assessment and support. All early years providers across Hartlepool have a named nursery nurse who supports with assessment and provision for children with SEND. The school nursing team provides effective support with areas of care such as sleep, continence, weight management and emotional health needs.

Most children and young people benefit from effective identification of SEND. The educational psychology team is a strength of the area. The team provides school leaders with valuable advice, support and training. This directly contributes to the accurate assessment of children and young people's education, health and care needs. For example, in the early years, training on early communication and interaction has strengthened the accurate identification of neurodevelopmental needs.

Children and young people receive effective early help intervention, which contributes to the early identification of their needs. Highly skilled family support workers know and understand children's needs well. They act as advocates for children and young people, ensuring that their views inform the development of support plans. Other education, health and care partners contribute effectively to these plans. Co-location with health partners helps to strengthen the sharing of information and communication about the needs of children and families.

Children and young people who are in mental health crisis have access to a 24-hour support service and intensive home treatments. Professionals provide additional support for children and young people who have a learning disability or autism spectrum disorder (ASD). Integrated therapy professionals run weekly drop-in clinics at children's centres across Hartlepool. Therapists assess children and young people's needs and direct parents and carers to other professionals. Where possible, practitioners consolidate appointments to support a 'tell it once' approach.

Enhanced transition processes support children and young people with SEND as they move between primary and secondary schools. This helps to provide a settled start to the new school. The post-16 offer for young people is strong. Local leaders use termly commissioning meetings to ensure that all provision matches needs. The designated clinical officer ensures that there are effective transitions between children and adult hospices in end-of-life care.

Primary, secondary and post-16 children and young people with learning disabilities enjoy and benefit from a wide range of community-based activities. Personal assistants (PA) and community short breaks workers support them well. However, a small number of families struggle to find PA support, which means that their children and young people have limited access to short break activities. Family support workers step in to provide this support wherever possible.

Increasing levels of need and recruitment challenges mean that children and young people wait too long for speech and language therapy or assessments which may lead to diagnoses such as ASD or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. This leads to frustration for children, young people, parents and carers. Local area partners take steps to minimise the impact of these delays on the provision and support available. For example, families and professionals can access a wide range of accredited training programmes, such as for autism spectrum disorder and early communication, to help meet emerging needs.

## **What is the area partnership doing that is effective?**

- Leaders, across education, health and social care, articulate their vision for children and young people with SEND well. Leaders understand the issues facing families in the local area. They are committed to providing person-centred services to meet individual needs. School and college leaders agree that there is a shared ambition to develop an inclusive approach to SEND provision across Hartlepool.
- Leaders have developed systems to ensure that they have an accurate picture of the needs of children and young people with education, health and care (EHC) plans. Close working relationships between partners help to ensure that pertinent information is shared on an informal and formal basis. Since the last inspection, leaders have strengthened governance arrangements, which have improved the strategic oversight of developments.
- Leaders have made a significant investment in the educational psychology provision for the area. This investment means that children and young people benefit from accurate identification of needs and timely support.
- Leaders have prioritised the development of a needs-led neurodevelopmental pathway. With the support of the parent carer forum, leaders have made improvements to the diagnostic process for children and young people. For example, on the under-fives pathway, parents and carers benefit from access to support from a consultant paediatrician during the waiting period. In addition, parents and carers have contributed to the foundation of an assessment pathway for children and young people with Down's Syndrome.
- Leaders have integrated the physiotherapy and occupational therapy teams in Hartlepool. This has improved the way that these teams understand and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. This integrated team has developed training programmes to empower and upskill parents, carers and staff in special schools. For example, the 'Move' programme supports families and

practitioners to deliver bespoke physiotherapy and occupational therapy programmes. This has increased the confidence of parents, carers and practitioners to challenge the child or young person to achieve their potential. 'Move' has achieved significant positive results. These include increased levels of communication and a reduction in the need for hip replacement surgery.

- There is a comprehensive package of support for post-16 young people at risk of not being in education, employment or training (NEET). School leaders work in partnership with the NEET team to identify vulnerable young people. There is an established partnership structure between different agencies to ensure that each young person receives a tailored package of support. Young people with SEND speak positively about the support and opportunities available to them. This includes supported internships which lead to paid employment.
- Co-production (a way of working where children, families and those who provide the services work together to create a decision or a service that works for them all) with parents and carers is a golden thread which weaves through new initiatives and service redesign. Leaders listen to and value the views of parents, carers, children and young people. For example, the views of children, young people and their families have contributed to strategic decisions around school place planning as well as operational improvements such as child-friendly spaces in the hospital. In addition, consultation with the parent carer forum led to the creation of a direct payment pathway. Family support workers help children, young people and families to manage and review their direct payment package. This means that families receive the right help without the need for social work intervention.
- Relationships between social workers and families are strong. Social workers speak passionately about children and young people and know them well. They demonstrate appropriate challenge and are not afraid to escalate their concerns when children are waiting for next steps from partners in health and education. Children and young people known to social care benefit from regular multi-agency meetings. Team around the child meetings, children in need meetings and looked after children reviews ensure that partners share information effectively. This means that children and young people's respective individual plans are progressed in a timely manner.
- Leaders have established arrangements for commissioning services and provision to meet the needs of children and young people with EHC plans. Partners work together to commission places for pupils in enhanced provision, the PRU and residential provision. There is a well-established process of quality assurance and oversight included as part of all commissioning arrangements. The needs-led dynamic support register identifies high levels of support for children and young people with or without a diagnosis. This effectively reduces the need for hospital admissions.

## What does the area partnership need to do better?

- Too many education, health and support assessments are not completed within the statutory timescales. Contributions to plans from different professionals vary with specific concerns around the timeliness and accuracy of those from the speech and language service. Leaders have taken significant steps to mitigate the impact of these delays on provision for children and young people. For example, integrated health visiting and early help services provide effective early identification of the needs of children and young people and timely support. Staff in early years settings and schools can access a health hotline through which they can receive advice and support from senior clinicians. The educational psychology team contributes effectively to the ongoing support for children and young people in schools and early years settings. In addition, leaders have recently increased the number of case workers to ensure the timely administration of plans. However, leaders need to increase the number of plans completed within the statutory timescales and improve the timeliness of reviews.
- Leaders do not have an accurate enough oversight of children and young people receiving SEND support. This means they do not have the information necessary to check trends in areas of need. This limits leaders' ability to identify the training requirements necessary to ensure that the wider workforce meets the needs of all children and young people with SEND.
- Leaders do not have a comprehensive strategy for the identification of alternative provision, other than the PRU. School leaders work together to identify and share school-based alternative provision. This ensures that they can meet the needs of children and young people with SEND. However, leaders do not collate this detail to help identify any gaps in provision that could be better met through the commissioning process.
- The waiting times for a diagnosis on the neurodevelopmental pathway and for speech and language therapy are too long. Leaders have completed an analysis and identified resources to begin to reduce local waiting times. However, development plans do not contain precise targets or timescales for improvement. This impacts on the accuracy of leaders' oversight of identified improvements.

## Areas for improvement

Leaders across the partnership should ensure that they continue to make rapid improvements to the EHC assessment and review process to ensure that all children and young people receive the support they need in a timely manner.

Leaders across the partnership should collaborate with school leaders in schools and academies to collect and analyse regular information on all children and young people receiving SEND support to check for trends.

Leaders across the partnership should ensure that plans to target the reduction in waiting times for speech and language and neurodevelopmental assessments contain accurate targets and ambitious timescales for improvement.

## Local area partnership details

Local Authority	Integrated Care Board
Hartlepool Borough Council	North East and North Cumbria
Sally Robinson, Director, Children's and Joint Commissioning Services	Alex Sinclair, ICB Director (Children, Young People and Maternity) Tees Valley
<a href="http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk">www.hartlepool.gov.uk</a>	<a href="http://www.nenc-teesvalley.icb.nhs.uk">www.nenc-teesvalley.icb.nhs.uk</a>
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## Information about this inspection

This inspection was carried out at the request of the Secretary of State for Education under section 20(1)(a) of the Children Act 2004.

The inspection was led by one of His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) from Ofsted, with a team of inspectors, including: two HMI/Ofsted Inspectors from education and social care; a lead Children's Services Inspector from the Care Quality Commission (CQC); and another Children's Services Inspector from CQC.

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# CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

22 JUNE 2023



**Subject:** ANNUAL FOSTERING REPORT 2022 - 2023 AND  
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE MARCH 2023

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

**Decision Type:** For information

## 1. COUNCIL PLAN PRIORITY

### Hartlepool will be a place:

- where those who are vulnerable will be safe and protected from harm.

## 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 year 2022/23. The provision of foster care is a regulated activity and as such there is a requirement to provide the executive side of the Council with performance information on a regular basis and also annually.
- 2.2 This report is also to present to Children's Services Committee the Statement of Purpose and the Children's Guide for this service.

## 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The work of the Fostering Service is subject to National Minimum Standards applicable to the provision of Foster Care for our children in care and care leavers. The National Minimum Standards, together with Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and the Children Act 1989 Guidance and Regulations Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review, 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 and the constitution of the Fostering Panel. The report also explains activity in relation to the recruitment, preparation and assessment of prospective foster carers and the progress in relation to the priorities for the service in 2022/23 - see **Appendix 1**.
- 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. PROPOSALS/OPTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

- 4.1 The Fostering Service Annual Report provides details of the service's full activity in respect of the following:
- The team;
  - An explanation regarding governance and oversight of Hartlepool's fostering service and Hartlepool's fostering panel activity over the year;
  - An understanding around how children's placements are made and our success around stability;
  - Information about our recruitment drive to encourage new foster carers to come to Hartlepool, the places where we advertise for new carers and the successes and issues we face;
  - Information about how we reward our carers and how we recognise their contribution to a child's life;
  - Information about Hartlepool's training programme for foster carers;
  - Information relating to the support and services Hartlepool foster carers can expect from the fostering service after they have been approved;
  - Our priorities for 2022-2023;
  - The voice of Hartlepool foster carers and children and young people who are cared for and;
  - Service development; Mockingbird, Special Guardianship Order Offer, Family Finding.
- 4.2 It is a requirement of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services that each fostering agency produces a Statement of Purpose, outlining its aims and objectives, a description of the services and facilities that are provided, how the service is managed and its fitness to provide fostering services. The Statement of Purpose for Hartlepool's Fostering Service is attached at **Appendix 2** to this

report. Additionally there is the Children's Guide to Fostering **Appendix 3** and the Annual Schedule of Training for Foster Carers, **Appendix 4**

## 5. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS

<b>RISK IMPLICATIONS</b>	The fostering service needs to adhere to the Statement of Purpose and provide the executive side of the council information relating to the fostering service on a quarterly basis.
<b>FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	<p>There are no financial implications arising from this report. The Fostering Service has a set budget to support the year's activity. This also supports the recruitment of potential carers. The annual budget covers the cost of the Fostering Service, including social workers, fostering allowances and the recruitment of potential carers.</p> <p>For 2022/23 the budget was £4.5m and the outturn was £4.1m, resulting in an underspend of £0.4m which was allocated to support the 2022/23 budget for residential placements budgets where there are budget pressures reflecting an increase in both the number of children cared for by the Council with complex needs and the cost of this provision. As these trends are continuing the budget for 2023/24 has been realigned.</p>
<b>LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no legal considerations arising from this report. The Fostering Team and Service adhere to the National Minimum Standards, Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011, and the Care Standards Act 2000 for the conduct of Fostering Agencies. The Fostering Service is inspected by Ofsted as part of its Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services.
<b>CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY</b>	There are no child and family poverty implications arising from this report.
<b>EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY CONSIDERATIONS</b>	The Fostering Service practices in a sensitive and responsive way towards Foster Carers. The Fostering Service works with carers from any ethnicity, faith or belief, gender, identity, language, race and sexual orientation. This is detailed within the Statement of Purpose. ( <b>Appendix 2</b> )
<b>STAFF CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no staff implications arising from this report.

<b>ASSET MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no asset management considerations arising from this report.
<b>ENVIRONMENT, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS</b>	There are no Environment, Sustainability and Climate Change considerations.
<b>CONSULTATION</b>	Foster carers are regularly consulted and their views and comments are reflected in the Annual Report. Foster carers are subject to reviews by an independent reviewing officer. As part of this process children and young people, and their social worker, provide feedback on their experiences of foster carers.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Children's Services Committee is asked to note the report in relation to the work of the Fostering Service in the annual report for 2022/23.
- 6.2 Children's Services Committee is asked to note the Statement of Purpose (**Appendix 2**) and the Children's guide to Fostering (**Appendix 3**).

## 7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Fostering Service is required to fulfill its statutory responsibilities to children in its care 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.
- 7.2 Children's Services Committee has an important role in the scrutiny of activities of the Fostering Service to ensure that performance in this area is of good quality, caring and robust and relates to the statement of purpose.

## 8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None.

## 9. CONTACT OFFICER

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# Fostering Service Annual Report 2022/2023



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# Foreword

I am privileged to introduce this Annual Report for Hartlepool Borough Council Fostering Service. Over the last year the service has continued to grow and improve.

Hartlepool's first Mockingbird constellation launched in November 2022. While the constellation began with our Hub carers Joe and Joyce Melrose and seven other satellite families there has been some movement both of carers and individual children and young people in and out of the group since, although at its core the carers involved have remained unchanged. There are currently seven families altogether- including Joe and Joyce- consisting of thirteen carers and ten children, but we expect to introduce two more families in the coming weeks. One space will be kept in reserve so that other families keen to join Mockingbird who are approaching acute crisis can potentially join at short notice if appropriate. Joe and Joyce's constellation consists of both foster carers and connected carers.

Mockingbird has already seen some notable successes. The children involved have left brilliant feedback about the social activities. Over the past year there has been a remarkable level of interest in Mockingbird among foster carers and connected carers in Hartlepool with over twenty families still actively interested in being part of a constellation.

