
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

1. Since the last meeting of Council the main areas of my work under the Children and Young People Portfolio were as follows:
2. **School Place Planning Arrangements: Basic Need Funding** – We have identified Mowden Infant and Junior School for future expansion to meet the demand for school places in the area and enable parents to express a choice of a local school. Since 2008 the authority has been experiencing a shortage of primary school places across the Borough with particular hot spots in certain areas of the town. This approval will allow for the continuation of feasibility work and public consultation and more detailed design of the project to commence.

Learning and Skills Service

3. Darlington Borough Council's Learning and Skills Service has made significant improvement in its provision since the previous inspection, at the recent January Inspection by Ofsted, the service was graded 'good' in all areas.
4. Partnerships were considered to be outstanding and Ofsted plan to visit the service again in the summer to highlight our Intensive Family Support as a Good Practice Example which may then be shared nationally.
5. The report highlighted the clear strategic direction of the service, which places a focus on high quality provision, particularly for the most vulnerable within the local community. The responsive and well-targeted learning helps make efficient use of the service's reduced resources and is supported by excellent partnerships. The service has been very successful in recruiting hard to reach learners who traditionally would not participate in learning activities and is particularly effective in supporting the most vulnerable. Learners have significantly improved their employability and social skills with many continuing in learning, gaining employment or becoming effective volunteers in their communities.

Ofsted Inspection

6. Following the Ofsted inspection, from 14 November to 25 November 2011, of safeguarding outcomes for children and young people and services for looked after children and care leavers, the report stated that vulnerable children and young people 'are safe and feel safe'.
7. The Inspection assessed safeguarding services provided by Darlington Borough Council; County Durham and Darlington NHS (Primary Care Trust); County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust; Tees, Esk and Wear Valley Foundation Trust; Durham Constabulary; and

any voluntary or private sector providing working with children and young people in the Borough.

8. Overall, the inspectors judged service provision to be adequate. Out of the eighteen outcomes judgements made, nine were graded as good and nine were graded as adequate. The areas identified as performing strongly related to partnership working, improved safeguarding performance indicators, children feeling and being safe, good outcomes for looked after children and care leavers, and the high priority and ambition for the children and young people in Darlington.
9. The Council, along with its partners are currently developing an action plan to address the areas identified as requiring an improvement, and to further enhance safeguarding and looked after services.

Ofsted Inspection Phoenix Centre

10. I am very pleased to report that an inspection at the Phoenix centre (Pupil referral unit) found provision to be satisfactory thereby moving the unit out of special measures. Congratulations to Headteacher, Kay Kelly and all the staff and young people for the hard work involved in these improvements. Darlington now has no schools in a special measures category

Troubled Families Initiative

11. Research has identified there are 120,000 'troubled families' with problems such as parents not working, mental health problems, and children not in school - and causes serious problems, such as crime and anti-social behaviour. All of which costs local services a lot of time and money routinely responding to these problems.
12. New figures estimate that £9 billion is being spent annually on these families (based on Government data collected in October and November 2011). That works out at £75,000 per family per year. £8 billion of this is spent on reacting to the troubles of these families with just £1 billion being spent trying to turn around their lives in a targeted, positive way.
13. It is estimated there are 275 'troubled families' in Darlington.
14. This programme will run primarily on a payment-by-results basis to incentivise local authorities and other partners to take action to turn around the lives of troubled families in their area by 2015. The Government will offer to pay up to 40 per cent of local authorities' costs of dealing with these families (Payment by Results Model) payable only when they and their partners achieve success with families.
15. Work has commenced in Darlington to identify the most 'troubled families' and develop a business plan to tackle the problems identified.

Local Safeguarding Children Board

16. The Local Safeguarding Children Board have recently identified their priorities for 2012-2013 :-

- (a) Neglect - development of multi-agency training and guidance for practitioners;
- (b) Sexual exploitation- raising the awareness of sexual exploitation with practitioners, settings and young people;
- (c) Domestic abuse and young people 'breaking the cycle' - working directly with practitioners, settings and young people.

