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**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

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1. Since the last meeting of Council and under the Children and Young People Portfolio, Cabinet has received the following:

**(a) Safeguarding and the Laming Review**

Cabinet noted the contents of the report on the key messages from the Lord Laming Review of 'The protection of Children in England' and the national and local implications of its findings. Members have responsibility for ensuring children's safeguarding and Local Authorities are required by the Government to prioritise safeguarding

**(b) Contactpoint Shielding Appeals**

Cabinet considered and approved the arrangements to shield records on the Contactpoint national database and gave delegated authority to the Director of Children's Services to hear any appeals from parents, carers or young people where the Shielding Panel have denied the request to shield.

2. Developments in Children's Services

School Improvement and Development Team.

- (a) A panel of LA Officers met to quality assure the work of all Darlington Children's Centres in preparation for future inspections by Ofsted which will begin in September 2010.
- (b) LA Officers and Darlington Headteachers held their regular consultation meetings through the 14 to 19 Partnership, Primary and Secondary Headteachers groups and the Joint Consultative Group.
- (c) Officers facilitated well attended meetings of Link Governors, Chairs of Governing Bodies and LA Governors.
- (d) LA Officers attended the official opening of Carmel RC Colleges building extension by Alan Milburn MP.
- (e) The School Condition Group met.
- (f) The second Bright Sparks Young Entrepreneurs Competition was held at the Dolphin Centre with Young People selling their ideas to a panel of experts including Duncan Banatyne.

Children and Families

**(g) Safeguarding**

The Government's response to the recent Laming Report, was published at the beginning of May (Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report.) The majority of the Laming

recommendations will be responded to in a revision of the 'Working Together' Guidance.

Regionally and sub regionally, Safeguarding Boards have been collaborating to ensure common processes and systems regarding Serious Case Reviews.

Inspection of 'front door' services is an immediate action from Ofsted. This will be an annual unannounced inspection of social care duty points - in Darlington this is sited in Central House

The inspection feeds into the Council CAA process.

Child Protection Plans:

Currently (4 June 2009) there are 54 children in Darlington with a Multi Agency Child Protection Plan.

This is broken down into the following categories:-

Neglect	34
Physical Abuse	16
Emotional Abuse	3
Sexual Abuse	0

This is a decrease on the figure reported in February 2009 when 79 children were subject to Protection Plans.

#### (h) *Children Looked After*

There are currently 143 children and young people 'looked after' by Darlington Borough Council.

This figure is the highest since early 2007.

The increase has resulted in pressure on the fostering service, as the majority of recent admissions to care have been children aged 0 – 8 years.

92 children are placed with 'in house' foster carers and 23 with Independent Fostering Agencies.

The service is reviewing recruitment and allowance schemes, in addition to exploring with Tees Valley Authorities commissioning options for fostering services.

### **Partnerships**

- (i) Consultation with staff has begun around the proposal to develop integrated teams to improve early intervention and preventative services
- (j) A series of local consultations has been launched with respect to the development of new and improved outdoor play areas

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

- (a) On Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> May I took part in a question and answer session with young people at the Education Village.
- (b) Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> June I attended Evolution's annual Volunteer Awards ceremony.
- (c) Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June I Chaired a meeting of Local Authority Governors from schools across Darlington.
- (d) On Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> June I was interviewed by Government consultants about Darlington's readiness to deliver our proposals as part of the Building Schools for the Future programme.
- (e) Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> June I signed a Memorandum of Understanding between Darlington Borough Council and Teesside University agreeing delivery of professional training and education to teachers and support staff in Darlington's schools.
- (f) On Monday 15<sup>th</sup> June I took part in a workshop to help young people prepare their pitches to Duncan Bannatyne with Tim West from Alpha Radio for the Bannatynes Bright Sparks event.
- (g) Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June I Chaired a meeting of the Local Authority Governor Appointments Panel.
- (h) Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July I attended a Joint Headteachers meeting
- (i) Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> July I visited the Turnaround School at Red Hall.
- (j) Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July I Chaired a meeting of the Children's Trust.
- (k) Friday 10<sup>th</sup> July I took part in a Sports Achievement Assembly at Heathfield School.

**Councillor Jenny Chapman**  
**Member with Portfolio for Children and Young People**