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**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

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1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has undertaken :-

**Behaviour and Attendance Partnership**

2. Pat Howarth, Head Teacher of Hummersknott Academy and the Chair of the Darlington Behaviour and Attendance Partnership gave Members a very interesting and informative presentation to outline the work and role of the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership which consists of secondary and primary schools, further education schools, Darlington Borough Council, Education Other than At School (EOTAS) Services, Behaviour Support and the voluntary sector and meets on a half term basis.
3. The aim of the Partnerships is to ensure that all students receive appropriate full time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have by regular attendance at school, college, academy or otherwise through a Fair Access Protocol which ensures all follow the agreed process and to reduce the number of permanent exclusions to zero and improve attendance. The Partnership aims to enable services to work together to achieve these goals and Mr. Howarth outlined the achievements of the Partnership to date which included helping the Phoenix Centre out of special measures; having only four permanent exclusions in 2011/12; encouraging all secondary schools to become engaged and reducing service costs; and managing budgets supporting school provision. A Review of Special Education Needs across Darlington has also been undertaken.
4. Following the presentation Members' questions related to the review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) across Darlington and how this will work in an Academy situation; and what mechanisms could be put into place to encourage the Heads to remain as a collective body and to sustain the good work that is currently being achieved. It was suggested that a way forward could be to encourage involvement of School Governors in the Partnership.

**Youth Offending Service**

5. As part of the commitment from all Scrutiny Committees to scrutinise Community Safety, we received a presentation from Joanne Benson, Head of Youth Offending Service to gain a better understanding of the Darlington Youth Offending Service.
6. The Presentation outlined the Youth Justice System national priorities and challenges; local priorities and challenges aimed at reducing First Time Entrants

year on year and embedding further restorative justice work to improve confidence and victim satisfaction; performance against National and Local Indicators; offending analysis for 2011/2; statistics relating to first time entrants by year; 2011/12 achievements which include significant reductions in the numbers of young people dealt with by the Youth Offending Service who were NEET (Not in Education or Training) and maintaining low custody levels for young people; the implications of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders (LASPO) Act which comes into force on 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 2012 and will bring about a single Remand Order for Youths which will apply to 12-17 year olds and local authorities to assume costs of all secure remands; and changes to the Youth Offending Services in light of the Police Crime Commissioners.

7. Members were particularly interesting in restorative justice processes; implications of the LASPO Act and in particular the financial implications to the authority; the work being undertaken with schools in relation to troubled families; and the implications of a number of Home Office grants which had previously been directed to the Youth Offending Service being redirected to the Police Crime Commissioners.

### **Early Intervention and Prevention – Update**

8. We received an update on the work of the Early Intervention Services following the Review undertaken by this Scrutiny Committee in April. Staff Teams are developing new ways of working, which aims to increase skills in family work. Traditional job demarcations are being eroded and teams have a close working relationship with a number of other key partners such as schools, General Practitioner's, police and social care and their role is to increase the early identification of children and families with additional needs that require support using a common assessment tool (CAF).
9. We were encouraged to learn that the number of assessments has increased and on target for a 50 per cent increase by March 2013; registrations in Children's Centres have increased by almost 65 per cent; and young people's participation and access to services remains high.
10. Areas of focus for 2012/13 are to work with the Commissioners from Health and the Council to further develop specifications of the service for 2013/14; to continue to develop the skills of individual workers to be confident in whole family problem solving; and to further develop the area model to include social workers who would work with families whose children are on the edge of care.
11. The Head of Family Support also outlined two case studies, one of a young man and the other of a young single mum who have turned their lives around by the help and support offered by the Early Intervention and Prevention Team. We will continue to receive updates on the work of the Team with interest.

12. **Work Programme** – We continue to give consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee and taking into account the ambitious programme of change across the Council and the key role of Scrutiny in ensuring that the programme is able to deliver the service improvements and the budget savings necessary.
13. Since the last meeting of Council I have attended various meeting with Officers.

**Councillor Eleanor Lister**  
**Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**