
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

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

Schools

2. Firthmoor Academy and Mount Pleasant Primary School were both inspected by Ofsted on 3 and 4 July, both schools were rated as Grade 2: Good in every category.
3. Joy Venning, Head Teacher of Hurworth Primary School (Academy), retired in August. The Governing Body of the Academy School have entered into an agreement with Heathfield Primary School (Academy) for the provision of Leadership services from the Head Teacher, Nick Blackburn, from September 2013.
4. A new Head Teacher, Julie Davidson, has been appointed at Red Hall Primary School and Mrs Henderson joined the Education Village Academy Trust this month as the Head Teacher for Springfield Primary School.

Children Centres

5. Dodmire and Maidendale Children's Centre was inspected by Ofsted in July under the new framework for inspection which has a clear emphasis on practice and the outcomes for families. The Centre was rated 'good' in all three categories of inspection. The report highlighted the very strong focus of working with all professionals involved with families to offer the best package of support to meet their needs, as well as a strong emphasis on improving the life chances of families.

Children Looked After

6. The number of children Looked After by Darlington Borough Council was 182 on 31 July 2013. This figure represents 17 fewer children than at 31 May 2013. The decrease is attributable to some children becoming subject to Adoption and Special Guardianship Orders and some young people reaching the age of 18 years and therefore no longer Looked After. There has also been a decrease in the number of children becoming Looked After, linked to the work of Locality Family Support Teams and improved interagency working via the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

7. Ofsted Key Inspections for the 2013 Inspection Year have now been completed in all Darlington Borough Council's Homes. Gilling Children's Home was inspected in April; Eldon Children's Home in June and Dunrobin Children's Home in July. All three mainstream Homes retained ratings of 'Good' - or 'Good with Outstanding Features'. The Short Break Centre for Disabled Children was inspected in July and retained a rating of "Outstanding".

LSCB

8. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) held a development session in July; these are undertaken on a six monthly basis. One of the key components of the session was to consider how the LSCB will meet its responsibility in monitoring the effectiveness of 'early help and intervention', as stated in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2013). Dedicated time was given to this month's meeting in discussing the LSCB performance framework and specifically how the LSCB measures the effectiveness of 'early help'.
9. Another focus of the development session was in relation to LSCB members' roles and responsibilities. The membership and Terms of Reference have recently been reviewed. Prior to the meeting, Board members were asked to complete questionnaires covering how they met their roles and responsibilities. It also gave agencies opportunities to identify LSCB strengths and identify area for development for the LSCB.
10. In addition, the LSCB Annual Report is due to be signed off and will be disseminated across agencies in September, it will accessible via the LSCB web-site www.darlington.gov.uk/lscb.

Child Protection

11. At the end of June 2013, 57 children were subject to a child protection plan. 53 per cent as a result of neglect, 35 per cent as a result of emotional abuse (an increase against last quarter which was 12 per cent), and 7 per cent under the category of physical abuse (a slight decrease from 10 per cent over the last quarter), and 5 per cent as a result of sexual abuse (this is an increase against last quarter which was 2 per cent). The last quarter, January to March, showed a significant reduction in the number of Initial Child Protection Conferences held (ICPC's). In March 2013 there were no ICPC's held.
12. When aggregating the data on age groups, by the end of the year 2012 to 2013 45 per cent of all children subject to a child protection plan, under the category of neglect, are aged between 0-5 years. However, during this quarter, this has significantly reduced to 25 per cent.
13. With regard to risk factors, domestic abuse continues to be the largest single risk factor with it being a factor in 44 per cent of all registrations this quarter.

14. From 1 April 2013, 33 children have been removed from plans. 17 (52 per cent) of these children were no longer at risk of significant harm. 24 per cent were currently in foster care, and 12 per cent had moved out of Darlington.
15. In order to improve the 'voice of the child' within the conference arena, it is proposed that children and young people (over 11 years), unless they specify otherwise, will be automatically referred to National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS). The proposal will be considered by the LSCB.

Children and Young People's Collective

16. I met with the Children and Young People's Collective on 17 July 2013, where the theme was 'bridging the gap'. We discussed what is being done for young people not engaged in employment, education or training (NEETs). Fuller figures are due out later in the Autumn, it is expected that there will be a higher NEET figure during the summer as most young people who have left school will have not yet moved to on to college, training, 6th Form or employed. We then went on to have discussion with the Traveller Education Service about the education needs of young people from the Gypsy and Traveller community. We learned about the Service, based at Rydal Primary School, and some of the successes that they have had in working with families and young people to improve attainment. We had an update on the Foundation for Jobs and the linkages being developed between employers and schools, and it was reported that 1,569 pupils were in contact with industry in some way since March last year. For our final item, we had an update from colleagues in Healthwatch, and the survey that they are undertaking and how we might link schools into this too.

Meetings

17. Since the last meeting of Council, I have attended:
 - (a) End of year celebrations at St. Teresa's RC Primary School;
 - (b) End of year celebrations at Carmel College;
 - (c) Darlington Partnership Executive meetings;
 - (d) A meeting with young people who climbed 3 Peaks supported by targeted youth workers;
 - (e) A meeting with the Education Funding Agency;
 - (f) Director and officer briefings;
 - (g) Celebration evening at Kings Church for a yearly update on the work of a charity with providing youth workers in schools and villages in the borough;
 - (h) Meeting to discuss options for a local community centre;
 - (i) 1-1 on Children and Young People Collective with the Chief Executive of the Darlington Partnership;
 - (j) Chair of Governors/ Link Governors meeting;
 - (k) Musical evening showcasing young bands at Planet Leisure;
 - (l) Quarter 1 Performance Briefing (Children's Services);
 - (m) Budget Advisory Panel discussion;
 - (n) Health and Wellbeing Board;
 - (o) Children and Young People's Collective;

- (p) Met with the Head teacher of Polam Hall School;
- (q) Met with the Head teacher, Chair of Governors and Chair of Directors of Hummersknott Academy; and
- (r) Met with the Chief Executive of the Carmel Education Trust.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Children and Young People Portfolio