

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION REVIEW GROUP

13th FEBRUARY, 2012

PRESENT – Councillor Lister (in the Chair); Councillors Curry, L. Hughes, Lister, E.A. Richmond, C. Taylor and J. Vasey; and B. Egan.

OFFICERS – Jenni Cooke, Assistant Director Children, Families and Learning, David Mason, Acting Head of Family Support and Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

DISCUSSION –

- Members discussed why early intervention and prevention services was a priority for Darlington.
- There are currently 203 young people looked after by the Local Authority.
- There are approximately 103 children and young people subject to Child Protection Plans.
- The need to achieve substantial savings for the Council and Members examined the costs of the variety of interventions.
- Costs for Looked After Children can vary between £4-£5K a week for secure services and £2.5 per week for local residential care services.
- Members discussed how the costs of providing care services are broken down and were advised that the bulk of the charges are for staffing, some children and young people may require a minimum of two staff and also costs for other services i.e. psychologists, additional educational assistance.
- A breakdown of these costs to be examined at a future meeting.

GROUP EXERCISE –

Members undertook a group exercise with a genuine Case example (below) to examine and promote where they felt that interventions could have been put in place at an earlier stage and consider what a localised response could offer.

Case example - A 42 year old lone parent with moderate learning difficulties with a 4 year old child who was failing to thrive. Mother had not family or support and had limited understanding of child development and limited parenting skills. The child was still wearing nappies, being pushed in a

buggy and feeding from a bottle and was also showing a lack of social, emotional, physical and language development.

The exercise prompted discussion points below :-

- How do midwives and health visitors work together and pass on information?
- How do the integrated teams work together and do these include health visitors and health professionals?
- What are the functions of the various organisations?
- Should the mother's learning difficulties not have been flagged up during her education and kept on record for future reference or on her health notes?
- Had the family moved from another authority, which is why she had not family or support mechanism, and should this information have been passed on from the other authority?
- When does a troubled family/parent first 'hit the radar'?
- Is it possible to have a breakdown on when the Looked After Children of this authority first became known to the Local authority or social care in some way?
- Who is involved with the Common Assessment Framework and how does it work?
- How well are local relationships working?

NEXT MEETING –

It was agreed that at the next meeting Members would :-

- Examine in more detail Multi-agency working, integration of services and the main functions of each.
- Methods available for early identification of areas of concern.
- The Common Assessment Framework.
- Examine recent audit figures for children over 12 looked after in relation to how they entered 'the system'.

Members to also give consideration to who they may want to invite in to the next meeting i.e. midwives, health visitors.