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**OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

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1. No reports have gone to Cabinet from Children's Services since the last Council meeting
2. Developments in Children's Services

The Department for Education announced on July 5<sup>th</sup> that the Building Schools for the Future programme was being ended and that a review would take place about future capital programmes for schools. As a result, the planned major investment in Branksome, Hurworth and Longfield, and the associated schemes at Carmel, Hummersknott and Haughton will not take place.

Further reductions in capital grants were also announced, affecting young people's services and school broadband services.

3. Andrew Dunn, the Assistant Director for Schools, Improvement and Development, is leaving his post to return to Headship. Andrew has been with the authority for nearly 4 years and has supported schools to deliver significant increases in their achievement levels during that period. We wish him well in his new post. Arrangements to replace his role are dealt with elsewhere on the agenda of Council.
4. The three Early Intervention Teams are now fully operating to provide support, advice and help to families with children aged up to 19 years old in the Borough. Headed up by Mervyn Bell, Yvonne Coates and Angela Davidson, the teams bring together the Council's Children's Services teams and County Durham and Darlington Community Health Services. They are also strongly linked to the Adult and Community Learning team.

The teams will support families through providing services relevant to them in their area – this may be parenting support, family learning, information advice and guidance for communities, or access to play and positive activities. The team will also work to identify when children, young people and families need some additional support early on to prevent long-term issues developing and to reduce the pressure on specialist services. Each team also provides support for the development and enhancement of skills development, and family and adult learning opportunities for 14-19 year olds.

The teams will increasingly be based in the communities they serve over the coming months. The teams receive a significant proportion of their funding from Area Based Grants, which were recently reduced mid-year. The service is currently assessing the impact of these cuts.

## 5. Children Looked After

There are 153 children and young people currently looked after by Darlington Borough Council. In May this figure 'peaked' at 157.

The figure is a 5% increase on the same period last year, with no correlating increase in provision so external independent placements have been used. This has resulted in a significant budget pressure, as average independent foster care placement is £900 per week and independent residential is £2,600 per week.

In addition, the requirements to independently review plans for looked after children and child protection cases has placed significant pressure on the system. This is being monitored and proposals being developed to increase the resources available to carry out the reviews.

## 6. Child Protection

On 15 June 2010 82 children and young people were subject to a child protection plan. This is a 46.4% increase on the same period in 2009. It is a continuation of the steady increase over the last 18 months.

<b>CPP</b>	<b>15 June 2010</b>	<b>June 2009</b>
Neglect	42	40
Physical Abuse	32	11
Emotional Abuse	3	3
Sexual Abuse	5	2
	82	56

51 of the 82 are aged 0-4 years – 26 under 1 year or unborn; 25 aged 1-4 years.

This reflects the increasing risk to unborn babies and children from parental lifestyle. Several factors are involved but key risks are domestic violence; substance misuse; inability or unwillingness to parent and place a child's needs as paramount.

The 'Think Family' approach is currently being expanded within services, and is the basis of the Family Intervention Team.

This team is a 'pilot' funded until March 2011 by the Youth Crime Action Plan. Future YCAP funding is uncertain, and the project group is looking at exit strategies based on evaluation of the scheme. If successful the model could be maintained by re configuring existing services. The Team has staff from Children's services; Adult Services; Brief Intervention Alcohol Worker; Health visitor and support workers. They work closely with Police and Housing, to provide services to the whole family from one team.

This model of service has been highly effective in other authorities, in reducing dependence on

specialist services, and enabling families to turn their lives around.

7. On May 25<sup>th</sup> I attended Darlington's Behaviour and Attendance Conference at Carmel RC College. Delegates discussed the formation of Darlington's first Behaviour and Attendance Partnership. The number of exclusions has fallen significantly in both primary and secondary phases since 2006-07. In 2006-07 there were 47 secondary permanent exclusions, this represented 0.31% of the school population. In reporting period April 09 to April 10 this has now reduced to 0.17% of the school population. There have also been dramatic reductions in both fixed term exclusions and *days lost* to schooling due to fixed term exclusions - in 2006-2007 Darlington had 2124 fixed term exclusions, and 5870 days lost due to fixed term exclusions. In 2008-2009 fixed term exclusions have continued to fall to 1179 and *days lost* have reduced to 2535. It is expected that the Behaviour and Attendance Partnership will further reduce the exclusion figures.
8. Primary schools in the borough have produced art and written work on the theme of St George and the Dragon for display in the Town Hall. Some of this high quality work was displayed at the Cabinet meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010.
9. On June 18<sup>th</sup> I attended a Health Conference with delegates from across the North East organised by staff in Children's Services. Many aspects of the Health agenda were discussed. The conference was sponsored by the Personal Finance Education Group. The aim of the conference was to celebrate the achievements of children and young people in achieving healthy school status and in sharing best practice.

