

---

**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) **School Admission Arrangements 2011/12** – Cabinet considered a report requesting that consideration be given to the Admission Policy for the 2011/12 academic year and the co-ordinated arrangements for all schools in the Borough. It was agreed that the changes required to the Co-ordinated Admission Schemes for both primary and secondary applications for the 2011/12 academic year be approved as the Authority is under a statutory duty to consult and adopt an admission scheme for both Primary and Secondary school places for the academic year 2011/12.

Although not part of this Admissions Report, I reported to Cabinet that a briefing had been circulated to all Members of the Council providing information on the appeals process—both the timetable and the procedure—for families who wish to exercise their right of appeal. Contact details for the Council’s choice adviser have also made available to all Members.
  - (b) **Building Schools for the Future** - a report was presented to Cabinet requesting the draw-down of funds to engage on the first stage of project management for capital works and ICT improvements to the Council’s secondary school estate. It was resolved that the National Contractors’ Framework, managed by Partnerships for Schools, be the preferred procurement route and that the draw-down of £1.2m from the provision made in the Council’s Medium Term Financial Plan, be agreed.
  - (c) **Raising Expectations – Enabling The System To Deliver - 16 To 19 Learning Commission** – A report was introduced to Cabinet updating Members on the progress to date in preparing for the transfer of funding and commissioning responsibility for the delivery of high quality education and training for young people aged between 16 to 19 years of age (16 to 25 years of age for learners with an identified learning disability), from the Learning and Skills Council to individual local authorities from April 2010. It was agreed that:
    - 1) The proposed Regional Planning arrangements be noted, and the Director of Children’s Services be authorised, in consultation with the Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People Portfolio, to keep those arrangements under review to ensure they are effective in supporting the Authority in discharging its responsibilities.
    - 2) The outcomes of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) staff matching process, be noted, and six posts be transferred formally to the Local Authority from the LSC from 1 April 2010.
    - 3) In relation to (2) above, the creation of the identified posts on the Council’s establishment be approved.
    - 4) The financial implications to support the staff transfer, as detailed in the submitted report, be noted.

- 5) The intention to support shared services as appropriate at SRG level, be confirmed.
- 6) The Director of Children's Services, be authorised, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and the Head of Legal Services, to put in place all necessary arrangements for receiving the transferring LSC staff in line with best practice in Transfer of Undertakings – Protection of Employment (TUPE) legislation.
- 7) The Director of Children's Services, be authorised, in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources, the Head of Legal Services and appropriate senior LSC officers, to put in place all necessary arrangements for the transfer and management of funding contracts, agreed by the LSC with learning providers in the Borough, from 1 April to 31 July 2010 and from 1 August 2010 to 31 July 2011.
- 8) The report be referred to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

## 2. Developments in Children's Services

### (a) **Choices DVD**

I attended the successful regional launch of Darlington E-Learning Team's own 'Choices' DVD, a film designed to highlight safe use of the internet following the tragic death of Ashley Hall.

### (b) **School visits**

I have visited a number of schools in Darlington :

- i. Mowden Federation Celebration Assembly;
- ii. The Turn Around Centre at Red Hall School where I met young people and celebrated reaching their weekly targets with them;
- iii. Whinfield Primary School on World Book Day to share a story with reception children;
- iv. Carmel College to greet Comenius partners;
- v. Alderman Leach Primary School to celebrate the opening of 2 new classrooms funded by the primary capital building programme; and
- vi. Mount Pleasant Primary School to share thoughts on Earth Day and to celebrate the school's environmental achievements

### (c) **Building Schools for the Future**

A Remit Meeting was held with senior officials from Partnerships for Schools and Government Office North East on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2010. The meeting was highly successful, with Partnership for Schools giving formal approval for the Council to work up a project for the improvement of 3 schools and to provide an enhanced ICT solution with capital investment for 7 schools.

### (d) **Integrated working**

Over the last twelve months we have begun a process of reorganising services around children, young people, families and communities in partnership with the PCT. We have been designing universal services to be responsive to the needs of the child, young person and family and not determined by old service boundaries. We have now developed three area teams each led by an Integrated Service Manager who will be enhancing early intervention and prevention services for children and young people.

Each Integrated Service Manager will have the responsibility for the operational management of universal and targeted services for all children and young people in a geographical area of the Borough. These three staff will work together to ensure a consistent predictable service is developed and will be tasked with enabling our most hard to reach families access to the services they need. Regular service user feedback will also be built into the annual performance cycle. This development will allow the teams to explore new and innovative methods of working, provide swift and easy access to services with families' geographical neighbourhoods and decrease the number of children and young people subject to multiple assessments. This development has come into effect from 1st April 2010.

**(e) Parenting Update**

The Parenting Strategy was launched in summer 2008. Since that time 3398 parents and carers have been consulted at a range of events. Four Parenting Practitioner Network Events have been held with a total of 241 practitioners attending. The aims of these events are to share good practice, to provide up to date parenting information from local, regional and national sources. The strategy concentrated on the enhancement of evidence based parenting programmes and between September 2008 and April 2010 a significant number of programmes have been delivered. This has resulted in sixty-nine practitioners being trained in delivery and two hundred and twenty nine parents and carers being referred to access Evidence Based Parenting Programmes.

I attended and addressed a “Think Family” Event held at Darlington Football Club which brought together practitioners from Children’s Services, the Police, Probation, PCT, Youth Offending Team, Schools, the Third Sector and other community partners to plan for developing an across-the-board “family” approach to delivery of services and the achievement of positive outcomes for children, young people and their families. A lot of good partnership working in this area has already developed in Darlington but participants at the event have pledged even closer collaboration.

**(f) Children Looked After**

There are currently (7/4/10) 147 children and young people ‘looked after’ by Darlington Borough Council this is a slight increase on the last reported figure of 142. Fostering placements continue to be the main placement (111 children), however this includes an increasing number placed with independent agencies due to insufficient ‘in-house’ provision. Actions are in place to address this including a review of allowances and marketing campaign. Two young people are currently in secure placements – one via the courts for criminal offences, and one young person for welfare reasons.

**(g) Child Protection**

Currently 79 children in Darlington have a Child Protection Plan. This is a small increase on previously reported figures:

|          |      |    |
|----------|------|----|
| December | 2009 | 76 |
| October  | 2009 | 47 |
| August   | 2009 | 49 |

The reason for the Child Protection Plan is based on the prime area of concern – neglect, physical abuse, emotional abuse or sexual abuse.

The April breakdown of Child protection Plans into categories is:

|                 |    |
|-----------------|----|
| Neglect         | 44 |
| Physical Abuse  | 28 |
| Emotional Abuse | 3  |
| Sexual Abuse    | 4  |

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes**  
**Member with Portfolio for Children and Young People**