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**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

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

**Children and Young People's Collective**

2. The Collective met on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014, and had as its focus 'Early Help – Parenting'. Presentations on 'Families who Experience Successive Removals of Children'; 'Teenage Pregnancy' and 'Care to Learn' led to a detailed discussion on services available. The meeting also received the Childcare Sufficiency Review and Children and Young Peoples' Participation Strategy for agreement. The new Health Hub was also discussed and the services for families and children as an 'early help' offer.
3. The next meeting of the Collective will continue to look at organisations' 'Early Help Offers' Early Help is vital in reducing demand for more expensive services and reducing individual trauma and crisis. The 'offer' does not rest with any one service but is part of the multi-agency response to individual situations; therefore the Collective is looking at individual organisations service offer.

**Corporate Parenting Panel**

4. The Panel met on 9<sup>th</sup> September 2014. The meeting theme was the Education and Health of Looked After Children. The meeting was attended by the Virtual School Head (Calvin Kipling) whose role is to support the education of all children who are Looked After by Darlington Borough Council.
5. Representatives from health services for Looked After Children, including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), attended the meeting and provided reports. Information on leisure and sports opportunities for Looked After children was provided by managers from the Dolphin Centre and Healthy Darlington.
6. The Panel met again on 18<sup>th</sup> November and the theme was Safeguarding Children who become Looked After. The Safeguarding Board Business Manager gave a presentation on Protection from Child Sexual Exploitation and Exploited Children Sub Group; the Independent Reviewing Officer gave a presentation on her role; and the Looked After Through Care Team gave a presentation on the Preparation of Children and Young People prior to and whilst they are in care.
7. Reports were also received on Children's Advocacy Services in Darlington, the Monitoring of Placements and Placement Moves and an Update from the Darlington Foster Care Association. The meeting was attended by young people

from the Children in Care Council (Darlo Care Crew) and by relevant officers involved.

### **Local Safeguarding Children Board & Child Sexual Exploitation**

8. The Board held a development session on 17<sup>th</sup> September 2014. This session was externally facilitated by Sue Woolmore (previously Chair of the National Association for Independent Chairs). Sue delivered an excellent session, and it was well received by all agencies present. The Board has agreed to commission Sue's training to frontline practitioners in Spring 2015.
9. During October, six multi-agency briefings have taken place covering the launch of the new multi-agency threshold of need indicators for practitioners; Child Sexual Exploitation and the training and support for education settings and others on internet-safety. Over 400 practitioners attended from a wide range of agencies.
10. At the LSCB meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> November, a report on actions being taken in Darlington on Child Sexual Exploitation was presented. These include:
  - (a) The convening of both strategic and operational multi-agency groups to oversee our response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). These groups report at every LSCB Board meeting (bi-monthly).
  - (b) Audits of multi-agency practice have been initiated and findings will be shared with the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
  - (c) Analysis of CSE profile in Darlington was undertaken, with support from the police and partner agencies that considered potential victims and offenders.
  - (d) Across County Durham and Darlington a communications and marketing group has been established to identify ways on highlighting CSE for professionals, young people, parents and carers and the wider community.
  - (e) Child protection procedures on both CSE and children who go missing have been agreed, which guide professionals on how to recognise CSE and how to respond to a missing child.
  - (f) The "**ERASE**" logo (standing for "Educating and raising awareness of sexual exploitation") has been adopted.
  - (g) Darlington LSCB has become a gold member of the "National Working Group". NWG is a charitable organisation formed as a UK network of over 2500 practitioners who disseminate information to professionals working on the issues of CSE and trafficking within the UK. Membership allows us to access a broad range of resources including e-learning packages and interactive education tools.
  - (h) Training is delivered by a CSE and is part of the LSCB Training Programme.
  - (i) Work on raising the profile of CSE includes meetings and presentations highlighting the work that is being undertaken in Darlington. These have included meetings with the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, presentation at the Corporate Panel and bespoke training to colleagues within Licensing, Trading Standards and Environmental Health.
  - (j) A revised CSE Strategy has been developed and compliments what our partners are doing in County Durham.

- (k) Education settings and other professionals have been informed of the training and support PCSOs can offer to settings in relation to internet safety. The majority of PCSOs in Darlington are CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection) Ambassadors and can offer a range of training sessions and resources to children, young people, professionals, parents and carers. Individual settings can contact their local PCSO or the LSCB Business Unit for information.

### **Schools Forum Meeting**

11. The Schools Forum met on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2014. The Forum received a report from its Monitoring Support Officer (appointed July 2014), relating to Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs budget position. For the current year 2014/15, the budget has seen an increase in spend, but this is managed within the overall DSG budget with no adverse effect on school budgets.
12. The Monitoring and Support Officer outlined a paper relating to Free Funded Education for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. Its purpose was to put into context the request from Early Years providers to the Forum for an increase in hourly rates. It was recognised that the objective is to sustain the highest quality good provision to ensure children are school ready, and to ensure retention and attraction of higher qualified staff. The issues have been recognised nationally and at the time of the meeting the outcome of the consultation on Early Years pupil premium and two year old funding was still outstanding. The government proposals were explained and it was agreed that, subject to the outcome of this consultation, a task and finish group report back to the next meeting on options.