The development of the Special Guardian Offer has been a significant achievement for the service. This is also an invaluable service that we are offering and very much welcomed by those holding Special Guardianship Orders. The SGO lead has supported the group to be self-sufficient in terms of the establishment of a support group which is well attended, fund raising events have been held and we are currently putting into place a training offer.

In the last six months we have created a small Connected Care team made up of three Fostering Social Workers, this ensures that timely assessments and statutory checks are completed when children and young people are placed with people connected to them. This ensures that all of the children and young people cared for in Hartlepool are safe and in placements that are subject to appropriate assessment.

Hartlepool's Foster Care family has shown tenacity in its response to the increased demand for caring homes for children, demonstrating massive dedication, commitment and often ingenuity in the service they have given.

The Foster Care Conference held in May was a huge success and the feedback was extremely positive.

We continue to be determined that every child cared for by Hartlepool experiences the best quality care and positive, secure relationships. We have joined up with the Reflective Fostering Study which is being led by the University of Hertfordshire on behalf of the Anna Freud Centre. Reflective Fostering is a 10 week group training programme for up to ten foster carers at a time. It encourages foster carers to think about their own experiences as people and as foster carers, how this might influence their responses to children and young people's behaviours and introduces them to the 'mentalizing' approach. The aim of the study is to evaluate the Reflective Fostering approach and establish whether or not it has a positive impact on a range of outcomes for foster carers and children involved, and by taking part we are joining a number of other local authorities up and down the country.

I look forward to 2023/24 with confidence that the Fostering Service will continue to give its Foster Care families the opportunity to grow, get involved in service development and to strive for excellence in terms of caring for our children. Finally, I want to thank all our Foster Carers for their ongoing support and their commitment to providing the best possible care to our children and young people.

**Lisa Cushlow**  
**Head of Service**

# Introduction

The annual report of the Fostering Service for Hartlepool Borough Council (HBC) provides information about the activity of and outcomes achieved by the service during 2022/23. The report will reflect on the work of the team and service provided, identify changes that have taken place within the service and detail the statistical information in respect of the Fostering Service from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023. Finally, the report will set out priorities for service development during 2023/2024.

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

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

The Fostering team works in partnership with children, young people, their families and other stakeholders involved in promoting positive outcomes for children and young people looked after by Hartlepool Borough Council in order to deliver a high quality foster care service;

The Fostering team actively seeks to involve foster carers, children and young people in our care, care leavers and children of foster carers in the development and continuous improvement of the service;

The Fostering team recruits, assesses, trains, supervises and supports a suitable and diverse range of foster carers to provide quality care and placement choice for children and young people;

The Fostering team provides stable placements and continuity of care for children by ensuring that carers and children and young people who are cared for receive appropriate support, leading to good outcomes;

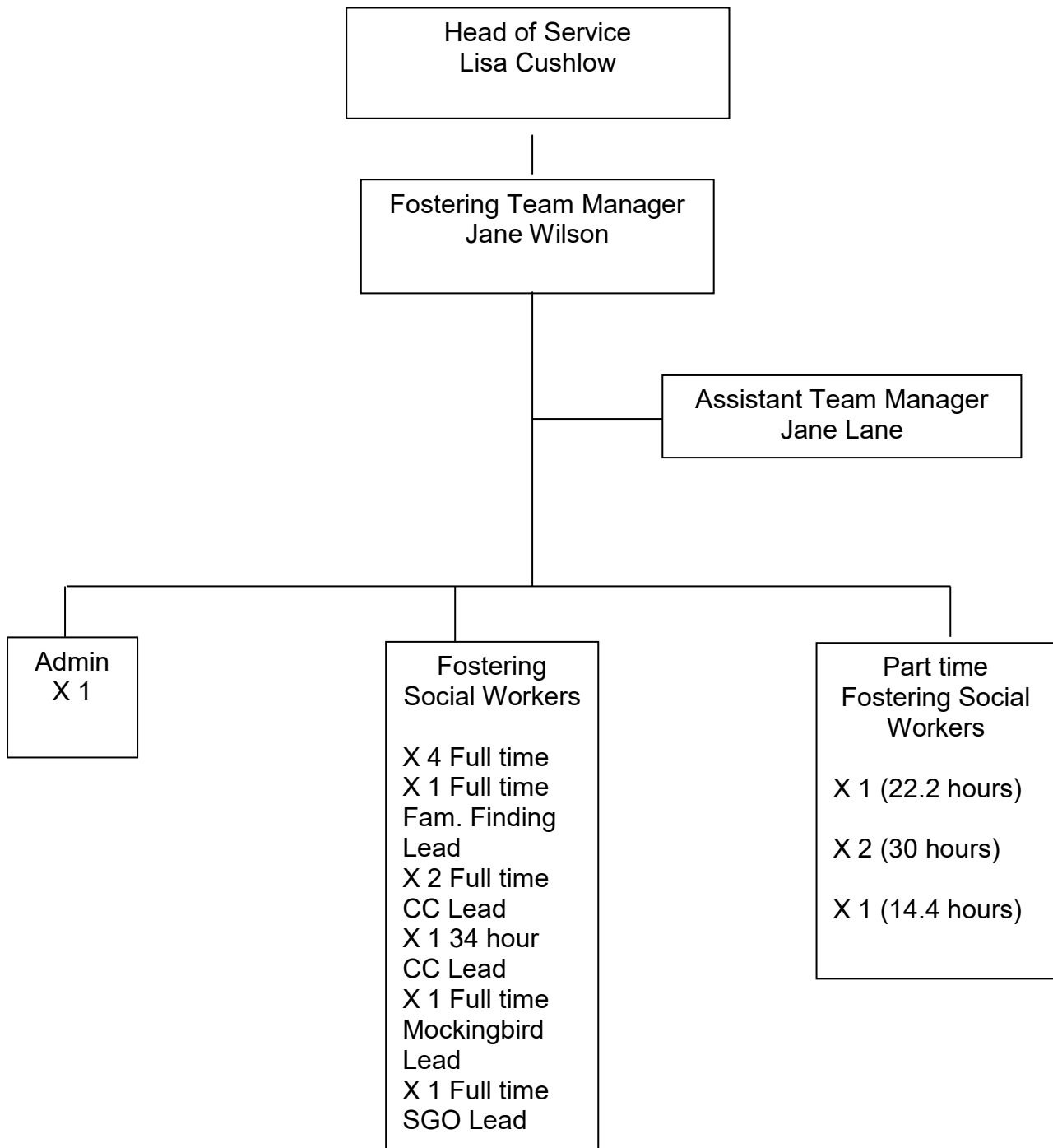
Wherever possible and appropriate, brothers and sisters will live together;

Individual children's needs/wishes and feelings are paramount and taken into consideration in relation to their care.



# Fostering Team Structure

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



# Governance and Oversight

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

This central list (as set out in the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011 and National Minimum Standards (Standard 14) includes an Independent Chair, two Vice Chairs, Agency Social Workers, an Education representative, an Elected Member and Independent Members. The Panel also receives advice when required from the Local Authority Legal Advisor, Medical Advisor and Panel Advisor. The Assistant Director of Children's Services, is the Fostering Agency Decision Maker, and as such, makes the final decision in relation to Foster Carer approval, Connected Person's approval, Extension Requests for assessments under Regulation 24 of the 2010 Care Planning Regulations, children's best interest decisions and matches. The Agency Decision Maker is robust in their quality assurance and decision making, ensuring that the best interests of children is always at the heart of everything we do.

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023, Panel has met eighteen times. The panel made recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker on the following fostering matters:

- For **thirteen** children there was a recommendation to agree a plan for them to be cared for permanently via long term foster care (their 'Best Interest Decision')
- The matches of **eleven** children with a long term foster carer were recommended
- **Twenty Five**, foster cares have been approved, **sixteen** of these are connected carer households and the remaining **nine** to provide 'mainstream' foster care
- **Eight** foster care reviews
- **Four** Foster Care resignations
- **Four** 'brief' reports were presented
- **Nine** requests were made for extension to Regulation 24 assessments

The table below highlights Fostering Panel activity for 2021/2022, then 2022/2023:

Year	2021/22	2022/2023
Panel met	17	18
Matches considered by the Panel	10	11
Recommendations for approval of prospective Foster Carers	7	9
Recommendations for approval of connected person Foster Carers	12	16
The Fostering Panel considered and endorsed the recommendations of Foster Carer Reviews	19	8
Resignation of Foster Carers	11	4
Recommendations to agree a plan for long term Foster Care for a cared for child (Best Interest Decision)	7	13

Panel activity reflects the work of the whole of Children's Services and it is clear from the above, particularly the increase in the number of 'best interest' decisions, that the Local Authority was responding to the challenges which are faced by Hartlepool's community in (sadly) taking on the permanent care of more children. The number of children cared for as at 31.3.23 was **325**, as compared with **308** the previous year. During the year, **142** children became cared for and **118** ceased to be cared for, so the upward trend is evident. In terms of attracting suitable people to care for our children, there were **10** fewer enquiries from prospective carers in this year than in the previous. The 'conversion rate' however was increased, resulting in more carers actually being approved. Despite this, the service and carers have struggled to meet the needs of every child and we have commissioned external provision in those instances. In March 2022, **39** children were living with independent agency Foster Carers and this figure was the same on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

There were **30** children and young people living in externally provided Children's Homes on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 and this number reduced to 28 at the same date this year.

Those numbers are positive in as much as, despite the rise in the number of children and young people becoming cared for, the dependence upon external provision has not increased. This will be, in part, due to the increase in our in-house provision of Children's homes with the opening of Wiltshire Avenue and the Star Centre. In terms of external residential provision, the cost of children's placements is rising significantly as there is a national shortage of supply against demand. Average weekly costs are rising and new placements for our children are being charged at a much higher rate than are existing. Hence, from a financial perspective, we significantly overspent in this (reporting) year and are also seeing Independent Fostering Agency costs increase.

In order to improve our sufficiency, another Children's home, Park Road, will opened in 2023/24 and the DfE plans for a Pathfinder regional Foster Care recruitment Hub (may) be pivotal in increasing placement choice for our children.

## Preparation for Children's Placements

The Fostering Service operates a duty system for responding to children who need Foster Care. Supervising Social Workers will liaise with the 'placing' Social Worker to ensure that there is a thorough understanding of the child's needs so that they are able to match him/her/them to the most suitable carer.

It is our usual procedure that children and young people requiring permanent placements are matched at panel prior to introductions taking place. For children and young people already in a foster placement and where a request is made for this placement to become permanent, the foster carers are considered within the family finding process. A thorough assessment of their suitability to meet the long term needs of the child/young person is undertaken and presented to panel.

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

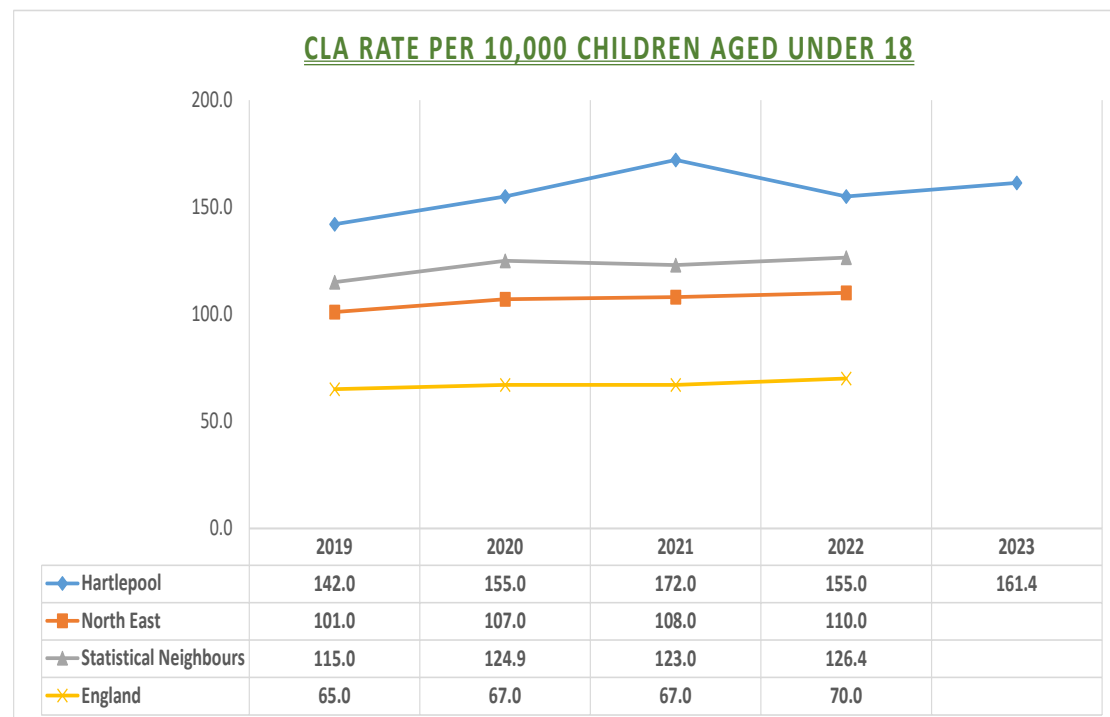
The team takes into account the assessed needs of the child and his/her/their family's wishes, and wherever possible maintains sisters and brothers together in the same placement.

The service benefits from a 'family finder' role; that person becomes involved with children who have a plan for permanence through long term fostering, at the earliest opportunity. The family finder identifies appropriate fostering families for the children, looking firstly at internal provision before exploring independent fostering providers. Hartlepool continues to provide good placement choice and stability with our foster carers – see stability data below. In this year, **10** children were matched to live permanently with foster carers

from the independent sector and 1 with Hartlepool's own Foster Carers. The latter is the Council's preferred outcome for its children, though this year's figures demonstrate that the Local Authority will always seek the best possible 'match' for children irrespective of whether the Foster Carer is approved by Hartlepool or another provider.

