
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

Purpose of the Report

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

Schools and Academies

2. On 1 May Firthmoor Primary School and St John's Church of England VA Primary School converted to Academy status. On the 1 June Heathfield Primary School, Hurworth Primary School and the Federation of Mowden Schools converted to Academy status. Gurney Pease Primary School is hoping to convert to a sponsored academy with the Education Village on 1 July and St Bede's RC VA Primary School is hoping to convert to Academy status on the 1 August.
3. The Governing Bodies of Skerne Park Primary School and Dodmire Primary School have given approval to begin the consultation process with regards to becoming sponsored academies with Hummersknott Academy and Longfield Academy, respectfully.

Ofsted Inspections

4. Reid Street Primary School was inspected by Ofsted in May 2012. The school was judged to be Good overall with an Outstanding grading for 'Behaviour and Safety of Pupils'.

School Place Planning Arrangements: Basic Need Funding for Heathfield Primary School

5. At three primary schools additional pupils will be admitted over their Planned Admission Numbers for the academic year 2012/13, these being Heathfield Primary, Corporation Road and St. Teresa's RC Voluntary Aided. Also we have approved the release of £175K of Basic Need Capital 2012/13 to fund alterations to Heathfield Primary to accommodate an additional 30 pupils for September, 2012. Neither Corporation Road nor St. Teresa's require any building works to accommodate the extra pupils.
6. The increases in available pupil places are proposed for one academic year only and longer term expansions will be reviewed as part of the development of the School Organisation Plan 2012-2017.

Children Looked After

7. At the end of May 2012, there were 203 children "looked after" - an increase of 7 since end of February 2012.
8. In the period between 1 April and 31 May 2012, three Special Guardianship Orders and two Adoption Orders were granted for Children Looked After by Darlington Borough Council.
9. Ofsted Key Inspections for 2012 have commenced for the 'in house' Children's Homes. Two homes had been inspected in this round by the end of May 2012, with ratings of 'good with outstanding areas'.

Foster Carer Charter

10. Darlington Foster Carer Association (DFCA) and the Family Placement Service were delighted to have the development of the Foster Carer Charter included as an illustration of good practice on the Department for Education website.
11. The Chair of the DFCA, Helen Clyde, with the Manager of the Family Placement Service, Hilary Tillotson, showcased joint working on the Charter at the Fostering Network Annual Conference. The presentation was filmed and is now being used by Fostering Network as part of their training.
12. Full implementation of the Foster Carer Charter is being progressed.

Child Protection

13. At the end of March 2012, 91 children were subject to child protection plans. In the last quarter there has been a marked increase of children made subject to a protection plan under the category of Neglect - this is now 80 per cent of the total. There has been an increase in domestic abuse, as a risk factor, however, children subject to plans under the category of Emotional Abuse has reduced from 16 per cent to 7 per cent. There are no children subject to a protection plan as a result of Sexual Abuse (March 2012).
14. During this quarter, there has been a marked reduction in the number of unborn babies being made subject to a child protection plan. The introduction of the pre birth procedures and rapid assessment of the unborn baby prior bringing matters to a conference is impacting on decision making and intervention at an earlier stage.
15. Domestic abuse continues to be the most significant risk factor, and by the end of March 2012 this represented 76 per cent of all children registered. The last quarter also shows a significant increase in drug use as a risk factor which has increased to 67 per cent, as well as parental mental health representing 48 per cent of all cases.
16. Over the last quarter, 49 children were removed from plans, as there had been significant reduction in levels of risk. In addition, 21 children were removed from a plan as they were no longer in the care of their parents.

Meetings

17. Since the last meeting of Council, I have:

- (a) Attended a meeting of the Darlington Partnership;
- (b) Attended and addressed an Local Education Authority Governors Meeting;
- (c) Attended a Children's Services Roadshow at the Dolphin Centre;
- (d) Met with the Chair of Governors of Skerne Park Primary School;
- (e) Met with David Gardner to discuss young people and the new Drug and Alcohol Strategy 2012-2015;
- (f) Met with a researcher compiling a report for Evolution to discuss the voluntary sector and its interface with the provision of services for children and young people in Darlington;
- (g) Attended the Shadow Health and Well-Being Board;
- (h) Attended the Public Sector Board meeting;
- (i) Met with a consultant working for government to discuss the SEN work the authority is doing with Hartlepool;
- (j) Met Dean Jackson, School Improvement Officer from Hartlepool currently contracted to provide part-time support in Darlington;
- (k) Met with a Public Health officer working in Darlington to discuss children and young people;
- (l) Attended the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- (m) Attended and addressed the Licensing Sub-Committee which dealt with a review of the premises license for "The Grange";
- (n) Met with Ron of Ron's Music to discuss his involvement in promoting busking in the Town Centre—especially talented young musicians;
- (o) Attended a meeting of the Darlington SACRE (Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education);
- (p) Attended the AGM of the Darlington Credit Union to support the continuing involvement of children and young people and to support a resolution allowing 16 year olds to be full members of the Credit Union; and
- (q) Attended a meeting of the Darlington Partnership Board;

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Member with Portfolio for Children and Young People