

# Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Agenda



**9.30 am Monday, 2 November 2020  
Via Microsoft Teams**

**In accordance with Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, this meeting will be held on a virtual basis. Members of the Public can view a live stream of the meeting at:**

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**Members of the public wanting to raise issues/make representations at the meeting can do so by emailing [Allison.hill@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:Allison.hill@darlington.gov.uk) 24 hours before the meeting begins.**

1. Introductions/ Attendance at Meeting
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To approve the Minutes of the meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on:
  - (a) 29 June 2020; (Pages 1 - 2)
  - (b) 13 July 2020 (Special); and (Pages 3 - 8)
  - (c) 7 September 2020 (Note of Informal Meeting) (Pages 9 - 12)
5. Academy Trusts –  
Presentation from the Regional Schools Commissioner
6. Adoption Tees Valley Annual Report 2019/20 –  
Report of the Service Manager, Adoption Tees Valley  
(Pages 13 - 50)
7. Darlington Safeguarding Partnerships Annual Report 2019/20 –  
Report of the Director of Children and Adult Services  
(Pages 51 - 78)

8. Performance Report Quarter 1 2020/21 –  
Report of the Director of Children and Adult Services  
(Pages 79 - 106)
9. Work Programme –  
Report of the Managing Director  
(Pages 107 - 122)
10. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEM(S) (if any) which in the opinion of the Chair of this  
Committee are of an urgent nature and can be discussed at this meeting
11. Questions



**Luke Swinhoe**  
**Assistant Director Law and Governance**

**Friday, 23 October 2020**

**Town Hall**  
**Darlington.**

**Membership**

Councillors Bartch, Mrs Culley, Ali, Bell, Crudass, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Lister, Lucas, Renton and Snedker

**Statutory Co-optees**

Malcolm Frank and Carly Spence

**Non Statutory Co-optees**

Maura Regan, Tim Fisher, Nick Lindsay, Glenis Harrison, Janet Woodcock and John Armitage

If you need this information in a different language or format or you have any other queries on this agenda please contact Allison Hill, Democratic Officer, Resources Group, during normal office hours 8.30 a.m. to 4.45 p.m. Mondays to Thursdays and 8.30 a.m. to 4.15 p.m. Fridays email: [allison.hill@darlington.gov.uk](mailto:allison.hill@darlington.gov.uk) or telephone 01325 405997

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 29 June 2020

**PRESENT** – Councillors Bartch, Crudass, Mrs Culley, Ali, Bell, C L B Hughes, L Hughes, Lister, Lucas, Renton and Snedker

**STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – None

**NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – Nick Lindsay and John Armitage

**APOLOGIES** – Malcolm Frank and Carly Spence

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillors Clarke and Dulston

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Jane Kochanowski (Assistant Director of Children's Services) and Tony Murphy (Head of Education and Inclusion)

### **CYP1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21**

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor C Hughes be appointed Chair of this Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

### **CYP2 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21**

**RESOLVED** – That Councillor Snedker be appointed Vice Chair of this Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2020/21.

### **CYP3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

### **CYP4 TO CONSIDER THE TIMES OF MEETINGS OF THIS COMMITTEE FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2020/21**

**RESOLVED** - That meetings of this Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee be held at 9.30 a.m. for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21.

### **CYP5 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 3 FEBRUARY 2020**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 3 February 2020.

**RESOLVED** – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 3 February 2020 be approved as a correct record.

### **CYP6 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) in relation to items

scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the 2020/21 Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas to be included in the work programme.

Members agreed that the Quad of Aims that had been received in relation to Adoptive Services be included in the work programme and also to examine how the coronavirus pandemic has affected the adoption of children.

Members discussed the impact of the pandemic on the sufficiency provision of early years and requested that this also be included in the annual report to Members scheduled for January 2021.

With regard to the Coronavirus Pandemic it was agreed that an update report on the impact of COVID-19 be presented to the Special Meeting of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee scheduled for 13 July 2020.

Members also agreed that the presentation to Scrutiny by the Regional Schools Commissioner be re-arranged as soon as possible.