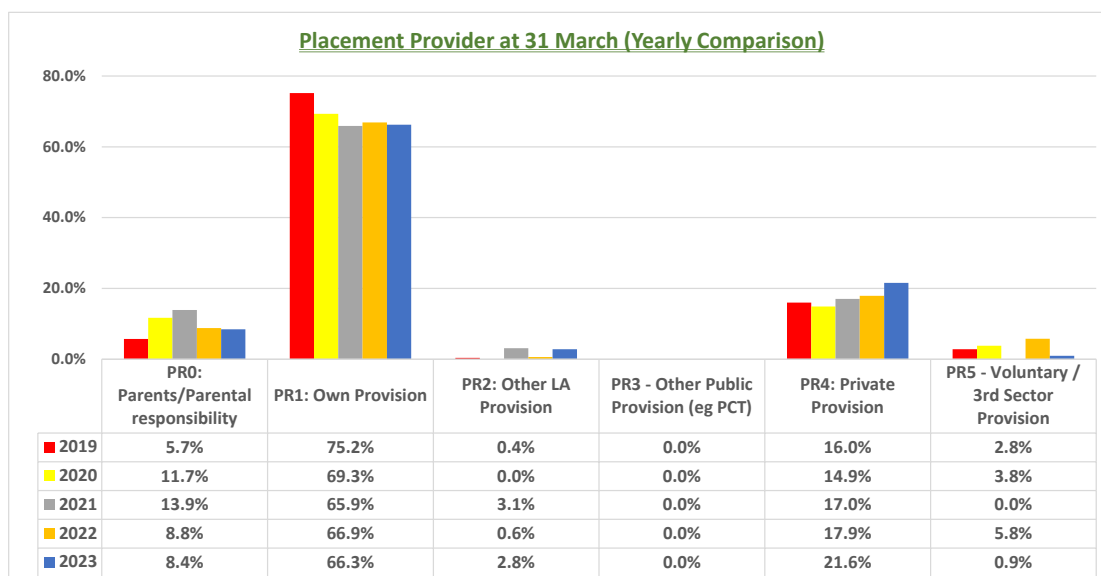
The family finder attends a monthly permanency tracker meeting. The function of this is to ensure all children's plans are given careful consideration with input and oversight of the Assistant Director for children's services. The tracker meeting aims to resolve any potential barriers to children being placed with the best carers and that there is no delay or 'drift' in achieving that plan.

## Profile of Children and Young People Cared for in Hartlepool



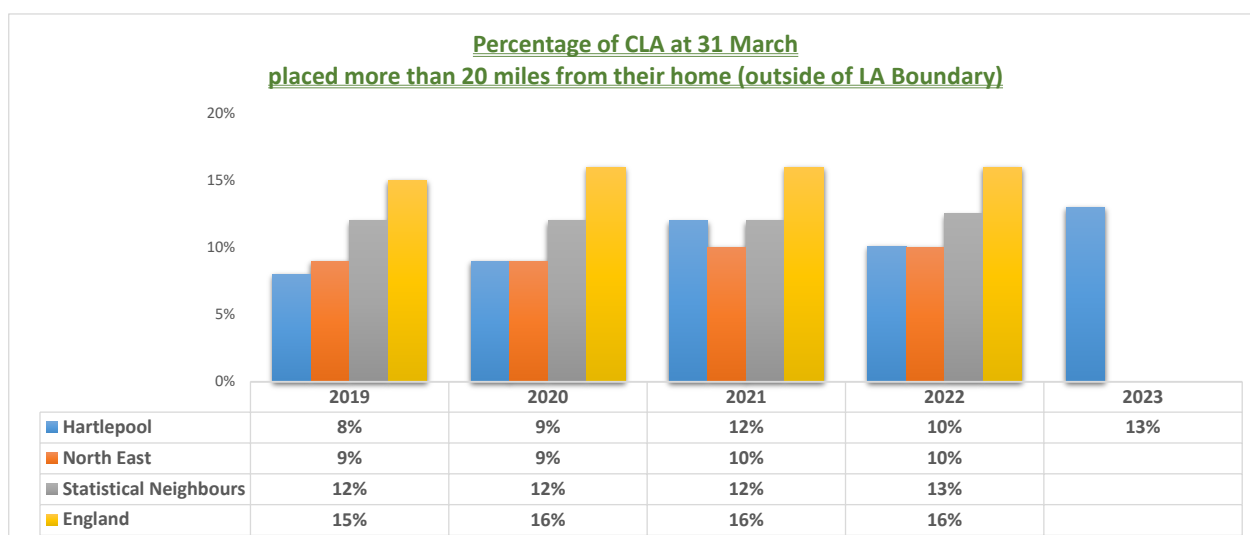
Hartlepool continues to have one of the highest number of cared for children per 10,000. Having peaked in 2021 and reduced considerably in 2022, the rate is now up again by 6% which is of concern given the national picture in terms of the availability of Foster Carers and indeed Children's Home provision for children and young people. Recruitment has stepped up in this year, however cannot keep pace with demand.

## Placement Type and Provision



The above chart demonstrates Hartlepool's high use of fostering placements, and that the number of children living with our own Foster Carers has remained almost exactly as last reporting period. The use of private provision has risen by 3%, which is to be expected given the increase in the number of children becoming cared for.

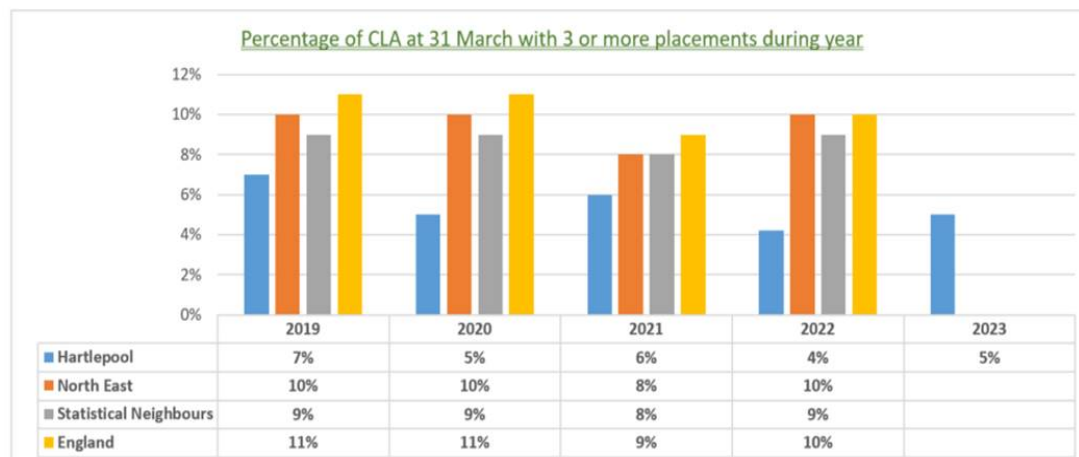
## Percentage of children looked after as at 31 March 2023, placed more than 20 miles from their homes, outside Local Authority boundary.



The above shows that the use of placements for our children and young people outside of Hartlepool has increased and now on a par with statistical neighbours though still lower than the national average, based their 2022 figures (2023 figures are not published at the time of writing) so has increased

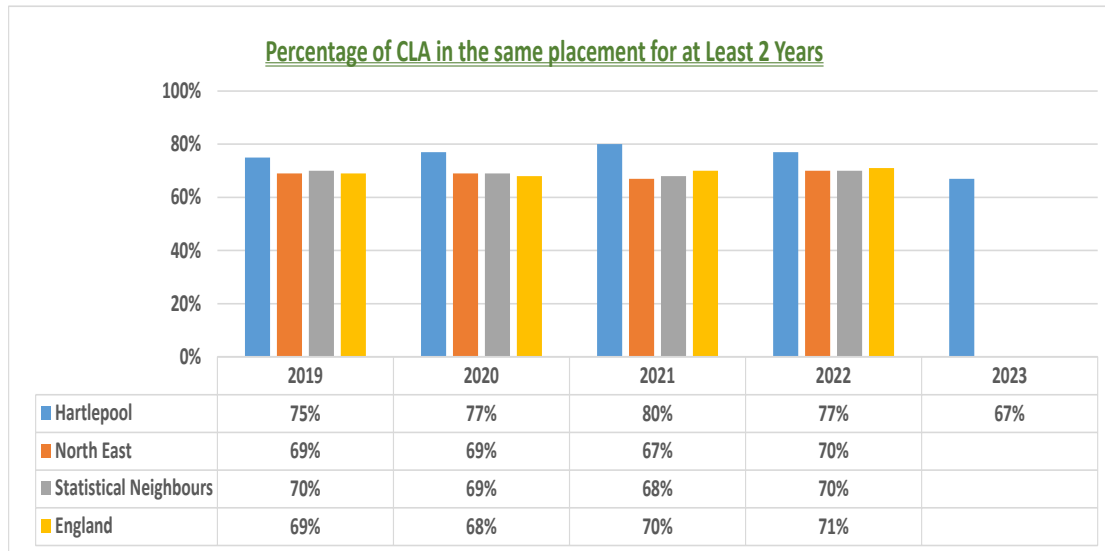
by 3% in this reporting year. The service aims to keep its children close to home and will continue to strive to achieve that wherever it can.

### STABILITY - Percentage of children as at 31 March 2023 with three or more placements during the year.



The above chart is demonstrating that, despite the increase in children becoming cared for in 2022, performance in terms of giving those children a stable and secure placement – from which comes all opportunity to thrive, develop and be happy – remains significantly better than all other comparators. As the panel activity chart shows, we have approved more connected Carers in this period and research tells us that children are more likely to remain in the care of their family than in none family placements. (Systemic review...Research on Social Work Practice 2018 – What Works for Children’s Social Care). In addition to this, the Fostering Service has recognized that recruitment is a struggle for all Local Authorities and providers and we are proactively seeking new and improved ways to support the Carers we do have, to offer a Secure Base to children in their care. This includes Connected Carers, ‘mainstream’ Foster Carers and those who are Special Guardians to our children. This will be explored further later in the report.

**STABILITY - Percentage of looked after children in same placement for at least two years, or are placed for adoption and their adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement, last for at least two years.**



The table above demonstrates a reduction in respect of placement stability (in placements of two years or more) for children and young people cared for by Hartlepool. The stability figure is now similar to (last year's) comparators and we will need to undertake some exploration of the data (once all is published) to ensure we understand what it reflects, in order to make improvements.

## Recruitment

The Fostering service has a recruitment strategy which uses a range of mediums to market the service to attract new foster carers. This activity takes place locally within Hartlepool, supported by Hartlepool's Marketing and Media Team.

The Connected Care and Special Guardianship Order Leads attend regional meetings which share good practice ideas and bench marking in relation to recruitment, training and key issues/ trends relating to, for example, demand around Connected Care Assessments and how this impacts upon recruitment of 'mainstream' Foster Carers.

In 2022/23 work continued to raise the profile of Fostering within the community. Local recruitment activity within the last 12 months has included;



- ✚ Videos of two care experienced young people sharing their views about Foster Care and the impact for them of living with their Foster Care families.
- ✚ The above, and videos created by Foster Care Families were shared at the annual Foster Care Conference and then on Social Media.
- ✚ New road side banners were produced incorporating the Mockingbird branding and placed in six prominent positions around Hartlepool.
- ✚ Business cards, Leaflets and newly designed 'pop up' banners were produced to use at events, information sessions and for Carers to help to distribute.
- ✚ Information sharing sessions in the community – supported by staff and Foster Carers
- ✚ Half-page Fostering advert in Think Local newspaper
- ✚ Full page in the March edition of Hartbeat featuring a young person's story
- ✚ Hartbeat two page spread focussing on Mockingbird



The greatest challenge for Fostering Services remains the recruitment of new foster carers to replace those who retire from the service and to increase placement availability and choice. Given the increase in children becoming cared for in this reporting period, that need is greater than ever. In 2022/23 the fostering service accepted the resignation of 4 Foster Carers and approved 25 new Foster Carers - 9 'mainstream' and 16 Connected Care Foster Carers. The target for recruitment for the year was 20. Whilst this is very positive, recruitment and approval is not keeping pace with the needs of our children.



Last year's annual report anticipated the positive impact of the Mockingbird model being introduced in Hartlepool and the enthusiasm for joining the first constellation has led to there being sufficient carers to create three. The Fostering Network coach who is supporting our implementation has commented that Hartlepool's response is amongst the best he has seen. At least one application from a prospective Foster Care family is directly related to Mockingbird, so helping with recruitment, as hoped. Most importantly - we are seeing signs that children's placements with their Carers are being sustained and stabilised because of the additional support which had been provided by our first constellation. This is the key driver for the implementation and growth of the project.

24
25

### There's never been a better time to be a foster carer in Hartlepool

Have you ever considered becoming a foster carer for Hartlepool Borough Council?

Caring, loving homes are urgently needed for children and young people in the Council's care – especially those aged 12 and over.

There's never been a better time to start fostering, as there's more niche support than ever.

In an exciting development, the Council's Fostering Team is now working in partnership with The Fostering Network to deliver the Mockingbird programme.

Mockingbird, a global award-winning and pioneering programme, delivers sustainable foster care.

It's structured around the support and relationships an extended family provides.

It nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families, supporting them to build a resilient and caring community of six to ten foster families called a constellation.

At the centre of each constellation is a hub home carer – an experienced foster carer supported by a liaison worker from the Fostering service – who provides constant support and mentoring to the foster carers.

"Mockingbird brings all the strengths and benefits of an extended family – including support and encouragement for one another and having someone at the end of the phone for advice 24 hours a day – plus training and other opportunities."

