
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council and under the Children and Young People Portfolio, Cabinet has received the following:
 - (a) **Children's Services Capital Programme 2009/10.**
Cabinet considered and approved the Capital Programme for 2009/10 including the release of £24,324,741 capital funding to undertake Capital Projects.
 - (b) **Funding Changes for 16 to 19 Education and Training – Delivery Arrangements**
Cabinet endorsed a submission from the Tees Valley Sub-Regional Group to GONE and the Department for Children, Schools and Families, in preparation for the transfer of funding and commissioning responsibility for the delivery of 16-19 education and training from the LSC to local authorities from 2010.
 - (c) **Secondary Schools Strategy for Change**
Cabinet considered and approved for submission a draft Strategy for Change document which the Council must produce and have approved by Partnerships for Schools (PFS) before any BSF (Building Schools for the Future) money can be released for replacing or remodelling secondary school buildings.
 - (d) **School Admission Arrangements 2010/11**
Cabinet approved the Co-ordinated Admissions Schemes for Infant, Junior, Primary and Secondary applications for the 2010/11 Academic Year, as the Authority is under a statutory duty to consult and adopt an admission scheme for both Primary and Secondary school places.
2. Developments in Children's Services
 - (a) Four staff from Darlington schools attended an award ceremony following their success in the "National Programme for Specialist Leaders in Behaviour and Attendance" developed by the DCSF to strengthen and develop leadership skills in this area. This is the second year this has been delivered in Darlington.
 - (b) Since March 26th Ofsted have inspected literacy and numeracy at Hurworth School and judged the school's provision to be outstanding. Red Hall primary school was judged by Ofsted to be good with outstanding features
 - (c) A new Protocol for dealing with Suspicious Incidents Outside of School Premises was issued to schools to ensure a consistent approach in how schools deal with these incidents.
 - (d) DCSF have announced that we have been successful in our bid to start to deliver diplomas in Hair and Beauty Studies from September 2010.
 - (e) Children Looked After

At 31/03/2009 there were 131 children looked after by Darlington Borough Council. This is a decrease of one placement since the last reported figure at 31/01/2009.

During February 2009 three young people became looked after. They were aged 14, 11, and under 1 year. Five young people ceased to be looked after. They were aged under 2 years (x 2 children), 5 and 15 years. One young person reached 18 years and therefore left care.

During March 2009 four children became looked after, one aged under 1 year, the others aged 11, 14 and 15 years. Three young people ceased to be looked after, aged 7, 11 and 14 years.

(f) Family Placement Service

The previous Adoption and Fostering services have now been combined to form the Family Placement Service, operational from 1 April 2009. The Service Level Agreement with DFW Adoption ceased on 31 March 2009.

(g) Children in Care Council

In accordance with the requirements of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, a Children in Care Council has now been developed by and for looked after children in Darlington. The aims of the Children in Care Council include offering looked after young people a forum to express their views and to influence the services and support they receive. Young people from the Children in Care Council delivered a presentation to the Corporate Parenting Panel on 21 April 2009.

(h) Child Protection

There are currently 67 children in Darlington with a child protection plan.

	<u>December 2008</u>	<u>February 2009</u>	<u>March 2009</u>
Children with a Child protection plan	63	79	67

The council has been seeing an increase in the number of Children Subject to Protection Plan's, due to the increase in referrals submitted following the media interest regarding Baby P. As can be seen from the recent figures, children subject to protection plans have decreased and this is due to proactive working and/or engagement with family members ensuring that the initial risks no longer exist.

3. Visits and Meetings by the Portfolio Holder since last Council

(a) Friday 13 March

I attended a briefing event in London for those local authorities seeking early release of BSF funding for secondary schools.

(b) Wednesday 18 March

I attended a stakeholder event held at Darlington Football Club linked to BSF.

(c) Friday 20 March

I met with a representative from Durham University and Council officers to discuss initiatives to reduce child poverty in the region.

(d) Friday 27 March

Today I was accompanied by two students from Queen Elizabeth Sixth Form College. I chaired a meeting of the Children's Trust Board.

I met with senior managers from Darlington PCT to discuss issues relating to Child health. I later visited Firthmoor Primary School.
I met with a manager of Arriva, other Members, Council officers, and the Youth MP for Darlington, to discuss ways to encourage young people using local transport.

(e) Monday 30 March

I met with the Headteacher of Hummersknott School & Language College and toured the new facilities.

(f) Friday 3 April

I was pleased to attend the Celebration of Learning and Skills Awards 2009, organised by the LSC, held at the Sage, Gateshead.

(g) Friday 17 April

I visited the Student Loans Company at Lingfield Point.

I met with the Executive Director of eVOLution.

I attended a meeting of the Child Poverty Task and Finish Group at Newcastle Civic Centre.

(h) Monday 20 April

In my capacity as Chair of the Children's Trust, I attended a meeting of Darlington Partnership Executive Group.

(i) Tuesday 21 April

I attended the Corporate Parenting Panel – which was a special meeting with the Children in Care Council.

(j) Thursday 30 April

I chaired the IDEA Lead Member network event held in Sunderland.

Councillor Chris McEwan
Member with Portfolio for Children and Young People