**RESOLVED** – That the work programme be noted.

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 13 July 2020

**PRESENT** – Councillors C L B Hughes (Chair), Bartch, Mrs Culley, Ali, Crudass, L Hughes, Lister, Lucas, Renton and Snedker

**STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – Carly Spence

**NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – Nick Lindsay and John Armitage

**APOLOGIES** – Councillor Bell, Malcolm Frank,

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Jane Kochanowski (Assistant Director of Children's Services), Tony Murphy (Head of Education and Inclusion) and Allison Hill (Democratic Officer)

### **CYP7 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

### **CYP8 OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Scrutiny Members on progress within Children's Services since the last meeting with a specific focus on COVID-19 pandemic response.

The submitted report outlined how the workforce within Children's Services had adapted to home working, with some exceptions where staff were building based, and to support understanding of how services were being impacted by the crisis a workforce capacity tracking tool had been developed to support managers across the service to monitor and review service capacity on a daily basis. It was reported that staffing levels had remained at normal levels throughout the pandemic.

Legislative changes came into force on 24 April 2020 to allow for flexibilities in care planning processes for children in care and adoptive pathways through the Adoption and Children (Corona Virus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020, however it was reported that other than introducing virtual methods of working the Local Authority had not implemented any of the amendments and Children's Services remained operational throughout the pandemic.

It was also reported that on 30 April 2020, the Secretary of State issued a notice to be in force from 1 May to 31 May 2020 to modify the duty in Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 to secure special educational provision and health care provision in accordance with Educational Health and Care (EHC) plans. This meant that local authorities and health bodies must use 'reasonable endeavors' to discharge their duties considering for each child and young person with an EHC plan and what they could reasonably provide under the circumstances. It was reported that in Darlington normal decision making processes for SEND continued throughout the COVID-19 period and the Multi-Agency Panel continued to meet virtually fortnightly.

With regard to safeguarding and assurance the Council and its partners completed RAG rating of all children and families that were open to services at the start of lockdown to ensure clarity for those who would be of most concern and prioritised visits; and each organisation carried out Covid-19 Risk Assessments to identify the most high-risk families. The individual RAG rated lists from each organisation were combined to produce two Multi-Agency templates for children who have an EHC Plan and children who have a social worker enabling the most vulnerable to be supported and safeguard children who are at risk. A multi-agency group had been established, known as the Critical Safeguarding Partnership Group (CSPG) to ensure strategic oversight across all agencies of vulnerable children and a new set of guidance was developed by partners in the early stages of lockdown.

It was reported that since the start of lockdown and the partial closure of schools on 23 March 2020, 100 per cent of schools in Darlington had remained open for vulnerable children and those with critical worker parents, compared to the national average of 61 per cent of schools being open in April 2020. All of Darlington's schools made arrangements that enabled children with a social worker to continue to attend and children and their parents were actively encouraged to do so and school attendance was monitored daily.

On 3 July 2020 average attendance at school for children with a social worker was 30 per cent which compared favourably with the last published Department for Education national attendance estimate for this cohort which was 18 per cent as of 11 June 2020. It was also reported that throughout the pandemic there had been a strong multi-agency focus on attendance with liaison between Head Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Social Workers and health colleagues to ensure the most vulnerable children received a co-ordinated approach to their education and on line learning.

With regard to referrals, it was reported that throughout the early stages of lockdown referrals reduced substantially with 38 children being referred during April 2020 compared to 102 during April 2019, however since June these numbers had steadily risen to nearer normal levels with 76 children referred during May 2020. It was also reported that although the number of contacts received regarding domestic abuse had decreased, a larger number of these progressed onto referral to social care which suggested a rise in the severity of the abuse and a higher level of impact/risk/concern for the child. There had also been an increase in the number of children who were feeling the impact of living with physical abuse.

Early Help services continued to respond to all contacts from professionals and members of the public, maintaining a focus of regular contact with families; services that were usually delivered through the children's centres were being delivered online, with advice about children's development and regular video sessions around play and positive interaction proving popular with families; some families required food parcels which were delivered by staff adhering to appropriate working practices; staff continue to review and offer telephone and virtual home visiting support where necessary and have been creative in responding to need using technology and social media; where communication with some children has proved challenging, increased use of the Mind of My Own app has been used to support this; and families open to Keeping Families Together (KFT) were also RAG rated using the Covid-19 risk assessment and had been offered ongoing face to face support throughout lockdown.