"It strengthens the relationships between everyone involved and greatly improves the stability of fostering placements."

"When you combine that with a good financial package and the support of a dedicated supervising worker from our support team, it really is a great time to become a foster carer in Hartlepool."

"Please also don't forget that there's no such thing as a 'typical' foster carer, so don't rule yourself out, whatever your age, background or circumstances – we'd love to hear from you!"

### Meet our first hub home carers

Joyke and Joe

Hartlepool's first Mockingbird constellation has Joyke and Joe Malrose as its hub home carers.

Joyke, a retired teaching assistant, and Joe, a former electrician, have been foster carers for Hartlepool Borough Council for more than 12 years and have a wealth of experience.

"It really is the best time to become a foster carer for Hartlepool Borough Council," says Joyke.

"For first time carers just knowing you have someone to help, support and advise you makes all the difference."

Joe adds: "We are at the end of the phone for advice, support or just a comfort chat at any time, or we'll be there at the drop of a hat if you need a bit of a hand – for example picking the kids up from school one day."

Joyke and Joe also have two bedrooms available if for any reason children from the foster families need to come for a sleepover.

"For the child it's a bit like going to stay with granny," says Joyke. "For the foster parents it can give them a breather or time out if they need to attend an event."

The foster families in Hartlepool's first Mockingbird constellation have all met and the children know each other too and are already forming friendships.

"Each month we do an activity day with the children, which they all really enjoy," says Joe. "They've also made door plaques with their name on for when they come for a sleepover."

"Fostering is hugely rewarding – seeing the difference you make to a child's life is second to none."

"If you're thinking about it, go and have a chat with the Fostering team – there's no pressure and you'll have plenty of time to decide. Give it a go!"

To find out more about being a foster carer for Hartlepool Borough Council, visit

[www.hartlepool.gov.uk/fostering](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/fostering)

01429 405588

[fosterandadopt@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:fosterandadopt@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## The table below details recruitment activity for 2022/23

<b>Initial enquiries - where did people hear about the service?</b>	19 initial enquiries. Prompted by, where stipulated: Internet search Hartbeat Word of Mouth Radio advert HBC social media
<b>Information pack sent out</b>	17 packs sent out
<b>Initial visits</b> - How many proceeded?	<b>16</b> home visits completed  <b>13</b> proceeded to preparation – as below
<b>Preparation Groups held:</b>	August 2022 – 5 (household) attendees  October 2022 – 5 (household) attendees  February 2023 – 3 (household) attendees  In this reporting year, the Team has taken four 'brief reports' to panel to seek a view on the cessation of the assessment of prospective foster carers, all of whom were prospective Connected Carers. In all instances, panel agreed with the assessor's recommendations. Panel has also considered 10 requests for 8 week extensions to Regulation 24 assessments.

## Foster Carer Retention

Hartlepool Borough Council recognises the invaluable contribution that Foster Carers make to Children's Services, and as such views Foster Carer retention as a significant priority. In this year we have seen a small net growth in the number of Foster Carers. Carer de-registrations are chiefly related to those Connected Carers who secured a legal order for the children in their care, thus also reducing the number of children in the care of the Local Authority. This is obviously a positive outcome for those children and their families.

### The table below details Foster Care capacity as at 31 March 2023

<b>Number of foster carers</b>	157 of whom 61 are Connected Carers (in 2022 there were 146 of whom 45 were Connected Carers)
<b>Number of placements possible if all in use</b>	273
<b>How many children in placement?</b>	159 within 'mainstream' placements;  82 in connected care placements  16 Young people in Staying Put placements
<b>How many unused?</b>	32
<b>How many not able to use/on hold?</b>	11 not available places

## Feedback from Foster Carers;

Foster carers are consulted on all aspects of the service and their views inform planning. In this year the review of the Banded Payment Scheme was complete, assisted by our Foster Carers and the requirements now include training considered to be essential to support our children and carers ie Foster Care Recording, PACE and Secure Base. Foster Carers asked that the service be more strident about how individual Fostering Families fulfil their training and practice expectations and this is overseen by the Independent Reviewing Officers who meet with Foster Carers, annually. The reviewed Banding and policies and procedures were up loaded onto the Council's website and put out through Social Media.

Foster Carers have been involved in discussions about the Mockingbird project and about taking part in the 'Reflective Fostering Study' being run by the Anna Freud Centre, in conjunction with Hertfordshire University. The Service continues to be grateful for and impressed by our Foster Carers who - though extremely busy looking after our children and all that goes with that - show such enthusiasm to help the Fostering Service to improve and develop. They, like the staff team, recognise that the quality of support and of self-awareness and indeed self-care (which the projects we are embracing aim to improve) are key to ensuring the safety and stability of the children we care for.

We asked our Foster Carers to tell us two simple things to gain a sense of how they feel about the service and what we can do to improve; what they are happy with and what they need. Their feedback has informed our priorities for 2023/24;

## **I am happy with...**

- ✦ The support from other carers.
- ✦ The feeling from helping children
- ✦ All in general
- ✦ Support from supervising social worker
- ✦ Supervising social worker support and child's social worker
- ✦ Love it
- ✦ Conference – it is fab
- ✦ The support we get
- ✦ The support I receive
- ✦ Overwhelmed
- ✦ Quality of training
- ✦ The service
- ✦ Happy with service
- ✦ The help and guidance I need
- ✦ All In general
- ✦ Support level
- ✦ The support we get
- ✦ The level of support I get from my supervising social worker
- ✦ Everything
- ✦ Support from supervising social worker who is very supportive of my needs
- ✦ The support I receive
- ✦ The help I get from SSW &SW
- ✦ Everything
- ✦ All support
- ✦ Everything HBC offer especially our supervising social worker
- ✦ Everything
- ✦ Level of support and enjoying looking after our children

## I need...

- ✦ More support when asked especially after 5pm – foster caring is (24/7)
- ✦ More tailored training
- ✦ To remind myself how amazing I am! Not sometimes – always!
- ✦ Not to be blamed for a breakdown in placement
- ✦ Quicker response to issues raised
- ✦ Training requested – availability
- ✦ More support for children for mental health at home
- ✦ Nothing
- ✦ I'm fine
- ✦ Nothing yet
- ✦ Nothing
- ✦ A rise
- ✦ Free council tax for all foster carers
- ✦ More beds!
- ✦ Nothing at the moment
- ✦ Nothing

## The Voice of our Children and Young People

Understanding children's experiences and hearing and responding to what they tell us is crucial for us to be what they need us to be. K told us this;

***“Before I came into Foster Care things were very difficult. I didn't have many friends...I struggled with going to school so I dropped out. When I went into Foster Care I went back...achieved GCSEs then college with the help of my carers...they said ‘come on, you can do it...I was achieving A's...I hope to go to uni this year. I wouldn't have been able to do this without my Foster Carers. They've always been there to give me support and confidence, telling me I am doing well and that I have come so far. I never believed in myself and now ....I'm doing really good...I have a part time job, I'm talking on panels for children and Foster Care and hope to be a Social Worker”***

There are times when children tell us things that they are not happy with, which is of equal importance to making improvements. We gain all views from children in our care reviews and from 'disruption' meetings in which children and young

people are actively encouraged to partake. Additionally, our children in our Care Council has grown and developed to the point that it has been separated into age groups so that their input and work is pitched where they need it to be.

The Participation Team is committed to ensuring the views and opinions of the children in our care and care leavers are heard and listened to; they act on the views of children and young people and take them to decision makers who will then revise the young people's opinions and make positive changes to the services children and young people receive.

The Participation Team has identified the need for set groups for different age ranges to be able to work on projects, consultations that are relevant to their age range. The Care Leaver Group meets every Tuesday, 4.30 – 5.30pm at the One Stop Shop. The Children in Care Council meet every Wednesday, 4.30 – 5.30pm. Both groups allow the young people chance to discuss and share their views in a safe space.

There are plans to have a group on a Thursday evening which will be tailored towards a younger age group and to include SEN children and young people were their needs maybe a little different to the other groups.

The children in care council has established good working links with Corporate Parenting Board and in particular the Chair of the forum, who has played active role in becoming more involved in the Children in Care Council. The Corporate Parenting Forum gives the children and young people a platform to be able to voice their opinions on matters that affect them. We have a Foster Carer champion who also sits on the Corporate Parenting Forum.



The children in care council to develop an online digital platform (Connecting You) where children, young people, foster carers and professionals can access information and to have a platform to communicate.

There was a launch day for the Foster Carers to get them signed up. All information in relation to Foster Carers are shared on the platform.

The Participation Team will be working alongside the Fostering Team to support with;

- Foster Carer coffee mornings
- Foster carer training, including the annual Foster Carer Conference
- Annual fostering events
- Fostering documentation
- Fostering recruitment
- Mocking Bird
- Foster Carer celebrations
- Foster children events – children's Christmas party
- Children who foster group – to offer support
- Reviewing the guide to Fostering for children and young people with the Children in Care Council.

## Training

All of the Council's experienced foster carers have completed the DfE Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Carers and new carers are working on the standards and on target for completion within required timescales.

Prior to approval, all prospective carers undertake a 3 day preparation course run by the team following the BAAF Skills to Foster Programme. Approved foster carers play an important part in this training, which we know from feedback is greatly appreciated by prospective carers. The Preparation Training is reviewed regularly to ensure that the material remains up to date, is relevant and reflects recent research. In 2022/23 we have incorporated more information about Mockingbird. All foster carers undergo a full assessment which serves a dual purpose – ensuring the household is suitable to Foster for Hartlepool whilst assisting the applicants to prepare for the role and to care for other people's children.

Post approval training includes access to all courses available to the children's workforce in Hartlepool and mandatory training days for foster carers. The schedule of Training and Support for 2022/23 is attached as **Appendix 4**.

**The Annual Foster Care Conference** was held during Foster Care Fortnight on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and focused upon attachment and the 'PACE' approach to



caring. These are key themes which complement the Secure Base model of Foster Care - our theme the previous year. The day was led by our own Head of Virtual School, Emma Rutherford and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive – essentially because Emma brought huge energy and personal insight and experience which is just unique and totally captivated the carers. The conference was an introduction to PACE and the forerunner to rolling the learning out as a mandatory topic for all Foster Carers.

**Fostering Panel** must be fit for purpose and meet all regulatory requirements – this includes them receiving at least one training session per year. This year, the annual training day was held on 8<sup>th</sup> September, supported by Fostering Network's Keith Miller (Practice Support Consultant). The session focused upon Panel Member roles and responsibilities and considering what good looks like in relation to written reports and practice relating to best interest decisions for children and considering 'matches' with Foster Carers. Panel members also had a presentation about PACE to ensure their awareness of what Foster Carers are learning and needing to implement.

## Post Approval Support and Participation

Each Foster Care family has an allocated Supervising Social Worker and receives a four to eight weekly supervision and support visits as well as telephone and e-mail contact. Supervising Social Workers also make a minimum of one unannounced visit per year to Foster Carers, this can be undertaken by a different member of staff to the foster carer's allocated Social Worker.

The Fostering team communicates regularly with carers; all carers have a council e-mail account so information can be shared securely and received between carers, the fostering team and the children's social workers.

The Fostering Team has a duty worker throughout the working week who is available to respond to any calls from carers. In addition to this, foster carers have access to the Emergency Duty Team, the commissioned out of hours service and an out of hours telephone support service provided by a Head of Service on a rota basis. Foster carers can contact the support phone line at any time.

The Fostering team also hosts a private Facebook group for approved foster carers, to communicate with each other, share experiences, advice and knowledge with other foster carers. This has proved to be an excellent communication tool and is an immediate means of letting the whole group know when we have children who are waiting for a suitable Foster Carer.

Our children and Foster Carers benefit from the support of trained Filial Therapists and Carers have access to support in relation to individual young people for whom they are caring.

Our two participation officers take a lead role in ensuring that children, young people and carers have time to spend together and to celebrate their achievements and there is an annual Celebration Evening for Carers and for children cared for and a Summer Barbeque for children and young people who are cared for and for the families who care.

This year the Celebration Evening was held at 'The Avenue' on 20<sup>th</sup> May – when carers received awards for their time and commitment to the role, with a special 'thankyou' and acknowledgement from the Mayor of Hartlepool.

The BBQ was held at Summerfield on 4<sup>th</sup> July and was very well attended and lots of fun. The 'Celebrating Success' event for our children and young people took place in October and the achievements of our children and young people were recognised at a huge and glamorous gathering. The children and Foster Carer's Christmas party on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2022 was supported by the children in our care council who helped to choose the theme (Gingerbread), helped to decorate the hall and were even Santa's helpful elves. Again, feedback was very positive;

Carer - *"Absolutely fantastic what Hartlepool's children's services does for the kids is out of this world well done to everyone involved Merry Christmas and all the best for 2023"*

Child; *"I loved seeing people including my little brother K"*



In 2022/23 Foster Carers were included in the roll out of 'Vivup' providing an employment health and well-being scheme equally to Foster Carers – though they are NOT employed – and the workforce. As with employed staff, its use is to demonstrate to Foster Carers that they are valued, that we wish to support them in a range of ways, to retain their talent and skills and to help them to be resilient.

The Fostering Team has 14 Social Workers and one business support officer who work a range of hours to fit service need as well as the needs of the individual. This has been a stable team for several years, so that Foster Carers and their families benefit from having long standing and trusting relationships

with their Supervising Social Worker and the wider team. This is in keeping with the ethos of Hartlepool Children's Services which takes a 'relational' approach to its involvement with families ie respectful, inclusive, honest, compassionate and co-operative. This means that, when there are worries, difficult conversations can be had without relationships breaking down, for the greater good of our children.

