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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.

**Corporate Parenting Panel**

2. The Corporate Parenting Panel met on 18 November 2014. Presentations were delivered on Protection from Child Sexual Exploitation with links to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Missing and Exploited Group (MEG); the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) and Preparation of Children and Young People Prior To and Whilst they are In Care and During Placement Moves.
3. Reports were presented on Children's Advocacy Services in Darlington; Monitoring of Placements for Looked After Children; Darlington Foster Care Association (DFCA); Performance Indicators for Children in Care Services and activities of the Darlo Care Crew (Children in Care Council). Young people from Darlo Care Crew attended the meeting and participated in discussions with panel members.
4. The Corporate Parenting Panel meeting took place on 13 January 2015, and the theme was "Quality and Effectiveness of Services for Looked After Children".

**Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)**

5. The Board met on 19 November 2014. Sub group reports were presented on behalf of the Performance Management Sub Group by Carole Atherton, Designated Nurse and the Training and Communications Group, by Odette Robson, Safeguarding Boards' Business Manager.
6. The Board was also updated on the work that has been undertaken across Durham and Darlington, to ensure that the procedures for Child Sexual Exploitation are being adhered to. This includes multi-agency auditing and findings will be shared with the Board.
7. A multi-agency communications group has also been established with Durham Safeguarding Children Board, to undertake action in distributing key messages to children and young people and their parents and carers in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation. This will include the distribution of materials, leaflets, posters but also the effective use of social media.

## **Education/Early Years**

8. Following a recent Ofsted 'upgrade' judgement to good at a day care setting, the total number of day care and playgroup settings with a grade of 'good' or 'outstanding' is now 25 (out of a total of 31 settings).
9. I am delighted that in the New Year's Honours, Maura Regan, Principal of Carmel College, has been awarded an OBE in recognition of her contribution to education. Council, will I'm sure, already be aware of the significant contribution Maura has made to the education and development of children in Darlington, and will join me in congratulating her on receiving this national award.

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

10. At the end of December 2014, there were 108 children were subject to a child protection plan. This related to 41 families. 66 children were placed under the category of Neglect, 31 under the category of Emotional Harm, 6 as a result of Physical Harm and 5 as a result of Sexual Harm.
11. A Child Protection Plan is created when the level of risk to a child or young person is significant and requires a closely monitoring multi agency involvement. The Plan will have a 'category' showing the main areas of concern.
12. Neglect and Family Dysfunction criteria is used when there is evidence of significant harm to a child or young person. This may include domestic violence within the family and lack of basic care and security.
13. On 31 December 2014, there were 217 children Looked After by Darlington Borough Council. This is an increase of 15 children since 30 September 2014, when the number was 202 and an increase of 29 children since 31 March 2014, when the figure was 188. This figure includes 13 children placed for adoption; 1 young person in secure accommodation and 29 children placed under 'connected persons' regulations (e.g. placed with extended family – 22 temporary approvals and 7 fully 'connected persons').

## **Inspection Outcomes**

14. Recent Ofsted inspections of Darlington Borough Council Children's Homes have been graded as follows:
  - (a) Dunrobin – Good
  - (b) Eldon Street – Adequate, previously Good
  - (c) Gilling – Adequate, previously Good
15. Our Short Break Care and Respite Facility at Harewood Hill Lodge is currently being inspected.
16. Action plans have been completed and returned to Ofsted in respect of the three children's homes. Operational Managers have satisfied themselves that the overall

care of our young people placed is good.

17. The changing grades reflect a regional and national trend, due to revised requirements for Children's Homes and an increased rigor in the inspection regime.

18. The narrative in respect of the overall care of our young people is good.

### **Awards**

19. Jo Benson, Service Manager for Youth Offending Service was nominated and has been awarded a Butler Trust award. This is the only award made for a Youth Offending Service in the country.

### **St Aiden's Academy**

20. Following the Ofsted grading, the Academy has developed an action plan and Monitoring Panel to ensure improvement in the identified areas. The local authority has a place on the Panel and is continuing to support the Academy where possible.

### **Meetings**

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

Attended the Team JJ Awards Evening;  
Attended Darlington Partnership Executive;  
Attended weekly briefings with the Service Director for Children, Families and Learning and Officers;  
Addressed Carmel Sixth Form College's Presentation Evening;  
Attended Health and Wellbeing Board Development Session;  
Met with the Chair of Governors of Borough Road Nursery;  
Attended the Local Safeguarding Children's Board;  
Attended a meeting at the Darlington College;  
Addressed a Sexual Health and Relationships Stakeholder Event;  
Met with the Chief Executive of the Darlington Partnership; and  
Attended the St. Aidan's Academy monitoring meeting .

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