The submitted report highlighted missing episodes that were now reducing and reported that most children had adhered to lockdown measures and return home interviews had been carried out through virtual visits; the Assessment and Safeguarding teams continued to undertake assessments, reviews and multi-agency meetings by adapting to virtual mediums such as Microsoft Teams, FaceTime and WhatsApp video calls and where possible using social distancing and PPE, face to face home visits had taken place for children in need, children subject to Child Protection Plans and children who are in care; changes were made to the number of children accessing Harewood Hill Lodge short break centre to minimise the risk of Covid-19 and risk assessments identified the most vulnerable children who were provided with a targeted service; and it was reported that children and families had been very understanding of the change to the way social workers had stayed in touch by virtual contact.

With regard to Children in Care, it was reported that from the beginning of April there had been a total of 26 children brought into care with 61.54 per cent of those being placed with extended family members; during the pandemic the Family Courts adapted to new processes and reduced the type of hearing they would hear in order to manage virtual Court hearings and remained open for urgent applications in respect of children who are at risk of significant harm, however non urgent applications have been unable to be lodged with Court and Family Courts will re-open to non-urgent applications on 1 July 2020; contact between children in care and their families has been via virtual methods and it was reported that young children had found it extremely positive for some children in specific circumstances; it was reported that there had been minimal movement in placements as a result of Covid-19 and moves had only taken place when there had been risks of infection and the reduction in placement moves had resulted in an improved performance regarding the three or more placement moves in a rolling 12 month period for child; Therapeutic Practitioners were supporting social workers with young people and family mental health and well-being; social workers had continued to celebrate young people's birthdays; participation workers held weekly meetings to capture how young people were dealing with the Covid-19 restrictions; and Residential Homes had been working as per regulations and standards with staff maintaining a focus on safeguarding children in their care.

Care Leavers remained in contact with services and had been supported in various ways during the pandemic with continued weekly access to the Psychological Well-being Practitioner for Care Leavers via telephone; foster carers had been flexible to help the service provide placements to meet the needs of children and continued to receive virtual support; Adoption Tees Valley remained operational using remote means to engage adopters and liaise with assessing social workers in the local authority; during lockdown daily meetings had taken place between the local authority and the Regional Schools Commissioner and daily updates have been issued to schools form Education Services; the Schools Forum met on 14 January 2020 and agreed the School Funding Formula Growth Fund and central budgets for schools and early years for 2020/21; Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6 reopened on 1 June and Secondary Schools followed for Year 10 and Year 12 from 15 June; a higher proportion of early years providers had remained open in Darlington than nationally and during the pandemic an Early Years Education Strategy Group was established to consider issues facing the sector and to develop strategies to support;

contact monitoring has been undertaken with private residential homes operating in Darlington and no matters of contractual compliance had been identified with positive outcomes for children and young people; and the Darlington Partnership welcomed David Gallagher as the new Statutory Safeguarding Partner representing the Health Sector with responsibility for the Tees Valley and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group.

The Chair invited the school representatives on this Scrutiny Committee to give their views on the submitted report and their contact with the local authority throughout the pandemic and it was agreed among the representatives that there had been a good working relationship between the Council and the primary and secondary schools and they had felt well supported and that collaboration and communication had been very strong.

The Chair also acknowledged and congratulated the schools on the work they had undertaken in close collaboration with the local authority.

Members discussed the submitted report and in particular requested clarification on how confident Members can be with regard to contact with those pupils who were not back in school and was advised by Nick Lindsay the 11-19 Partnership representative that schools had been undertaking contact with those pupils by door knocks and garden visits to ensure some dialogue with vulnerable families was made and the Assistant Director of Children's Services also confirmed that Covid-19 Risk Assessments carried out by all organisations ensures those children are kept safe.

Members questioned if there had been any cost implications of 100 per cent of all Darlington schools remaining open with low numbers; acknowledged that it was positive to see staffing levels remained strong and services had been learning from lockdown whilst maintaining the quality of contact and that statutory visits continued to be carried out using virtual methods.

Members also discussed the supply of personal protection equipment; Voice of the Child visits; reassurances that children and families were receiving support; with regard to EHC Plans the utilisation of the flexibility of the legislation to undertake Regional Multi Agency Placement Panels; the ceasing of 'reasonable endeavours' at the end of July and how this would affect the authority in regard to timeliness.

The Chair acknowledged the work that had been undertaken with the children and families however reiterated the need to follow the outcomes for these families and suggested that Members carry out a 'deep dive' review and examine this issues in conjunction with the Parent Carer Forum.