Individuals in the team are experienced practitioners with a real interest in and commitment to Fostering and creating permanence via SGOs and to moving this agenda forward. In taking on individual roles and responsibilities, team members are increasingly becoming 'subject experts' so that the improvement plan – essentially to have the best possible stability for our children through greater placement choice and the best quality, best supported Carers – can continue.

## Service Developments

### Special Guardianship

The work of the Special Guardian has continued to bring innovation and improvement to the support systems around families in the community, who care for children in this unique and sometimes difficult role. The primary aim is to ensure that pre order preparation is robust and transparent to maximize children's opportunity to experience safe, stable and loving care into adulthood. Very importantly, the SGO lead has also reached out to the community to invite all those with an SGO to seek support if they need it and has engaged schools, early help colleagues and various providers in the town to raise the profile of children and families with SGOs so that they can be better understood and supported. Some of the work completed in 2022/23 is;

- ✚ Review of all pre order processes and paperwork
- ✚ Establishment of SGO support group – now a registered charity
- ✚ Development of a training programme for prospective Special Guardians
- ✚ Fund raising and awareness raising events across the town
- ✚ Establishment of an SGO pathway on the IT system to reflect all work completed
- ✚ Tripling of the number of families accessing the adoption support fund
- ✚ Publicising the role of SGO and the Offer of the LA on local radio
- ✚ Qualifying Care Leavers returning to the Local Authority for support
- ✚ Being host to another Local Authority (which is 'outstanding') as they wish to emulate HBC's SGO provision.

### Mockingbird




Hartlepool's first Mockingbird constellation went live in November 2022 and the Mockingbird Lead along with the appointed Hub Home carers have thus far succeeded in establishing positive relationships between both carers and children and the interest in the scheme is growing exponentially. The service will need to evidence the impact and cost effectiveness of the project in order to develop more constellations – if enthusiasm and interest were matched by budget allocation this would not be an issue. As the government set up the scheme with only pump priming funds, Local Authorities need to find a budget to sustain and build the model, which is difficult in the current financial climate.

## Reflective Fostering Study

The Fostering Service became involved in the study and the implementation commenced in March 2023 with a plan to begin the 10 week training programme in April 2023. This important research is to support the lives of carers and of children in care. The programme has been developed by specialists at the Anna Freud Centre and aims to help carers look after themselves and therefore be able to build strong, supportive relationships with children in their care. Evaluations of the programme have so far shown that it had a positive impact on carer's stress levels, carer child relationships and the child's emotional well-being. As with all other improvement plans for the service, we hope to invest in our carers, so that they are better able to invest in our children. This cannot be more necessary than in this time of difficulty for families in the town and pressure and demand on Foster Carers who are the back bone of our offer to the Hartlepool community. An additional benefit of being part of this research is that Hartlepool carers and staff will have free access to future training provided by the Anna Freud Centre.

## Children who Foster Group

Two members of the fostering team reinstated the group early in 2022 and have seen it grow in membership across the year. The children will continue to meet quarterly and their work plan (interspersed with fun activities!) for 2023/24 will include;

-  Developing an information leaflet about being a child who fosters to share as part of our information packs and recruitment materials.
-  Reviewing the 'child reference' used for prospective carer applications
-  Priority! The group is a safe space to check in with the children about how they feel about fostering, what's great or not so great – also what they wish to look at/achieve as a group.

## Family Finding








The lead for family finding has reviewed the 'matching' paperwork and process for children over the age of 14 and has also produced a useful flow chart for children's social workers to guide and support them in this pivotal stage of

making decisions for permanence for children. She has also built relationships with external providers so that discussions about children's needs are increasingly child focused – so that matching is improved and therefore stability and positive experiences for our children.

## Connected Care

There are now three workers within the team who are dedicated to the role of assessing and supporting this group of carers. In February 2023, the service took on responsibility for completing Regulation 24 assessments for the safe, immediate placement of children. They have reviewed all processes relating to this complex area of Fostering, in conjunction with legal services and meet with Heads of Service and the Assistant Director to ensure a clear line of sight to practice, planning and the regulation of children's placements.

### Priorities for 2022/2023 – how did we do?

-  Approve a minimum of 20 new Foster Carers – **ACHIEVED**  
29
-  Re-launch the 'Children Who Foster Group' - **ACHIEVED**
-  Launch HBC's first Mockingbird constellation - **ACHIEVED**
-  Take part in 'The Reflective Fostering Study' (Anna Freud) to improve support offer to Fostering Households - **ACHIEVED**
-  Review membership of Fostering Panel to improve gender balance and bring more diverse perspectives - **ACHIEVED**
-  Develop the SGO offer to support stability for families in the community AND to reduce the number of children in our care – **ACHIEVED** (though the numbers of children coming into our care have increased)
-  Increase Foster Carer allowances (age related and banding) by 2% - **ACHIEVED**

- ✚ Increase capacity of in house therapeutic support for Foster Carers and Children, to include systemic family therapy – **NOT ACHIEVED – the worker could not continue his studies**
- ✚ Maintain the level of children's stability at 7% and under for those in short term placements - **ACHIEVED AND IMPROVED** and above 77% for children permanently placed – **NOT ACHIEVED**
- ✚ Foster Care celebration event to be led by Foster Carers, at their request - **ACHIEVED**
- ✚ Develop the Foster Care training offer to ensure it can be accessed at various times and via a range of delivery – **ACHIEVED**

### Priorities for 2023/2024

- ✚ Strive to improve the long term stability of our children who are placed with Foster Carers and Special Guardians on a permanent basis
- ✚ Retain and if possible improve our children's short term stability figures
- ✚ Improve the range and nature of support to carers to increase children's stability and security in their Foster placements by utilising the Support Workers (appointed in this year) to offer additional support to children and carers who are struggling
- ✚ Identify and overcome any barriers to creating a second Mockingbird Constellation.
- ✚ Complete the Reflective Fostering Study research and measure impact for children (stability), individual carers, the team and the service
- ✚ Uplift carer remuneration (Banding and Age Related Allowance) to recognise the increase in the cost of living.

- ✚ Review the Connected Care process to assess outcomes for children and families and impact for the Fostering Service
- ✚ Increase children's placement choice and improve on recruitment by taking part in the DfE regional Pathfinder recruitment pilot
- ✚ Act upon ideas from Foster Carers about raising our profile and recruitment eg foster care walk, information sessions, a presence in the town, shopping centres, schools.
- ✚ Recruit and approve a minimum of 20 new fostering households
- ✚ Create additional management capacity to ensure robust oversight of service delivery, given additional duties within the service (Connected Care)
- ✚ Provide training to panel members in respect of gender identity and the impact for children in our care.
- ✚ Increase the number of Foster Carers who secure a Special Guardianship Order for children in their care where that is in the child's best interest.







# Hartlepool Borough Council

## Fostering Service

### STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

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

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

This Statement of Purpose was reviewed and updated in March 2023 and is to be approved by the Elected Members of Hartlepool Borough Council.

The Statement of Purpose will be reviewed and revised as appropriate by the Team Manager of the Fostering Service no later than April 2024.

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## Introduction

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

This statement is available to all members of staff, Foster Carers, children and birth parents and is available on the Hartlepool Borough Council Website. A copy of this statement is also to be lodged with Ofsted. The information contained is regularly updated, and will be amended annually.

A separate Children's Guide to the Fostering Service is given to all young people who are to be placed with Foster Carers. This is also available on the HBC website and Practice manual.

### CHILDREN'S GUIDE

Subject to the child's age and understanding, the fostering service ensures the child receives the Children's guide at the point of placement and that the Foster Carer explains the contents of the Children's Guide in a way that is accessible. The Children's Guide includes a summary of what the fostering service sets out to do for children, how they can find out their rights, how a child can contact their Independent Reviewing Officer, the Children's Commissioner, or Ofsted if they wish to raise a concern. The fostering service will update this guide as required on an annual basis to ensure that information is current and reflects developments in the service. The service would seek to ensure that the guide is available in a format appropriate to the communication needs of the child

concerned and would access council resources such as language translation to achieve this.

## **Aims and Objectives, Principles and Legislative Framework for Standards of Care**

### **AIM**

The aim of the fostering service is to recruit, train and support Foster Carers to provide high quality placements for the children of Hartlepool. The service will support Foster Carers and Family Network Carers (Connected Carers) to value, support and encourage children and young people to grow and develop as individuals, to be physically and emotionally healthy and to aim high in their education so that they achieve the best possible outcomes.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- To plan and implement effective recruitment campaigns and strategies in order to attract the number and range of carers identified to meet the complex and diverse needs of the Children cared for by Hartlepool and to ensure a choice of high quality foster placements.
- To ensure that wherever possible and appropriate sisters and brothers will be accommodated together.
- To ensure that the individual child's needs/wishes and feelings are paramount and taken into consideration in relation to their placements.
- To undertake effective, timely assessments of prospective carers including Connected Persons carers within specified timescales to ensure that children are afforded safe and effective care.
- To maintain and support the Fostering Panel to consider Foster Carer and Connected Persons assessments and make recommendations for approval of prospective Foster Carers, children's plans for long term foster care, and approval of the match of named children with Foster

Carers. The panel also considers the first reviews of Foster Carers and subsequent reviews where category changes are being agreed or there have been issues regarding children's care, along with any requests for extensions to Regulation 24 assessments.

- To provide pre and post approval training for applicants and carers, equipping them to meet the diverse needs of children and young people.
- To provide regular, recorded supervision and support contacts with carers by suitably qualified and experienced staff.
- To ensure that additional and flexible support is available to carers to underpin placement stability and improve outcomes for children in their care.
- To protect children and young people from abuse and neglect through safer recruitment practices and adherence to safeguarding policy and procedures in all areas of the service including for staff, carers and panel members.
- To create stability for children and young people in foster care through robust matching processes and a good standard of consistent and effective support.
- To have a Staying Put policy and procedure in place in order that young people are encouraged to remain in placements post 18.
- To achieve better life chances for children who are cared for, particularly in relation to health, education, employment and leisure activities.
- To promote the development of skills and expertise within the fostering community, to create a culture of aspiration for our children.
- To maintain and promote contact with family members, where appropriate, through creating opportunities for positive family time.

- To prepare young people adequately for when they eventually leave their foster placement.
- To create lifelong attachments with carers in order that children and young people continue to be supported into adulthood.
- To work in partnership with children and young people, their parents and carers and social workers.
- Provide an environment where each child and young person is helped to make the best of his or her abilities emotionally, physically, educationally and socially.

## PRINCIPLES

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

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

## STANDARDS OF CARE

The Fostering Service will support Hartlepool Children's and Joint Commissioning Services in meeting the child focussed standards which set out

what children in foster care need, as detailed in the **Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards 2011**:

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

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

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

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

**Standard 3: Promoting positive behaviour and relationships**

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

**Standard 4: Safeguarding Children**

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

**Standard 5: Children Missing from Care**

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

**Standard 6: Promoting good health and wellbeing**

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

#### **Standard 7: Education, employment and leisure activities**

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

#### **Standard 8: Promoting educational achievement**

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

#### **Standard 9: Promoting and supporting contact**

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

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

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

#### **Standard 11: Preparation for a placement**

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

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



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

## CHILDREN IN OUR CARE – OUR VALUES

In addition to the national standards, Hartlepool Fostering Service has adopted a vision and aspirations for children who are cared for, which underpin the Team's approach to service delivery. These include:

- The vision to ensure that every child we care for in Hartlepool experiences high quality care and stable relationships, is nurtured and grows up with a sense of identity and belonging.
- When a child becomes cared for, there must be sufficient range of accommodation options available to be able to match them with Foster Carers who will meet his/her/their needs.

## The Service Provided

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

### **1) Those provided to registered Foster Carers and potential Foster Carers including Connected Persons Carers;**

- Initial visits to people expressing an interest in becoming Foster Carers
- Preparation training for applicants
- Competency based assessments of applicants underpinned by the Secure Base model of care.
- Support systems for approved Foster Carers and Connected Persons carers including allocated Supervising Social Worker and regular supervisions
- Post-approval training and development for Foster Carers and Connected Persons Carers
- Consultation with Carers about the development of the service

## **2) Those provided to children requiring a foster placement;**

- A duty social worker available during office hours Monday to Friday
- Provision of a range of foster care placements for children cared for by Hartlepool Borough Council
- Provision of carers for use by the Emergency Duty Team for children who need care during evenings, weekends and bank holidays.
- Consultation with children in our care on all aspects of the service.

The Fostering service also works in conjunction with a number of other agencies and professionals to ensure a cohesive and effective package of support is available to children who become cared for. The Child in Care Council plays a critical role in service development and has a valuable contribution to make in terms of feedback. The authority is committed to learning from the experiences of children in its care and to seeking improvements.

In addition to the above, The Fostering Service now includes a dedicated lead for Special Guardianship. Their role is to improve Hartlepool's SGO 'offer' and to ensure consistently good and robust practice in the planning process for securing Special Guardian Orders for children and young people. Special Guardians now have access to support groups and training sessions, are signposted to suitable services to support the child they care for and are supported to access the adoption support fund.

## **PROVISION OF THERAPEUTIC SERVICES**

The Fostering Service receives a discreet service from the Therapeutic Social Work Team which provides therapeutic input to children and young people in foster placement, consultation to carers and other professionals.

In addition, the members of the Therapeutic Social Work Team work closely with carers and often work directly with them in conjunction with the child in their care. The key objective of the work is to provide a regular, easy to use guidance and support service to all Foster Carers and to improve placement

stability for our children. They also provide training to Foster Carers, Connected Persons carers, social workers and other professionals.

### **PROVISION OF HEALTH PROMOTION SUPPORT SERVICES**

There is a named nurse identified for Children and Young People in our care who oversees Children's Annual Health Assessments and has a proactive role in health promotion for Young People. They will provide support to foster carers in addressing a range of health issues which may affect children. They also provide advice and support to young people on an individual basis on issues such as contraception and sexual health

A dedicated consultant paediatrician advises the Fostering panel on medical issues for prospective Foster Carers and children with a plan for permanence via long term fostering.