17. The Business Plan and Annual Report will be published in April 2012, further details regarding the above priorities, including action plans will be included in the Business Plan. All documents will be available on the LSCB web-site www.darlington.gov.uk/lscb

Children Looked After

18. Darlington has the highest number of children subject to Adoption Orders and Special Guardianship Orders in the Region. In the period between 1st April 2011 and 6th February 2012, twelve Special Guardianship Orders and fourteen Adoption Orders were granted.
19. The number of children Looked After by Darlington Borough Council was 201 on 31 January 2012 (90 per 10,000 population). This represents an increase of 8 children since 31 December 2011.
20. The Ofsted Inspection of the Fostering Service has been announced and will commence on 19 March 2012.

Schools

21. Bishopton/Redmarshall CE Primary School was inspected by Ofsted on 18-19th January – the outcome was ‘Good’.
22. Whinfield Primary School was inspected by Ofsted on 7-8th February – the outcome was ‘Good’.

Child Protection

23. By the end of January 2012, 113 children were subject to child protection plans, with 75 children placed under the category of neglect, 17 under emotional abuse, 20 under physical abuse, and 1 child as a result of sexual abuse. When aggregating the data on age groups, 55 per cent of all children subject to a child protection plan are aged between 0-5 years old.
24. Domestic abuse continues to be a significant risk factor within child protection. Sixty-five percent of all children made subject to a plan, were at risk as a result of domestic abuse.
25. The Review and Development Unit has implemented ‘My Conference Pack’ which is an age specific document to ensure that the child’s views are central to the child protection process. The conference pack has been introduced as part of the LSCB training to ensure that professionals from all backgrounds can complete this piece of work with the children. The unit is now ensuring that as part of the plan, a professional is identified to complete this and forward to the Independent Chair in preparation for the conference.
26. The Unit have recently reviewed the Pre Birth Child Protection procedures to improve outcomes for unborn babies where there are child protection concerns. These have recently

been agreed by the LSCB.

Darlington Children's Trust Update

27. In the recent announced inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children services HMI Inspectors made some positive comments about the Children's Trust in Darlington. Examples of these are: the 'Children's Trust provides strong multi agency leadership; the partnership shares a clear vision that Darlington's children and young people are the future for their borough and the CYPP expresses the ambition to help them achieve their own potential and to enjoy life as active participating citizen. The draft CYPP 2011-2014 demonstrates the ambition of the Trust to meet the challenges of the economic climate and transform services for children, young people and their families.'
28. Following a rapid improvement workshop that took place week commencing 23rd January 2012 significant changes have been made to the processes of Darlington's common assessment framework. New common assessment framework forms and processes have been developed and an action plan has been developed to ensure these changes are implemented with haste. The Local Safeguarding Children's Board is monitoring the implementation of these changes through their sub group structures.

Head of Social Work and Youth Offending Service

29. Jan Lefevre, Head of Social Work and Youth Offending Services has retired after 27 years in social work here and in Newcastle. I'm sure we would all wish her well and thank her for the commitment she has given to improving services for children. David Mason has been appointed to the post and will take up the appointment in April

Meetings

30. Since the last meeting of Council, some of the meetings/events I have attended:
 - (a) The Common Assessment Framework Rapid Improvement Workshop Feedback session;
 - (b) Provided a video welcome to the SEN Launch in Hartlepool;
 - (c) Public Health Learning Event (Durham University);
 - (d) Meeting with secondary Heads about school transport;
 - (e) Visited St. Augustine's RC Primary School to discuss Internet Safety;
 - (f) Met with Tees Valley Lead Members of Children's and Adult Services;
 - (g) Attended the Youth MP count at the Town Hall;
 - (h) Visited Skerne Park School to discuss associated transport issues;
 - (i) Attended the Darlington Partnership Executive;
 - (j) Visited the Phoenix Centre on World Book Day;
 - (k) Attended the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
 - (l) Met with Ben Million, Youth MP (2010-2012);
 - (m) Met with Peter Roberts, Nordic Pioneer;
 - (n) Met with Dr. Ben Reid from the National College's Leadership Development Team;
 - (o) Attended the Local Safeguard Children's Board meeting;
 - (p) Attended the Darlington Partnership Board; and
 - (q) Attended and addressed the annual "Vibe Awards".

Councillor Cyndi Hughes

Member with Portfolio for Children and Young People