Other issues discussed were in relation to on line engagement with those families who did not have English as a first language; digital inclusion and access for all children to laptops and wi-fi; the reasons for the initial increase of missing episodes at the beginning of lockdown; what arrangements were in place for the return of all children to school in September and the logistical challenges facing schools with the management of 'bubbles'; and discussion around the challenges around the High Needs Budget to fund special schools, individual EHC plans and packages for alternative provision.



**RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That the thanks and congratulations of this Scrutiny Committee be extended to Children’s Services and all educational settings during these difficult times.

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## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 7 September 2020

### ***PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS WAS NOT A FORMALLY CONSTITUTED MEETING***

**PRESENT** – Councillors C L B Hughes (Chair), Bartch, Mrs Culley, Ali, Bell, Crudass, L Hughes, Lister, Lucas, Renton and Snedker

**STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – None

**NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – Nick Lindsay and John Armitage

**APOLOGIES** – Malcolm Frank, Carly Spence and Tim Fisher

**ABSENT** – Maura Regan, Glenis Harrison and Janet Woodcock

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE** – Councillors Dulston (Stronger Communities Portfolio)

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Sharon Raine (Head of Performance and Transformation), Allison Hill (Democratic Officer), Joanne Stoddart (Head of Assessment, Care Planning and Looked After Through Care), Paul Richardson (Head of Skills and Employability), Martin Graham (Head of Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement), Ken Ross (Public Health Principal) and Tony Murphy (Head of Education and Inclusion)

### **MINUTES**

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meetings of this Scrutiny Committee held on 29 June and 13 July 2020.

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AND PUBLIC HEALTH - POST-COVID-19 PRIORITIES**

Ken Ross, the Public Health Specialist gave a presentation to Members on public health and Post Covid-19 priorities.

The presentation outlined the government's obesity strategy launched in July 2020 recognising obesity as a significant risk factor for Covid-19 and which also complements the Darlington Healthy Weight Plan, a whole system approach to providing an environment that supports healthy choice; highlighted how schools were being supported with mental health issues including the successful Trailblazer bid for school based mental health support through transition, focus on children and young people in years 4-8 from September 2021 and the Emotional Health and Resilience Nurse commissioned from the Harrogate and District Foundation Trust.

The presentation also highlighted how the 0-19 Service had at the start of lockdown changed its style of delivery and prioritised families to ensure the most vulnerable had contact by the service which was delivered by various virtual means and the service had received positive feedback from parents and families who had accessed the service during this time.

Regarding healthy eating Members discussed with the Public Health Specialist and the representatives of the Primary Schools Forum and the 11-19 Partnership what was being offered in schools for lunches, packed lunches, the voucher scheme and free school meals; how to tackle an obesogenic society; and the mental health support within schools and specialized mental health support.

Members thanked Ken Ross for his presentation and also extended thanks to to his team for their work throughout the pandemic.

### **INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to set out the Independent Reviewing Officer Annual report for 2019/20.

The submitted report provided Members with an overview of the work of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) service in relation to Looked After Children, including the Dispute Resolution Process and an overview of the performance of the unit in a range of responsibilities.

The submitted report also provided information on the role of the IRO's and statutory and non-statutory functions that the service is responsible for; detailed staffing levels and caseloads; provided statistical information relating to the number of Looked After Children and number and timeliness of Looked After Reviews; the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans and timeliness of Initial Child Protection Conferences; the Quality Assurance function; and highlighted the actions scheduled for 2020/21.

Members discussed the report and in particular how Independent Reviewing Officers are forging relationships with Members; the caseload figure in Darlington of 68 children which remains in the upper limit of the statutory guidance of 70; and the importance of full participation of Looked After Children in their reviews and contact with the IRO.

### **PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 4 2019/20**

The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators.

The submitted report provided Quarter 4 (January to March) 2019/20 performance information in line with an indicator set agreed by the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group and subsequently by each individual Scrutiny Committee.

The submitted report highlighted where Children and Young People were performing well and where there was a need to improve. It was also outlined that where indicators are reported annually, quarterly updates will not be available.