### **PROVISION OF EDUCATIONAL SUPPORT SERVICES**

The Fostering service has strong links to the educational support services for children in our care and in particular works closely with the Virtual Head Teacher who has a strong commitment to cared for children and provides training and support to Hartlepool's Foster Carers.

### **PROVISION OF LEISURE, SPORT, CULTURAL AND RELIGIOUS ACTIVITY**

Foster Carer training and supervision promotes the importance of leisure provision for looked after children and young people, and the expectation that carers will seek out and support new experiences and activities to enhance children's self-worth, social development and independence. The council has a leisure offer for all children in its care which is promoted by the supervising social worker and the foster carers and children have welcomed this.

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

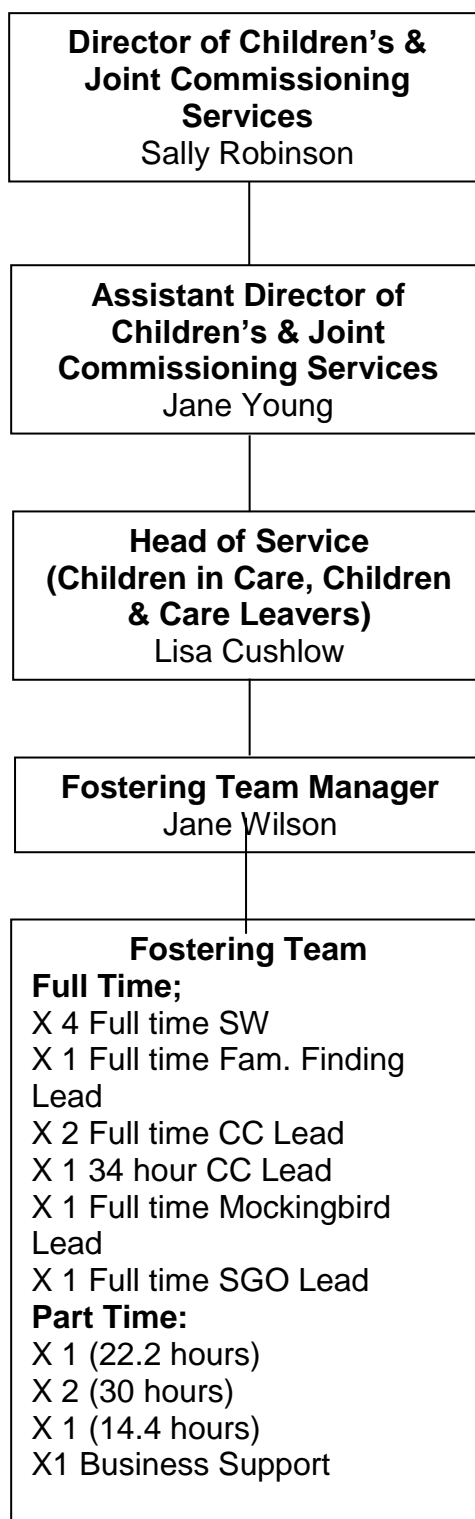
We are committed to directly challenging racism and ensure that all young people who access our services are treated with dignity and respect and aware that our practice is anti-oppressive and anti-racist practice. We will ensure that all people are treated equally, regardless of age, sex, sexuality,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

### **PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD / PATHWAY PLANNING**

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

# Management Structure

The Fostering Service of Hartlepool Borough Council is provided by designated workers from the Fostering Team who are part of Children's and Joint Commissioning Services



## Specific Service Information

### NUMBERS OF FOSTER CARERS

The number of Foster Carer approvals achieved between 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023 comprised of 9 approvals of mainstream carers and the approval of 16 Connected Person Carers. In the period 2022 - 2023 the fostering service accepted the resignation of 4 Foster Carers.

The total number of Foster Carers approved by Hartlepool Borough Council on 31 March 2023 was 157, which number is comprised of 96 'mainstream' Carers and 61 Connected Carers.

### NUMBERS OF CHILDREN PLACED

The total number of children cared for by Hartlepool as at 31 March 2023 was 328 (as against 308 at the same time in 2022) of whom 241 were placed with Hartlepool's own foster placements. There were 16 young people in a Hartlepool staying put arrangement at this time and 1 young person in a Supported Lodgings placement.

### DESIGNATION OF CARERS

The majority of carers are 'mainstream', offering either short term or permanent care to children and young people up to the age of 18 years and 'staying put' placements for those who are over 18.

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

Hartlepool currently has four carers who have experience in providing 'parent and child' placements and carers who have the capacity to provide such placements in very specific circumstances. This is an area which continues to

require attention so that our resources are able to meet the demand for these placements in the most effective manner. Specific training has been devised and delivered to Foster Carers to support them in their care of parents and their child/children.

## **Safeguarding, Complaints & Allegations**

### **PROTECTING CHILDREN FROM HARM**

Hartlepool Fostering Service operates a safer recruitment process for all staff employed by the agency and panel members. In addition, there is a rigorous vetting and assessment process undertaken with all potential carers. Enhanced disclosure and barring checks are repeated every 5 years for all carers and in addition all staff and panel members are required to confirm that they have had sight of, and will adhere to, the General Data Protection Regulations, Data Protection Act 2018.

Hartlepool Fostering Service has policy and guidance underpinning its service on safe caring, health and safety, bullying, management of behaviour and Foster Carer agreements.

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

- Issues regarding standards of care,
- Breach of foster care agreement
- Child protection/safeguarding issues
- Allegations of abuse against foster carers; and
- Complaints made about a foster carer

Children will know about these procedures through their social worker and the Children's Guide. They also have access to an Advocacy Service independent of the service currently provided by National Youth Advocacy Services (NYAS).

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Hartlepool Borough Council Children's and Joint Commissioning Services operate a complaints service which is independent of the Fostering Service.

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

## NUMBERS OF COMPLAINTS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

In the year 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2023 there were no complaints made by or against Hartlepool Foster Carers or against the service itself.

## ALLEGATIONS

All allegations in relation to Foster Carers are investigated and actioned using Child Protection Procedures and are reported to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), under the procedures for Managing Allegations against people who work with children or who are in a position of trust. Foster Carers are offered independent support during this process which can be accessed via their Fostering Supervising Social worker.

## NUMBERS OF ALLEGATIONS AND THEIR OUTCOMES

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 3 children (2 sisters placed together and one young person – not connected to the other children - placed alone) became subject to child protection procedures following concerns raised by people external to the Foster Care home. One situation was triggered by an incident which occurred outside the Carer's home and the other was an allegation from family members about the nature of the relationship between Foster Carer and the young person in her care. The situations were investigated under S47. One investigation was alleging emotional abuse and one was sexual. The recommendation of the S.47 will inform the Foster Carer's review and will be presented to Fostering Panel for consideration. In the first instance the Foster Carers are being monitored in relation to the concern and in the second the allegation was 'unfounded'.



# Procedures and Processes for Recruiting, Approving, Training, Supporting and Reviewing Carers

## RECRUITMENT

### PUBLICITY

Hartlepool's recruitment strategy is reviewed annually. Enquirers are asked where they obtained the contact details of the service and this information is analysed in order to target specific campaigns.

The team has worked closely with the Public Marketing and Media Team and posters, roadside banners, business cards and leaflets are being displayed in council and public buildings in the town, local advertising and editorials in Hartlepool's 'Hartbeat' publication, 'Live Local' and the council's website. There have also been videos on social media featuring Foster Carers and young people previously cared for, sharing their experiences. Publicity materials reflect our brand, and the Mockingbird logo which we hope will assist in our efforts to attract new carers.

### RESPONSE TO ENQUIRIES

Enquiries regarding fostering are responded to quickly. An Information pack is normally sent within one day of the enquiry being received. Once a response slip is received from the enquirer a home visit is normally made within three to five working days. Information about the assessment process is given and information about the family is gathered, including their motivation to foster. They are asked to make a formal registration of interest to proceed to stage 1 of the assessment process. If no response is received within 4-6 weeks then a further contact is made to ascertain their wishes and reason for delaying or withdrawing. If the potential applicants do not respond in a further 4 weeks then the record will be closed. In relation to Connected Carers, there is an additional process which relates to immediate placement of children (under Regulation 24).

## ASSESSMENT

### STAGE ONE

Stage 1 of the process to become an approved Foster Carer can last 8 weeks. The registration of interest form is signed to give consent to proceed and for statutory checks to be completed for all relevant people in the household. Once this has been completed and returned, the applicants are required to undergo a number of statutory checks including an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check, local authority checks and current employer. The purpose of these checks is to safeguard children to be placed. Personal references are also completed.

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

A Medical examination is carried out by the applicant's doctor using the Coram BAAF medical form and returned to the Hartlepool Medical Adviser for comments and a recommendation regarding suitability to foster.

All applicants are required to attend a 3 day preparation course. The preparation training undertaken uses the Fostering Network's Skills to Foster programme including, Skills to Foster, Child Development, Separation and Loss, Attachment, Working Together, Safer Care, Moving On, Life Work, PACE, a description of the Secure Base Model of Foster Care and Mockingbird. There is an evaluation at the end of the course and applicants are requested to give feedback.

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

## STAGE TWO

Stage two assessment has seen the service develop and implement use of a template (for Connected Carers) which includes all stages of the potential placement a child or young person, with information to inform viability, regulation 24, Fostering and SGO processes. The Fostering Team completes the assessments of 'mainstream' carers using the Integrated Children's System (ICS). The topics covered for all assessments include; personal background, history and experiences; parenting experiences; birth children's views; the home environment, including dog/pet safety and; the applicant's own contributions. In addition to the assessment sessions with the applicants and their family, at least 2 personal referees are interviewed, as are the ex-partners of the applicants where it has been agreed that there was a 'significant' relationship. Children of the applicants living elsewhere will also be interviewed, with the agreement of their carer or their own agreement.

When all necessary material is available, the Form F is completed by the social worker using contributions from the prospective Foster Carer. The report is read and signed by the prospective Foster Carer and is presented to the Fostering Panel which usually meets once every 3 weeks. Prospective Foster Carers are encouraged to attend the Panel meeting when the application is discussed. The Fostering Panel considers the report and makes a recommendation regarding the application. This recommendation is then approved (or not) by the Agency Decision Maker. Prospective Foster Carers are then notified in writing of the outcome of their application

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

## SUPPORT

Once a Foster Carer has been approved by Panel they complete a Foster Carer agreement and are provided given access the policies and procedures relating to the service and to the Foster Carer Handbook. All Foster Carers are allocated a Supervising Social Worker from the Fostering Service. This person will visit the Foster Carers, provide formal supervision on a monthly basis or at an agreed level dependent upon the needs of the child/young person currently in placement and carer's experience and capability. They will also provide directly, or facilitate access to, any practical, emotional or professional support required.

Foster Carers are provided with equipment to enable them to care for a child. Foster Carers will be invited to attend a bi-monthly support group that is facilitated by the Fostering Team. The group is an opportunity to build networks of support with other carers, exchange ideas about fostering and to have the opportunity to hear guest speakers on a variety of relevant subjects. This provides a valuable forum for carers to be updated regarding service developments and to network with other professionals.

The Fostering Service operates a duty system within office hours which is staffed by a fostering service worker. Foster Carers can access support and advice from this worker if their allocated worker is not available. An out of hours telephone support service is also provided additional to the Emergency Duty Team arrangements which are in place. This telephone support is provided by the Heads of Service for Children's Services. .

All Foster Carers receive full membership of Fostering Network and access to an independent advice and mediation service should an allegation be made against them.

The Fostering Service liaises with the Foster Carers about any matters which may impact upon their role and consults with them about any necessary or proposed changes. Foster Carers contribute to any changes or developments within the service. The Fostering Service arranges a yearly Celebration event

to recognise the efforts of the all carers and specifically to give thanks to the longest serving Foster Carers. Most importantly, the event aims to demonstrate our gratitude to all our carers for their dedication and commitment to the children of Hartlepool who are cared for.

The fostering service has a Foster Carer Charter and this sets out the local authority's responsibilities to approved Foster Carers and what it will provide to carers including all support and information. It also sets out the Foster Carers' responsibilities, detailing the expectation of Carers being committed to working in partnership with the local Authority to provide the best possible care for our children and to pursue learning and their personal and service development so that there is continuous improvement.

## TRAINING

An annual training schedule details and supports the provision of sufficient and regular training opportunities for Foster Carers, during the approval process and throughout their Fostering career.

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

Foster Carers are required to complete the Training Support and Development Standards (TSDS) workbook and all new Foster Carers will be required to undertake this piece of work within the first twelve months of their approval, or 18 months for Connected Foster Carers. Foster Carers will have the opportunity to be supported on an individual basis to complete the workbook by their Supervising Social Worker. There is also the opportunity for carers to be mentored by more experienced carers.

Foster Carers are required to complete a training portfolio and their Supervising Social Workers supports each carer to ensure they have a Personal Development Plan which is reviewed as part of the Foster Carer's annual review.

Foster Carers are given support and encouragement to attend all training events that are relevant to their role. Wherever possible Foster Carers and staff attend the same training to enhance partnership working and to ensure the best care is offered to children and young people. Carers are given information about training provided corporately, through Children's and Joint Commissioning Services.

## REVIEW

The registration of all Foster Carers is reviewed on an annual basis. The views of the Foster Carer are sought, together with the views of children and placing Social workers via end of placement reports and within the review documentation. The supervising social worker is responsible for collating the information and adding their own views based on the experience of, and outcomes for, children and young people who have been placed with the carer during the review period. The Supervising Social Worker will also use their observations of the carer during visits and supervision to provide an analysis of, and recommendation about, the Carer's suitability to continue in the role.