#### 10. Darlington Children's Trust

##### E-Safety Update

The Council's Learning Technologies Team, community interest company Humantics and a group of young people from the Borough, won an award for an internet safety film they created as a result of the tragic death of Darlington College student Ashleigh Hall, who was murdered by paedophile Peter Chapman. The film they made – Choices... a Click too far was winner of the Digital Media category. It forms part of a pack of training materials called E-Safety for All, created by the Council's Learning Technologies Team which provides teachers with resources for teaching internet safety to children from nursery age up to further education.

##### Tellus 4 Survey

The Tellus survey was introduced by Ofsted as part of the Joint Area Review methodology to provide a young persons' perspective of their local area. The survey was extended to all local authorities in 2007 (Tellus 2) to gather information from young people across all local authority areas.

In 2009, 16 eligible schools signed up for Tellus4 representing 45.7% of our eligible schools; an increase on Tellus 3 in 2008 (37%). The final number completing the survey was 14 (12 primary, 2 secondary) or 40% of the eligible schools; a continued increase on 2008. The total number of pupils completing the survey was 925 (465 - Y6; 309 - Y8 and 151 - Y10).

The five National Indicators calculated using Tellus information are shown in the table below. The figures give comparisons with national averages (Nat) and statistical neighbours (SN)

	<b>DBC %</b>	<b>Nat %</b>	<b>SN %</b>
NI110: Participation in Positive Activities	66%	66%	64%
NI115: Substance misuse by Young People	9%	10%	12%
NI199: Satisfaction with parks and play areas	50%	54%	51%
NI50: Emotional health and wellbeing	56%	56%	59%
NI69: Children who have experienced bullying*	38%	29%	28%

\* The Darlington figures varied substantially from the national and SN responses and were red flagged.

The Tellus4 survey shows that Darlington's children and young people perceive their local area and their life experiences on a par with the national picture. However, there are some responses which provide reliable information for the planning and delivery of services. These have been incorporated into the formal Needs Assessment as part of the Annual Review of the Children and Young People's Plan 2009.

The coalition government has recently announced that the Tellus survey will no longer continue and Darlington Children's Trust will commence discussions about the next steps for future consultation with children and young people.

#### 11. European Year 2010: Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion

The European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion 2010 is an opportunity for the EU to find out what is happening across the member States. Being at the frontline of combating poverty, local and regional agencies are in a unique position, dealing day in and day out with individuals experiencing, or at risk of experiencing poverty and exclusion to know about the services and the good practice in their region.

The aim is to make the 2010 Year an opportunity for collating examples of innovation and good practice in combating poverty and social exclusion across the EU resulting in a Europe-wide Best Practice Publication.

The Dept for Work and Pensions (DWP) has given funding to regions to undertake their activities.

As part of UK involvement the Social Inclusion Regional Group (SIRG) through the Northeast Office in Brussels has drawn together local authorities, trades unions, and voluntary and community groups from across the region to work together to host a series of events looking at:

- Financial Inclusion
- Combating Discrimination
- Child Poverty
- Decent Housing
- Access to Jobs

Darlington's event theme is *Combating Discrimination* and our European colleagues also looking at this aspect are Valencia and Oslo.

Darlington is hosting its event on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2010 at the Central Hall, Dolphin Centre from 1.30pm to 4.30pm. It is a showcase event with a focus on good practice and innovation which is making a difference to children and young people. To broaden the event local organisations are being asked to get involved in Darlington Diversity Day e.g. private employers, public sector, third sector and schools.

**Councillor Cyndi Hughes**

**Member with Portfolio for Children and Young People**