It was highlighted that 17.2 per cent of re-referrals were repeated within 12 months, which was better than the target of 18 per cent; 100 per cent of children with a Child Protection Plan and 100 per cent of Children Looked After had been allocated to a

qualified social worker; Year to date, 0.6 per cent of children who had their Child Protection Plan (CPP) ceased, had been subject to a CPP for 2 years or more and continues to remain below the target of 5 per cent; 89.0 per cent of statutory looked after children visits had been completed within the timescale and performance against this indicator had continued to improve throughout the year; 73.6 per cent of looked after children aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years), had been in their current placement continuously for at least two years; 94.3 per cent of looked after children who were due a review health check received them within the required timescale; 90.2 per cent of looked after children who were due a review dental check had received them within the required timescale; and 28.1 per cent of Care Leavers were not in employment, education or training (NEET).

The areas highlighted for focus were in respect of referrals screened and completed within one day which was slightly below the target of 90 per cent at 86.8 per cent; 89.5 per cent of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days from the Strategy meeting being held/Section 47 being initiated; timeliness of assessments was 88.7 per cent, just below target of 90 per cent, however it was highlighted that it was important that social workers have time to undertake good quality direct work and was under constant monitoring; 92.0 per cent of statutory child protection visits had been completed within 15 working days, with 79.6 per cent completed within the internal aspirational target of 10 working days; and the rate of looked after children had increased and was currently 120.1 per 10,000 population (270 children), compared to 117.2 per 10,000 population (264) last year.

Members discussed in particular the looked after children who are transferred into the system from another authority and how they are dealt with; use of the Early Help Service to support families prior to statutory intervention and also the Strengthening Families Programme, which Members requested further information on at a future date.

Members also expressed their concerns at the percentage of Children in Care that had had three or more placements within the previous 12 months and the number of Children in Care refusing dental appointments and health assessments and the possible reasons for this.

## **DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the progress and performance of the Designated Officer, April 2019 to March 2020 and to highlight the required actions for April 2020 to March 2021.

The submitted report outlined the Designated Officer's function, in line with national guidance and highlighted that all organisations working with children in Darlington are required to have policies and procedures in place on what their organisation should do when an allegation is made against an employee/volunteer who has contact with children. These policies and procedures are in line with Darlington Safeguarding Partnership multi-agency procedures.

Members discussed in particular the increase in the number of referrals in this

reporting period explained by the high number of allegations from a school for children with Special Educational Needs which accounted for 19 per cent of the total number of allegations, mostly relating to the use of restraint and the Action Plan that had been put in place with the Safeguarding Officer to address this issue and what contact had been made with other authorities who have children attending the setting.

## **LEARNING AND SKILLS ANNUAL REPORT**

The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on the performance of the Learning and Skills Service for the academic year 2019/20.

It was reported that the Learning and Skills Service continues to perform well with a 'Good' Ofsted grade whilst supporting some of the most vulnerable adults, young people and families in Darlington; and have put in place further checks and controls to ensure the service continues to perform at a high level as a result of the shift of provision due to a change in the demographic of the learners.

The submitted report also highlighted some challenges to be faced in 2020/21 with the move towards Tees Valley Combined Authority priorities as part of the devolution of the Adult Education Budget; the challenges faces by Covid-19 and the transition to online learning at the start of lockdown using Google Classroom and the expectation that all further education provision will fully restart from September 2020; and the ongoing challenges of apprenticeship funding.

## **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included in the previously approved work programme.

# Annual Report 2019-2020



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Glossary

ADM- agency decision maker

PO- Placement order

RAA- Regional Adoption Agency

VAA- Voluntary Adoption Agency



## **1. Introduction**

Adoption Tees Valley has now been running as an operational Regional Adoption Agency for almost 2 years.

This is the second full Annual Report, for the reporting period of 1.4.19-31.3.20, a year where there has been more embedding of the practice, procedures, and systems for delivery of the adoption service to the Tees Valley Local Authorities.

One of the biggest achievements is to have expanded the adopter voice into the RAA over this past year. As we continue to develop adoption in Tees Valley, and bring in new ideas for new ways of working, it's really important to listen to the views of adopters, and those who use the service, to improve their lives.

We have been really pleased to expand the Adopter Partnership Forum, which is now a monthly meeting between the Agency and adopters.

The Directors have now also welcomed 2 newly recruited non-executive directors to the Board, who are adoptive parents, and who will share decision making and setting the strategic direction of the RAA.

Pete, one of the new non-executive directors:

I was overjoyed to become a non-executive director earlier in the year: I know how hard everybody works at ATV and how passionate they are about what they do and why they do it, so to be able to contribute towards this is a huge honour and privilege.

