
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

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

School Term Dates 2016-17

2. The school term date arrangements have been set for Darlington Maintained Schools for the academic years 2016/17 and these were published at the end of June 2015.
3. Following circulation of the information paper to schools and governors, officers from Local Authorities drafted a preferred term date model for the 2016/17 academic year following the consultation exercise which ended on 22 May 2015, with stakeholders, 42 schools in Darlington as well as with their Governing Bodies.

Children and Young People's Collective

4. The Collective met on 8 April 2015 and had young people's emotional health and well-being as its focus. The multi-agency group discussed work in place – ranging from LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children's Board) sub group examining 'self-harm' and services available to CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services) and the current review. This important area of work is a PCC (Primary Care Centre) priority locally and subject to national review.
5. The Collective met again on 15 June 2015, with the main item being use of "legal highs" (NPS – Novel Psychoactive Substances). An interesting discussion took place about the "Darlington picture" with perspectives from Health, DAAT, Trading Standards, the voluntary sector and schools. A multi-agency group has been created to gather evidence and inform where awareness raising will be most effective. The message to the public is: "Do you know what's in it?"

Corporate Parenting

6. The Corporate Parenting Panel was held on 23 June 2015. The Panel received reports on the educational achievements of children looked after and also the health outcomes.
7. Members have received mandatory 'corporate parenting' training which included small group discussions with young people, foster carers and officers. This was well received and ensures Members have opportunity to be assured that services are of a good standard.

Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)

8. The Board met on 13 May 2015 and was chaired by the newly appointed Independent Chair, Richard Burrows, who has extensive knowledge of chairing other multi-agency partnerships. Members discussed and agreed the Board priority areas for 2015 and beyond, following discussions at the Board's development day in March. The identified priorities are:
 - (a) Child Sexual Exploitation: Prevention, protection and prosecution; developing community knowledge (licensing and taxi drivers) and links with the Safeguarding Adults Board on the joint priority area of 'Sexual Exploitation'.
 - (b) Neglect: Identification and prevention; developing evidence based interventions; measuring the impact of multi-agency interventions.
 - (c) Self-Harm: Mental health, emotional well-being and resilience; clear pathways of support for practitioners, parents and carers and young people (self-harm and suicide prevention); linkages with other bodies (Health and Well-Being Board, Public Health and work being undertaken with Durham).
 - (d) Early Help - Who's Responsibility?: Evaluating the effectiveness of 'early help' services for children and families by partner agencies; developing and agreeing a multi-agency 'early help' strategy.
9. The Safeguarding Board's Business Unit are currently developing an Annual Report (2014-15) and Strategic Plans to take forward these priorities. These reports will be presented to the LSCB this month.

School Forum

10. The Forum met on 19 May 2015. The agenda included regular reports concerning the current and previous years' budget position, as well as a number of reports providing updates regarding commissioned school services. The Forum was notified that the previous year's final budget had an improved position over that projected of approximately £150k after existing commitments, which has been rolled forward into the current year's budget.
11. The Forum also received a request from George Dent Nursery for £13,000 of additional funding in 2015/16, which was approved.

Education

12. The latest Ofsted Inspection report for the Longfield Academy of Sport was published on 21 April. The Academy was judged to be good in all areas.

Child Protection/Looked After Children Statistics

13. On 4 June 2015 there were 192 children Looked After by Darlington Borough Council. This is a decrease of 10 children since 23 March 2015. Within the total number, 14 children were in pre-adoptive placements; 23 children were placed with family and friends – deemed Looked After; 58 children were aged 5 years and under; 16 young people were aged 17 years.
14. At the end of May 2015, 97 children had a Child Protection Plan. This related to 41 families. 66 per cent of children on a Child Protection Plan were as a result of Neglect, 33 per cent as a result of Emotional harm and 1 per cent due to Physical abuse.
15. There has been an increase in unborn babies being made subject to a Plan and this is 4 per cent of all Child Protection Plans. Children aged under 5 years old (excluding unborn babies) account for 36 per cent of plans, 37 per cent are aged 5-10 years, 17 per cent are between 11-15 years, 6 per cent 16 years old and older.
16. Work is currently ongoing with NYAS (National Youth Advocacy Services) to obtain further feedback from children and young people on the services they receive whilst being subject to child protection plans. This will be collated and presented through the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).

Children's Homes Provision for Children who are Looked After by Darlington Borough Council

17. Darlington is leading the work to develop a framework of Independent Children's Home Providers in partnership with Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland and Hartlepool Borough Councils. This approach aims to extend the choice of provision, improve quality and provide value for money through collaborative commissioning. It is anticipated that the framework arrangement will be in place by 1st April 2016.

Funded Childcare Places for Two Year Olds and the Early Years Pupil Premium

18. Darlington has met the Department for Education's target of making 634 free childcare places available for eligible two year olds. These places have been met by working in partnership with local schools, private nurseries, playgroups and childminders. At the end of April 2015 take up of these places by parents was around 60 per cent. This take up should gradually improve as from 1 April the eligibility checking process has been made easier for providers and parents with the introduction of the on-line eligibility checker (available at www.darlington.gov.uk/childcarechecker) and there are planned marketing activities over the summer period, including a series of commercials on Star Radio.
19. From 1 April 2015 around 380 children in Darlington have become eligible for the new Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) which is paid to schools and early education providers to enhance their ability to improve eligible children's outcomes.

Three and four year olds accessing funded early education will attract EYPP if they meet at least one of the following criteria:

- (a) their family receives either Income Support, income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, income-related Employment and Support Allowance, support under part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, the guaranteed element of State Pension Credit, Child Tax Credit, Working tax Credit or Universal Credit; or
- (b) they have been in local authority care for 1 day or more, have been adopted from care or have left care under a special guardianship order or residence order."

Councillor Cyndi Hughes
Children and Young People Portfolio