### **Education**

13. Three new Head Teachers joined Darlington Schools in September. Alison Sinclair is the new Head Teacher of Gurney Pease Academy, Zoe Beach is the new Head Teacher of Northwood School and Michael Tiplady is currently Acting Head Teacher of St Bede's Academy. All three are internal appointments from within Darlington Schools and it is wonderful to see high calibre people being retained within the Borough. I wish them every success in their new roles.
14. Cockerton CE Primary School and Skerne Park Primary School have been inspected by Ofsted. Both schools received a grade of good which represents significant improvement in both schools.
15. The Ofsted Inspection report for St Aidan's has now been published. The judgement being 'inadequate – serious weakness'. A meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> November was arranged by Jenny Chapman which I attended, to clearly state the concerns and impact on the local community. This was a constructive meeting and a follow up meeting will be held in January to review progress.
16. In reception classes 55.3 per cent of Early Years Foundation Stage pupils gained a 'Good Level of Development', which is an improvement of 5.9% on 2013. The gap

between the lowest achieving 20 per cent and the Cohort Median has remained static.

17. The trend of year on year improved performance for year one (KS1) pupils in the phonic screen check continues. This year there is a 6 per cent improvement with 82 per cent of pupils meeting the required standard.
18. Key Stage 1 performance was marginally improved with a 3 per cent improvement in Level 2B+ in Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM). The percentage of pupils achieving a Level 3 is increasing year on year.
19. The percentage of pupils making expected progress in Reading, Writing and Maths (RWM) at Key Stage 2 has increased. There is a steady rise in the number of pupils attaining Level 5+.

### **Child Protection/Looked After Children**

20. On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014, 129 children were subject to child protection plans. This related to 52 families. 64 per cent of children on a plan were as a result of neglect, 28 per cent as a result of emotional harm, 4 per cent due to physical abuse and 4 per cent as a result of sexual abuse. With regards to age profile, there has been an increase in unborn babies being made subject to a plan. 37 per cent of children subject to a plan are aged under 5, 41 per cent are aged 5-10 years, 20 per cent are between 10-15 years, 2 per cent over 15 years old.
21. Over the last 6 months, 69 children have been made subject to a plan, with 74 per cent showing domestic abuse as a risk factor, 45 per cent with alcohol use, and 29 per cent parental mental health risk factors.
22. Over the last 6 months, 81 children were removed from a plan. 36 per cent of children were removed from a plan when no further concerns of domestic abuse (this is not including cases where the relationship has ended). 48 per cent demonstrated improved parenting, and 59 per cent showed an improvement in the care children were receiving.
23. On 30<sup>th</sup> September 2014, there were 202 children Looked After by Darlington Borough Council. This is an increase of 10 children since 31<sup>st</sup> August 2014, when the number was 192 and an increase of 14 children since 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014, when the figure was 188. This figure includes eight children placed for adoption; two young people in secure accommodation and 22 children placed under 'connected persons' regulations (e.g. placed with extended family).

### **Commissioning of Supported Accommodation for Young People Leaving Care**

24. Approval has been given for the procurement of supported accommodation for young people leaving care. The Supported Accommodation Services for Young People Leaving Care will be added to the annual Procurement Plan and will be classified as a non-strategic procurement.

25. This will ensure that we have a service fit for purpose to manage the transitional needs of Young People Leaving Care to improve their outcomes.

## **Meetings**

26. Since the last Council, some of the meetings/events I attended include :-

Darlington Partnership Executive and Board meeting;  
Sang with the Festival of Thrift Choir;  
Attended a safeguarding post-Rotherham meeting with the Leader, Chief Executive, Independent Safeguarding Chair and Safeguarding Manager;  
Gained Safeguarding level 2 training;  
Met with Kate Roe, Principle of Darlington College;  
Met with Darlo Care Crew;  
Attended Schools Forum;  
Attended weekly briefing sessions with the Director of Children's Services and her team;  
Chaired Governor Appointments Panel;  
Attended the Health & Wellbeing Board's development session;  
Attended a "Question Time" event at Longfield Academy;  
Attended a charity presentation at Harewood Lodge;  
Chaired the Children and Young People's Collective;  
Attended the Student Award Ceremony at Darlington College;  
Attended the opening of a new library at Holy Family Academy;  
Attended the Harvest Festival Assembly at Skerne Park Academy;  
Attended the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Committee;  
Met with and addressed newly appointed social workers;  
Attended the Corporate Parenting Panel;  
Attended the Local Safeguarding Children's Board;  
Attended the launch of a regional "Math's Hub" at Carmel College;  
Delivered a speech to the Year 11 prize giving ceremony at Carmel College;  
Attended the CCG innovation fund presentation on Children & Young People; and  
Attended a workshop feedback session for those who use services for people with learning disabilities and their carers.

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes**  
**Children and Young People Portfolio**