It has also been great to be involved in the Adopter Forum meetings. As a result of the forum meetings we have brought about an improved communications strategy to ensure as many adoptive families as possible are aware of the vast support available through ATV (from ASF and therapeutic support to parties and support network meetings), we have contributed towards the planning of a 'youth group' for adopted children, we have contributed towards plans for reaching a wider sector of the community (including the BAME community) and we have been able to use the wide and varied experiences of attendees to ensure fair and balanced discussion of all topics in the eyes of existing adopters, where they not only speak for themselves but also the children in their care.

Alongside Pippa, I feel we have already started to make worthwhile contributions in terms of the adopters' voice shaping how things move forward, particularly during

current circumstances as to how support can be provided to all families, and I look forward to continuing to work closely with ATV in the future.

The Service and its key stakeholders can now begin to consider whether the RAA is delivering on the ambitions of the regionalisation of adoption programme, and work in a more informed way where challenges remain, to support improvement.

*Is there evidence that children are achieving permanence through adoption more quickly? Are more children who cannot return to birth family finding permanence through adoption?*

Within this year, the service has focussed on improving timescales, and progressing early permanence for children, where this is appropriate for their plan.

The provisional data shows a reduction in timescales for children from entering care to moving in with adopters. Encouragingly, those LA's where timescales were the highest have shown improvement. A small number of children continue to have extended timescales, sometimes for reasons associated with Court decision making, and care planning for further siblings. Where it is identified that there is delay ATV and the LA seek to work together in a collective, but robust way, to address causes of delay, and progress planning for children.

The information on timescales from Placement Order to Match have remained the same over the last year. There is variation in the timescales for children, and while many children are achieving timely matching, some children wait longer.

In ATV further analysis is being undertaken to understand the profile of those children who have waited longest, and those for whom the plan has changed from adoption to permanence via long term fostering. This will help focus the recruitment strategy in a more targeted way. It will also help think more about the therapeutic needs of children prior to seeking an adoptive family, and what we may need to think about collectively, to help prepare children and adopters, where emotional needs are more significant, and create vulnerability. We already know that we have a high demand for adoptive families for siblings, and we regularly promote this in external marketing.

Early permanence has been promoted and developed more fully across the RAA footprint this year, and we have seen a total of 16 children have an EP placement within the year, at some stage. Within the previous year, 7 children had an EP placement.

The benefits of early permanence for children are that the child has the opportunity for earlier attachment to their permanent parent/caregiver, and reduced moves between carers at this crucial early stage of life.

Through ATV, more prospective adopters are being introduced to the notion of early permanence, and are considering this within their assessment, supported by feedback from adopters who have taken this route.

Adopters who offer fostering for adoption/EP are being helped to support contact arrangements and a number of them have met with the child's birth parent(s) and been able to work together with them in care planning. The indicators are that this will provide better long term outcomes for children, with a greater sense of their identity held within the adoptive family as they grow up.

We have increased the numbers of children who have had early permanence placements, but we know we need to do more, together. Regional training has been planned, but was postponed due to the recent pandemic.

The service has made significant improvements in recruitment, which has contributed to availability of adopters for the children referred. Additionally, there has been strategic work with regional Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAAs) to encourage them to contribute to sufficiency within this region, and a greater number of children have been placed with regional VAA's, either within the North East region, or within a neighbouring region.

The number of children who have been referred for an adoption placement remains high creating demand for placements. The number of children placed for adoption within the year has been the highest over recent years which has meant that although recruitment has been stepped up, there has been a rise in the number of placements with VAA's, and other RAA's over this last year.

*What about adopters? Are those wishing to adopt children achieving their ambitions in a more timely way?*

The evidence would suggest that ATV is making impact on the journey of those wishing to adopt. Assessment timescales are improving, and once approved there has been a small reduction in the numbers of prospective adopters who wait more than 3 months before they are matched. Exploration into the 4th month beyond approval shows that around half of all approved adopters are matched by this point.

Most adopters are being linked and matched with a child, or children quickly following approval.

Almost all ATV adopters are taking children from the Tees Valley region, which we celebrate. This means children remain within the region of their birth identity, and often important links with siblings are more easily maintained.

*Are adoptive families receiving timely and high quality adoption support?*

In the first ATV Bi-annual report, the vision for adoption support was set out:

The vision for Adoption Tees Valley is to be a centre of excellence and resource for adopted children and their families throughout the period of their childhood, and beyond where necessary. We know that there can be considerable support needs for children and families after the Adoption Order is granted, and sometimes even shortly after placement. Many adopted children have needs associated with early trauma; attachment difficulties; separation and loss; and may need some help with recovering and managing the long term impact of these issues.