The first review is normally held after twelve months and then annually thereafter. Reviews are chaired by Reviewing Officers who are independent of the Fostering Service. The review report is presented to the Fostering Panel by the supervising social worker for consideration after the first review and if there is a proposal to change the terms of approval or recommendation of de-registration, or after an allegation or complaint. Foster Carers have the option to attend panel.

The registration and approval of Foster Carers may be reviewed by Panel at any time if there are changes of circumstances or events which indicate that Foster Carers are no longer suitable to care for children.

## CONFIDENTIALITY AND CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Foster Carers are provided with full information about the children placed with them and are expected to observe high standards of confidentiality. As an agency we maintain records on carers and looked after children, who are subject to National Standards and General Data Protection Legislation (Data

Protection Act 2018) known as GDPR. Staff and Foster Carers are expected to declare any potential conflicts of interest, as are panel members.

## DE-REGISTRATION

Most Foster Carers voluntarily withdraw from the fostering task. The details of their resignation are placed before the Fostering Panel and their de-registration is formally recorded.

There are occasions when the registration of a Foster Carer is reviewed with a view to considering the options available, i.e. changes to terms of approval or de- registration. Foster Carers are offered the opportunity to submit a response or attend the Fostering Panel in these circumstances. If the Foster Carer is unhappy with the decision reached, they are also able to request a review of the decision or to have their case addressed by the Independent Review Mechanism.

## THE FOSTERING PANEL

The Fostering Agency is required by the Fostering Services Regulations to establish a Fostering Panel. The membership, role and functions of the panel are prescribed within the Regulations. Panel membership is drawn from a central list of members and quoracy dictates that at least five members are present in order to conduct business. These members must comprise the chair or vice chair, 2 social work representatives and, where the chair is not present and the vice chair who is present is not independent of the Social Work Agency, at least one of the other panel members must be independent of the Agency. Panels must also have access to medical and legal advice as required.

Hartlepool's Fostering Panel normally meets once every three weeks and considers assessments of prospective Foster and Connected Persons Foster Carers, extensions to Regulation 24 assessments, annual reviews of carers, de-registrations and issues in relation to Foster Carers. Although not a requirement within the regulations the Fostering Panel also considers the plan for a child for long term fostering and also matching children long term with carers. The business of the Panel is formally recorded.

The Fostering Panel makes recommendations that are presented to the Agency Decision Maker for consideration. These decisions are recorded and notified in writing to the prospective/existing Foster Carers.

Foster Carers who disagree with the Panel decision regarding their approval, de-registration or changes to category of approval will have the opportunity to request a review of the decision made by the Fostering Panel either through the agency or through the Independent Review Mechanism, which is provided by Coram Children's Legal Centre on behalf of the Department for Education.

The Hartlepool Borough Council Fostering Panel policy and procedures document provides additional information regarding the constitution and running of the panel.

## APPENDIX 1

### RELEVANT LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS AND STAFF

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

- Fostering Service Regulations 2011
- The National Minimum Standards for Fostering Services 2011 from section 23 of the Care Standards Act 2000
- Children Act Guidance and Regulations Volume 4: Fostering Services (2011)
- Family and Friends Care: Statutory Guidance for local authorities 2010.
- GDPR April 2018.



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

#### **NMS 2011 STANDARD 16**

- 16.1 The fostering service has a clear statement of purpose which is available to and understood by Foster Carers, staff and children and is reflected in any policies, procedures and guidance. It is available to the responsible authority and any parent or person with parental responsibility.
- 16.2 The aims and objectives of the statement of purpose are child focused and show how the service will meet outcomes for children.

#### **THE CHILDREN ACT 1989 GUIDANCE AND REGULATIONS VOLUME 4: FOSTERING SERVICES (2011)**

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

that the service is at all times conducted in a manner consistent with the Statement of Purpose.

## APPENDIX 2


### NUMBERS, RELEVANT QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF STAFF AS AT 1 APRIL 2023

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

NAME & STATUS	DATE OF APPOINTMENT in Fostering Team			QUALIFICATIONS	RELEVANT EXPERIENCE
Lisa Cushlow Head of Service	01	09	20	DIPSW – 2006 BA – Specialist Social Work (children and families) 2013	Team Manager – Safeguarding Assistant Team Manager Safeguarding Social Worker – safeguarding Social Worker Fostering Family Support Worker
Jane Wilson Team Manager	07	01	19	CSS 1987 CMS 2001	Instructor – Adults with Learning Difficulties Safeguarding Social Worker Team Manager Fostering Head of Service for Looked after children, Care Leavers, Adoption and Fostering Panel Adviser
Jane Lane Assistant Team Manager	14	03	16	DIPSW (2003) HCPC Registered	Early help Safeguarding Family Placement Social Worker Children & Families Supervising social worker

Laura Jeffreys – Social Worker and SGO Lead	17	05	21	DIPSW and Masters Sociology Degree Degree (2005) PQ1 (2006)	SGO Lead IRO Social Worker Safeguarding Permanence Social Worker
Charlotte Austin Social Worker	07	10	13	BSC Hons in SW and LD Nursing 1:1 Practice Educator	Fostering Social Worker Children and families/children with disabilities
Leanne Johnson Social Worker	01	10	17	BA (Hons) in Social Worker July 2011	Children's Safeguarding Drug and alcohol practitioner Family Placement Social Worker
Alison Bousfield Social Worker – Connected Care Lead	01	07	17	MA in Social Work BSc (Hons) Sociology	Fostering Social Worker Children & Families Social Work Safeguarding Senior Practitioner Safeguarding Team
Jolene Lyons Support Officer	25	06	19	NVQ 1, 2 and 3 in Business Administration – July 2016 Foundation Degree in Business Management 2021	Fostering - Children's and Commissioned Services
Emma Howarth Social Worker – Family Finder	01	10	11	BA (Hons) Early Childhood Studies degree	Social Worker Family Finder Family Resource Worker
Joanne Colledge Social Worker	08	06	18	BSc in Social Work 2013	Fostering Social Worker Safeguarding SW Family Support Worker
Suzanne Rayment Social Worker – Connected Care Lead	04	05	21	BA (Hons) Social Work 2010	Social Worker Fostering Safeguarding SW
Ellie Woolliss Social Worker	04	01	22	BA (Hons) Social Work June 2022	Social Worker – Fostering Supported Living and fostering placements

Moira Spencer Social Worker	03	08	20	BA (Hons) Social Work (2012)	Social Worker – Fostering Social Worker – cared for, care leavers Lead n UASC Personal Advisor – Care Leavers Sessional Worker for Care Leavers
Amanda Watcham Social Worker	09	09	19	BA (Hons) Social Work (2013)	Fostering Social Worker Social Worker Children with disabilities
Paul Reynolds Social Worker – Mockingbird Lead	19	08	19	Masters in Social Work (2013)	Fostering Social Worker Social Worker children with disabilities Looked After children's SW Social Worker- safeguarding Adult Mental Health Social Worker
Beth Burnside Social Worker	10	08	21	BA Hons in Social Work (2012) Masters Credits (2016)	Safeguarding Social Worker 4 years Throughcare 5 years Fostering 1 year
Claire Gibbon Social Worker – Connected Care Lead	11	10	22		Safeguarding Social Specialist Social Worker (Families Forward) Assistant Team Manager Fostering



The Fostering service aims to provide information on caring for children and young people. This leaflet will give you information about what to expect.

## CONTACT US

Through Care Team  
01429 405588



# A FOSTERING GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Who are cared for by Hartlepool Borough Council



WE CARE ABOUT OUR CHILDREN, YOU COULD TOO

## What does fostering mean to you?

Fostering is a safe home with a caring family who look after children and young people. They will offer support and guidance, and make sure you are healthy, safe and secure.

## Going to live with a foster family

It may feel a little strange at first but your foster family will help you to settle in.

## Finding the right family for you

If you are unhappy living with your foster family you can tell your social worker.

It can take a while to feel settled in a new home, particularly if you have a lot of other things going on. Your social worker can help work out any difficulties.

## In your foster home you can expect:

- To have all your personal belongings
- A bedroom
- Someone to listen to your hopes and fears
- Space to put your things
- Pocket money
- Help with your education or training
- Celebrate your birthday and religious festivals
- Support to have contact with family and friends
- Develop your life story
- Attend review meetings where you will be able to talk about any concerns you may have.

## Education

We will do our best to make sure you can stay at the same school or college  
A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be developed with you.

Your PEP shows how well you are doing at school and gives you an opportunity to say what other educational activities you would like to be involved in.

## Health

You will have a health assessment to make sure you are in good health.  
You will then have a yearly health assessment with a nurse or a doctor.  
You will be registered with a GP, and attend the dentists and opticians regularly.

## Independent Visitors and Advocates

An independent visitor is someone who works for an Independent Organisation to help support you with your concerns and to give you advice

You are entitled to an independent visitor they can attend your reviews with you  
The independent visitor will come out to your home and get to know you

## Complaints and concerns

You can discuss any concerns or worries you may have with your social worker.

Children and Young People have a right to complain.

If you would like to make a complaint you can contact the complaints officer on:

**01429 284020**

email to:

**[cas.complaints@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:cas.complaints@hartlepool.gcsx.gov.uk)**





# Foster Carers Training Programme 2022-2023



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## Application Process

Please email [CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk) or [HSSCP@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:HSSCP@hartlepool.gov.uk) to apply for a place stating the course title with date/time and your name, payroll number, post title, contact telephone number and email address (your manager's should be cc'd into your email request). Please reserve the course date in your diary. Once your application has been processed and if a place is allocated to you, you will be notified via the email address you have provided as confirmation of your booking.

**Joining instructions and confirmation of your place will be sent by electronic meeting invite to the email address provided.** (Please note: all sessions will be held in the Hartlepool area unless otherwise stated).

**Please do not share course information, only attend a session if you have applied for a place and been sent an invitation or confirmation of place.**

**Children's and Joint Commissioning Services  
Adult and Community Based Services**

## **FOSTER CARER INFORMATION**

### **For training purposes**

Hartlepool Borough Council  
Level 4, Civic Centre,  
Hartlepool, TS24 8AY

Tel: 01429 523051

Email: [CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)



We will process the information you provide on this form in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Hartlepool Borough Council currently processes your personal information for the purpose of the administration and monitoring of training provision and for statistical and evaluation purposes. The information you provide will be stored securely and will only be used for the purposes identified. For further information on how the Council process your information please see our privacy notice at [www.hartlepool.gov.uk/privacy-notices](http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/privacy-notices). It is important that you read our privacy notice so that you are aware of how and why we process your personal information. If you have any questions on how we process your data please contact the Data Protection Officer, Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY tel:01429 523087 or email [dataprotection@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:dataprotection@hartlepool.gov.uk)

Once this form is completed and returned you can book onto any training provided by CAS Workforce Development ([CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)) or HSSCP ([HSSCP@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:HSSCP@hartlepool.gov.uk)) using your HBC email address.

Name(s)	
Address	
Postcode	
Contact Tel No:	
HBC Email: ( <b>Please note:</b> this email will be used for all correspondence regarding training)	
Special requirements we need to be aware of (eg. Access, learning support, communication, etc):	
Supervising Social Worker:	

## **SIGNATURES**

Signature(s):		
Date:		
Please post your completed form and return in the SAE provided		
<p><b>Please note: A recharge of £50 is in place for cancellations less than 5 days/non-attendance.</b></p> <p><b>Recharge waivers will be considered on an individual basis.</b></p>		

## Emergency First Aid (Mandatory)

### Dates

### Times

27 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	9.30 am – 4.00 pm
15 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	9.30 am – 4.00 pm
21 <sup>st</sup> and 28 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	5.00 pm – 8.00 pm (Both sessions to be attended)
26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022	9.30 am – 4.00 pm
7 <sup>th</sup> October 2022	9.30 am – 4.00 pm
10 <sup>th</sup> January 2023	9.30 am – 4.00 pm
9 <sup>th</sup> February 2023	9.30 am – 4.00 pm
6 <sup>th</sup> March 2023	9.30 am – 4.00 pm

### Overview:

### Delivered by: Orangebox Training Solutions

Orangebox Training Solutions

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Information Governance (Security) for Foster Carers Training (Mandatory)

### Dates

### Times

9<sup>th</sup> January 2023

10 am – 11 am (Zoom)

14<sup>th</sup> February 2023

11 am – 12 noon (Zoom)

14<sup>th</sup> March 2023

10 am – 11 am (Zoom)

**These sessions will be held over Teams. The link will be provided on application. Please do not share the link, you need to apply for a place individually.**

### Overview:

These Virtual sessions will take no more than 1 hour and will include the following content:

- Information security policies and the GDPR;
- Holding, transferring and sharing information;
- Secure emailing and encryption;
- Paper records and minimum document approach;
- Data losses and fines;
- Laptops, data sticks and mobile phones;

There will also be an opportunity to ask questions at the end of the session concerning any queries you may have in relation to information security

Face to face refresher period is every 2 years – online refresher will be available soon and will be alternate year to the face to face

### Delivered by:

Departmental Childrens Information Governance Lead – Kay Forgie

**Applications should be sent to**  
**[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)**

## Online Safety and Cyber Bullying/Dark Web

### Dates

21<sup>st</sup> April 2022

### Times

6.30 pm – 8.30 pm (Zoom)

### Overview:

Most children use the Internet positively but they can sometimes behave in ways that may place themselves at risk. Knowing the potential risks and being able to encourage responsible and safe use of the internet is vital to help safeguard children online.

This course is intended for all users of the Internet who work with or care for children.

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert, AML Training Solutions

**Applications should be sent to**  
**[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)**

# Safeguarding Children Level 1 (Foundation) (Mandatory)

## Overview:

This course will help to ensure that all people working with or who have contact with children and young people are equipped to carry out their safeguarding responsibilities effectively.

