
OVERVIEW OF SOCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

1. Since the last meeting of Council, the following are the main areas of work under my Social Services Portfolio :-

a) Opening of Nubeck Garden Nursery

I attended the opening of Nubeck Garden Nursery, which was opened by the Mayor of Darlington, Councillor Francis, on 2nd June 2004.

Nubeck Nursery is based at the Council's Woodburn Nursery site, and is part of our modernisation of day services for people with learning disabilities. It offers accredited training for people with a learning disability in a horticultural setting. The project will work closely with Community Services who have assisted with the refurbishment of the nursery site. As the site offers the opportunity to train in a real working environment, it will allow people who wish to find employment the opportunity to gain the relevant skills, qualifications, and experience to achieve their goal of securing paid employment.

b) Vulnerable Witness Suite

I attended the "turf cutting" ceremony for the new vulnerable witness suite which will be located at Meadowfields, Neville Cross. The new suite will provide the most modern facilities for victims and witnesses of crime. For further information, the Press Release for the suite is attached at **Appendix A**.

c) I&DeA Conference

I attended an I&DeA (Improvement and Development Agency) conference on 1st July 2004 in Newcastle which considered the implications of the Children Bill and brought together Members and Chief Officers from across the region.

There were interesting presentations from officers and Members from Newcastle and Durham about the steps they are taking in moving towards integration of children's services.

In the afternoon we were able to hear presentations from the regional children's trusts on the interesting ways in which agencies are working together to deliver services for children.

d) Meetings with Primary Care Trust

I continue to meet on a quarterly basis with the Chair and Chief Executive of Darlington Primary Care Trust. The meetings are important to foster the Social Services Department's and Primary Care Trust's understanding of each other's roles and our continued integration

of services in Darlington.

Key services we are currently delivering in an integrated way with the Primary Care Trust include, intermediate care, learning disability, occupational therapy, domiciliary care, and mental health.

We are also continuing with our work in the Children's Trust pilot to integrate services and develop better pathways of care for disabled children and their families.

2. **Social Services Developments**

a) Youth Offending Service

Darlington Youth Offending Service has been ranked 1st nationally out of 154 authorities for its overall performance for the year 1st April 2003 to 31st March 2004.

There are 26 other Youth Offending Services in 1st place alongside Darlington, which includes only one other North East team, South Tees.

For information, other regional positions are:

North Tyneside	28th
Sunderland	33rd
Gateshead	54th (joint)
South Tyneside	54th (joint)
Stockton	54th (joint)
Northumberland	140th
Hartlepool	145th
Newcastle	154th

b) GOLD (Growing Older Living in Darlington)

The GOLD Project Team were chosen by the Primary Care Trust to represent Darlington for Older People in a national scheme called "NHS Live". The Project will give the chosen local teams the opportunity to link with sponsors from leading private sector organisations for one year, to exchange ideas, share learning, and look at the involvement of older people. The national launch of NHS Live takes place this month in London, and GOLD representatives from Darlington will be attending to meet their linked organisation.

Councillor Eleanor Lister
Cabinet Member with Social Services Portfolio