The service has placed considerable focus on the adoption support offer to adopters and children, within the service, and for those who have adopted prior to ATV setting up. The service is responsible for provision of adoption support to adopters who may have moved into the area, or who have adopted a child/ren from a local Authority outside of the area, and are now 3 years post adoption.

ATV now offers a post adoption support offer to each family for one year following the granting of an adoption order. This is with the aim of maintaining and building on the relationship with the assessing worker, to help families to engage in a longer term way with the service, and with the Tier One and Tier Two support services. Our long term goal is to reduce the levels of need for higher Tier services in the longer term, through earlier lower level support to children and families.

This year has seen the recruitment of an Adoption Education Support Worker, funded collectively by the 5 Local Authority Virtual Schools, and ATV is now able to offer education support, guidance and advice where required for children.

Additionally, the service has started a Children's group, for adopted children, to be alongside other adopted children, and build a sense of identity and belongingness with other children with adoption in common.

Where families require an adoption support assessment, there is a wait for this. The service has reviewed the way in which more timely support can be offered, and a new "triage" approach is planned.

## **2. Covid 19**

The coronavirus pandemic started in March 2020, and has continued to impact on adoption in Tees Valley into this reporting year, 2020-21.

Although this would fall into the next reporting period, the response to Covid is relevant to report within this period, for scrutiny and assurance about the service being delivered to children, prospective adopters and birth families.

The pandemic led to a quick response, and the building was closed, with workers moving to home based working very quickly. Stockton Borough Council is the host Council for the RAA, and operationally the service has been aligned with SBC procedures for managing risk.

The service is closely connected with the national RAA Heads group, and practice, guidance and changed procedures have been undertaken in line with national review and evaluation, and local consultation.

The Government issued amended regulations for adoption, under the Adoption and Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations, 2020.

- ATV has not removed the requirement for an adoption panel, which would be permitted under the amended regulations. ATV has continued to hold a weekly adoption panel, via video conferencing, chaired by an independent Chair. The local guidance has permitted reduction to 3 panel members if required, however, almost all panels have been attended by at least 5 panel members.
- ATV has used the flexibility permitted under amended regulations, to allow prospective adopters to enter stage 2 of the assessment process, without the medical or DBS being returned, in stage 1. Each case is considered by the Recruitment Manager, for decision making.
- No adopter has been approved without all checks, references and medicals including DBS, being returned and satisfactory, unless permitted under existing regulations governing fast track assessments.

Further, the RAA has worked together with Medical Advisors, and the 5 Local Authorities, to ensure that appropriate care is taken to fully understand children's needs, and prepare adoptive parents for children coming to live with them.

The adoption work has continued throughout "lockdown".

Recruitment and assessment of adopters has continued, using video conferencing, including for preparation training, and all assessment work. No adopters will be approved without at least one home visit by the assessor, to the adopters and all members of the household.

- Adopter approvals have continued.

- Children have continued to be referred, and matched with adopters.
- During the early stages of lockdown, no children were moved on to their new families. Careful risk management is now being used to plan for, and move children on to their new families, with whom they are matched, where it is safe and right to progress that plan.
- ATV has applied for Government funding, under the Covid 19 additional adoption support fund, and has commissioned additional support for adoptive parents via the Adopter Hub; psychological support; access to NVR support.

### **3. What has gone well, and what are the key challenges?**

- ✚ 91 children have stated their permanent family life with their new adoptive parents.
- ✚ 69 families have been created, offering children and adopters the opportunity for the rewards of family life.
- ✚ 3 sets of sibling groups of 3 have been placed. A further 16 sets of 2 siblings have been placed, enabling children to grow up with direct birth relatives.
- ✚ There has been some excellent examples of working together between ATV and the partner Local Authorities. See case study 1.
- ✚ Recruitment of adopters has gone well, with a significant improvement on the previous year. 50 adoptive families have been approved.
- ✚ ATV has worked together with the national Steering Group, to plan for a wider national approach to raising awareness about adoption, and the need for more families.
- ✚ The staff team has remained stable, while some new social workers, temporary business partners and support workers have joined the team. Team working is collegiate, and supportive, bringing a positive culture to the agency.
- ✚ Adoption support has been offered to many more families, across a greater range of tier 1, 2 and 3 services.
- ✚ The adopter voice has become more embedded and the Partnership Forum has begun to take shape.
- ✚ The children's group has started up, with the first cohort getting benefits from this group experience.