## Audience

This Safeguarding Children (Level 1) course bundle is intended for staff who fall into the following work groups:

Group 1: Staff who are in infrequent contact with children, young people and / or parents / carers and who may become aware of possible abuse or neglect.

Group 2: Those in regular contact or have a period of intense but irregular contact, with children, young people and / or parents / carers, who may be in a position to identify concerns about maltreatment, including those that may arise from the use of a common / early help assessment.

Please note: if you fall within the three work groups outlined below, you would need to complete additional training.

Group 3: Members of the workforce who work predominantly with children, young people and/or their parents/carers and who could potentially contribute to assessing, planning, intervening and reviewing the needs of a child and parenting capacity where there are safeguarding concerns.

Group 4: Members of the workforce who are responsible for making safeguarding referrals to the Police and Children's Social Care

Group 5: Members of the workforce who have particular responsibilities in relation to undertaking section 47 enquiries, including professionals police and children's social care; those who work with complex cases and social work staff responsible for co-ordinating assessments of children in need.

**Course Duration:** 2 hrs 15 minutes online

**Course link:** <https://teeswide.melearning.university/> (Self registration)

## Safeguarding Children Level 2 (Intermediate) (Mandatory)

### Overview

This Safeguarding Children (Level 2) course bundle is intended for everyone who makes or who could potentially make onward safeguarding referrals to the Police and Children's Social Care.

In addition to completing this course learners should read the Safeguarding Procedures section of the [Tees Safeguarding Children Procedures](#) website.

**Course Duration:** 2 hrs online

**Course link:** <https://teeswide.melearning.university/> (Self registration)

## Foster Carer Recording

### Dates

6<sup>th</sup> September 2022

2<sup>nd</sup> November 2022

### Times

9.15 am – 2.15 pm

5.00 pm – 8.00 pm

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Paul Reynolds

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)



# Autism: All you want to know but never dare ask!

## Dates

**1<sup>st</sup> March 2023**

## Times

**9.30 am – 4.30 pm**

## Overview:

The trainer offers up an interesting first person perspective and insight into some of the areas that are little talked about by many people in mainstream society. The trainer, Steve has a 15 year old son; both he and his son are both on the autistic spectrum and high functioning.

## On completion of the course participants will develop an understanding of:

- Difficulties experienced by individuals on the autism spectrum – facial recognition
- Being literal – say what you mean, mean what you say
- Sensory integration awareness
- Behaviour that challenges

## Target Group:

All Child and Adult Workforce (Multi-agency) and Parents/Carers

**Delivered by:** Steve McGuinness – MSITUA – Autism Consultancy

**Applications should be sent to**  
**[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)**

## Supporting Children experiencing Bereavement/Grief and Loss

### Dates

### Times

10<sup>th</sup> May and 17<sup>th</sup> May 2022      10 am – 2.30 pm

21<sup>st</sup> June and 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022      10 am – 2.30 pm

**(Both sessions must be attended)**

### Overview:

The course is run by the Jo and Mya Education Project. Adults are often worried about saying the wrong thing. The course aims to help you:

Develop confidence by providing both knowledge and resources  
To identify children and young people who require more specialist intervention and make appropriate referrals.

### On completion of the course participants will develop an understanding of:

- How children grieve
- The role attachment plays in this process
- Murder, manslaughter, suicide and the impact this can have
- Special Educational Needs
- Cultural differences in loss and grief

**Delivered by:** Alice House Hospice (Jo and Mya Project)

**Please book your place by discussing with your Supervising Social Worker.**

**Note to Supervising Social Workers** – please take full details of Foster Carer who wishes to book a place and email [CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Pace Training

### Dates

### Times

24 <sup>th</sup> May 2022	9.30 am – 12.30 pm
6 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	1.00 pm – 4.00 pm
9 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	9.30 am – 12.30 pm
14 <sup>th</sup> June 2022	1.00 pm – 4.00 pm
22 <sup>nd</sup> June 2022	9.30 am -12.30 pm
	1.00 pm – 4.00 pm
15.3.23	9.30 am – 12.30 pm

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Emma Rutherford (Virtual School Head)

**Applications should be sent to**  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

# Safer Caring, Understanding Allegations and Standards of Care

**Dates**

**Times**

TBC

**Overview:**

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert, AML Training Solutions

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Advanced Blended Trauma Informed Practice and Attachment Disorder

### Dates

### Times

24<sup>th</sup> January 2023

9.30 am – 12.30 pm (Zoom)

7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

9.30 am – 12.30 pm (Zoom)

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert AML Training Solutions

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Managing Placement Breakdown

### Dates

12<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### Times

10 am – 12 noon (Zoom)

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert AML Training Solutions

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Caring for Larger Sibling Groups

### Dates

21<sup>st</sup> November 2022

21<sup>st</sup> February 2023

### Times

10 am – 12 noon (Zoom)

10 am – 12 noon (Zoom)

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert AML Training Solutions

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## De-Escalation

### Dates

29th September 2022

### Times

10 am – 12 noon (Zoom)

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert AML Training Solutions

**Applications should be sent to**  
**[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)**



## Trauma Informed Practice

### Dates

4<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### Times

10 am – 12 noon (Zoom)

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert AML Training Solutions

**Applications should be sent to**  
**[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)**

## My Meeting My Plan Briefing

### Dates

10<sup>th</sup> May 2022

### Times

10.00 am – 11.00 am

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Jill Lambert/Mike Hackett

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Compassion Fatigue

### Dates

23<sup>rd</sup> May 2022

### Times

10 am – 12 noon (Zoom)

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert AML Training Solutions

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Self Harming Behaviour

### Dates

7<sup>th</sup> June 2022

### Times

12.00 noon – 2.00 pm (Zoom)

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert AML Training Solutions

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## Advanced Blended Trauma Informed Practice and Attachment Disorder

### Dates

### Times

24<sup>th</sup> January 2023

9.30 am – 12.30 pm (Zoom)

7<sup>th</sup> March 2023

9.30 am – 12.30 pm (Zoom)

### Overview:

**Delivered by:** Andy Limbert AML Training Solutions

Applications should be sent to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)

## E Learning

Self Register for your free training at:

[https://teeswide.melearning.university/course\\_centre](https://teeswide.melearning.university/course_centre)

### Courses Available:

- 01. Safeguarding Adults - Level 1 v2
- 02. Safeguarding Adults - Level 2
- 03. Safeguarding Adults in Health and Social Care Training Course
- 04. Safeguarding Against Radicalisation - The Prevent Duty
- 05. Safeguarding Children - for Education - Level 1
- 06. Safeguarding Children - Foundation **(Mandatory)**
- 07. Safeguarding Children - Intermediate **(Mandatory)**
- 08. Safeguarding Children with Disabilities
- 09. Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)
- 10. Mental Capacity Act
- 11. Self Neglect and SARs
- 12. Trauma Informed Practice
- 13. Abuse Related to Beliefs in Witchcraft
- 14. Adult Sexual Exploitation
- 15. Bullying and Cyberbullying
- 16. Child Sexual Exploitation
- 17. Common Assessment Framework (CAF or Early Help)
- 18. Sexual Abuse and Recognising Grooming - Children
- 19. Domestic Abuse and Intimate Partner Violence
- 20. Neglect - Children
- 21. Effective Communication with Children and Families
- 22. Equality and Diversity
- 23. Gangs and Youth Violence
- 24. Hate Crime
- 25. Hidden Harm: Parental Substance Misuse, Parental Mental Ill-Health and Domestic Abuse

- 26. Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery
- 27. Information Sharing and Consent
- 28. Missing Children
- 29. Physical Abuse - Children
- 30. Privacy and Dignity - for Health and Social Care
- 31. Self-Harm / suicidal - children
- 32. Honour-Based Violence and Forced Marriage
- 33. Female Genital Mutilation
- 34. Unconscious Bias
- 35. Multi-Agency Working
- 36. Suicide Prevention
- 37. Safeguarding Adult Refresher
- 38. Safeguarding Children Refresher
- 39. Loneliness and Isolation
- 40. Dementia Awareness
- 41. Substance Misuse
- 42. Human Rights Act 1998
- 43. Criminal Exploitation and County Lines
- 44. Online Safety - Risks to Children **(Mandatory)**

## Other Training Resources

**For further information please go to:**

<https://hscp.co.uk/professionals/page/51>

**Email: [HSCPtraining@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:HSCPtraining@hartlepool.gov.uk)**

**Tel: 01429 523825**



## SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN TRAINING APPLICATION

Applicants Name in Full: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Applicants Job Title: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Name of Organisation: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Workplace Address (including postcode) <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Workplace Tel No: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Workplace Email: <input type="text"/> (Please note: this email will be used for all correspondence regarding this training request)	<input type="text"/>
Special requirements we need to be aware of (eg. Access, learning support, communication, etc): <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Line Manager's Name: <input type="text"/> Line Manager's Email: <input type="text"/> (Please note: this email is required for us to obtain information from your manager regarding your attendance at this course)	<input type="text"/>

## COURSE DETAILS

Course/Workshop: <input type="text"/>	Title: <input type="text"/>	Preferred Date: <input type="text"/>
PLEASE NOTE: By attending this course you agree to complete an impact on working practice evaluation.		
PLEASE NOTE: Once your training application has been processed, you will receive a calendar invite containing the link to access the training / details of the venue. This will mean that your email address will be visible to the other attendees of the course. If you do not wish for your email address to be visible to other attendees, please contact HSSCP Training via <a href="mailto:hsscptraining@hartlepool.gov.uk">hsscptraining@hartlepool.gov.uk</a> and we will organise for the link to be sent to you via an alternative method.		

## SIGNATURES

I consent to the information on this form being shared with accredited organisations and agencies who deliver the HSSCP training. (We will share this information as part of the registration process for HSSCP training and provide trainers with your name and email address).		Yes / No <input type="text"/>
Signature of Applicant: <input type="text"/> (Your signature is required to enable us to process this application)	<input type="text"/> Typed names cannot be accepted as signatures. Please sign over this text or replace with an electronic signature.	Date: <input type="text"/>
Signature of Line Manager: <input type="text"/> (Line managers signature is required to approve your application and claim any associated costs)	<input type="text"/> Typed names cannot be accepted as signatures. Please sign over this text or replace with an electronic signature.	<input type="text"/>
We will process the information you provide on this form in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018. Hartlepool Borough Council currently processes your personal information for the purpose of the administration and monitoring of HSSCP training provision and for statistical and evaluation purposes. The information you provide will be stored securely and will only be used for the purposes identified. For further information on how the Council process your information please see our privacy notice at <a href="http://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/privacy-notices">www.hartlepool.gov.uk/privacy-notices</a> . It is important that you read our privacy notice so that you are aware of how and why we process your personal information. If you have any questions on how we process your data please contact the Data Protection Officer, Hartlepool Borough Council, Civic Centre, Hartlepool TS24 8AY tel: 01429 523087 or email <a href="mailto:dataprotection@hartlepool.gov.uk">dataprotection@hartlepool.gov.uk</a> . You can withdraw your consent to the sharing of your information with accredited organisations and agencies at any time by contacting the Data Protection Officer, using the contact details above.		

## INVOICE/RECHARGE DETAILS (TO BE COMPLETED FOR ALL COURSE APPLICATIONS)

Invoice Organisation: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Invoice Address: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Is a Purchase Order required from your organisation prior to submitting our invoice? <input type="text"/>	Yes / No (If Yes please provide the contact details to obtain this.) <input type="text"/>
Email Address for your Finance Dept: <input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
Please return your completed application to Hartlepool & Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP) Children's and Joint Commissioning Services, CETL, Brierton Lane, Hartlepool, T S25 4AF or if electronic signatures are used via email to <a href="mailto:HSSCPtraining@hartlepool.gov.uk">HSSCPtraining@hartlepool.gov.uk</a> Please note: This training is free to employees of those organisations who financially contribute to the HSSCP (for all other organisations please refer to the HSSCP Charging Policy), however, a recharge of £50 is in place for ALL cancellations made within one week of the event or non-attendance.	

## Free Training Resources

### Open University:

[Free courses - OpenLearn - Open University](#)

Sign up for an account at: [IAM - Open University](#)

For further information please contact:

- 1) For OpenLearn account creation issues email [OU-computing-helpdesk@open.ac.uk](mailto:OU-computing-helpdesk@open.ac.uk).
- 2) For all other OpenLearn queries email [openlearn@open.ac.uk](mailto:openlearn@open.ac.uk)

### Middlesbrough College:

[Course Search | Middlesbrough College \(mbro.ac.uk\)](#)

For further information please contact: [distancelearning@mbro.ac.uk](mailto:distancelearning@mbro.ac.uk).

**Please forward any certificates to  
[CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk](mailto:CASWORKFORCEDEVELOPMENT@hartlepool.gov.uk)  
so they can be added to your CPD record.**

## Foster Carer Support Groups

Date	Time	Venue	Speaker
3.5.22	10 – 11.30 am	CETL	My Meeting My Plan
14.7.22	10 – 11.30 am	CETL	NYAS
12.10.22	10 – 11.30 am	CETL	Child Parent Relationship Therapy
15.11.22	10 – 11.30 am	CETL	Hart Gables
10.01.23	10 – 11.30am	CETL	Jill Blackett – Hart Drugs Services
14.2.23	5.30pm- 7pm	CETL	Let's Connect – Participation Team
7.3.23	10 – 11.30am	CETL	Jane Wilson and Jane Lane – sharing Fostering Quarterly Reports and 'State of the Nation' for HBC Fostering

## Useful Information:

### Dates for your diary:

## Notes

*Training and Development Team, Quality and Review, Hartlepool Borough Council, Level 4, Civic Centre, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS24 8AY*