- ✚ The Virtual School heads have worked collectively with ATV to co-fund the Education Support Worker post, which is having impact and benefit in children's lives.
- ✚ The whole of the adoption support service has been enhanced, with funding from ASF. Therapeutic parenting training is now regularly delivered via different providers and models.
- ✚ More families are benefitting from direct therapy provision, through the access to the ATV Provider framework, and ASF funding.

### **Key challenges**

- ✚ There continue to be more children requiring families than adopters who are available, although nationally the gap is beginning to close.
- ✚ Sufficiency of adopters recruited through ATV is a key priority, in order to maximise financial resources, and enable children to be placed with adopters who the RAA supports, locally.
- ✚ The volume of work has been a challenge in this year, taking account of expansion in all areas.
- ✚ While in the main there is improvement to working closely together with all 5 Local Authorities, there remain some challenges to achieve timely referrals, and provision of information for family finding.
- ✚ Timescales for placement remain a challenge for some children. We need to have a shared and deeper understanding about the cause of this.
- ✚ Volume of Life Story work has continued to challenge the service.
- ✚ Services for non-agency adoptions compete with resources for children in our care who require permanence through adoption. The service has had to create a waiting list for step parents, and this can be lengthy.

Case Study 1: Working together – Hartlepool Borough Council and ATV- the experiences of 2 social workers

**Hartlepool social worker says:**

I feel that Hartlepool Borough Council and Adoption Tees Valley work in partnership with one another and this has a direct impact upon achieving early permanence for those children who have a plan of adoption and are waiting to be matched with their forever family. In respect of baby A, I submitted an Early Notification Form to Kath, the Permanence Champion, one month prior to A's birth. At this early stage I was mindful that further assessment with parents and wider family members was required however felt it was important to ensure that Adoption Tees Valley were fully aware of A to ensure that

family finding could commence without delay, should this be the final decision made by the Family Court. Myself and Kath met after I had submitted the Early Notification and Kath also visited A in the foster placement. I feel that this helps ATV to get a real sense of the child and assists greatly when exploring potential families who would be an excellent match.

Care proceedings concluded for A with a Placement Order granted. Kath was fully aware of all court dates and I liaised with her to inform her that final orders had been made. Kath forwarded me two family profiles and I received the PAR for a couple I felt would be the better match for A. An initial visit was completed by myself and Kath to meet the prospective adopters and their Social Worker. I felt the open communication between HBC and ATV hugely contributed to how quickly things progressed from final orders being made. Following matching, permanence was achieved for A without delay throughout the process from the Early Notification Form, to being placed with the forever family.

For A and prospective adopters this means that they are able to see milestones such as baby learning to crawl, weaning, taking the first steps and celebrating the first birthday. A has managed the transition into the adoptive placement without issue and I feel this has been helped massively by placement at a young age and how well the plan of introductions were facilitated by all involved.

Kath says:

My role as Early Permanence Champion for Hartlepool is to liaise with social workers to ensure that referrals for children with possible plans for adoption are received as soon as possible so that early internal family finding can commence without any delay. When a referral is received, it is my role to arrange an adoption process meeting with the social worker so that all relevant information about the child is received and court dates are shared so that I am able to monitor the case to ensure that there is no delay should a Placement Order be granted. I remain involved with the case up until a Placement Order is granted and the case is then transferred to a Family Finder.



#### 4. Benchmarking

Included within this section is information about adoption across the Tees Valley in previous years, and the half year position of ATV against some key performance and ASGLB scorecard indicators.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Population of children aged 0-17 Tees Valley	144,531	144,996	144, 996	145,691	146,120
Looked After Children (end of period) Numbers Tees Valley	1,370	1,585	1,717	1,862	2151
Adoptions Tees Valley	65	60	70	83	61

At 31.03.19		At 31.3.20	
Average time in days for child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family during year, Tees Valley <b>ASGLB scorecard A1</b>	446	Average time in days for child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family during year, Tees Valley  Govt threshold is 426 days Current national average: 486 days	432
Average time between Placement Order and a match, across Tees Valley <b>ASGLB scorecard A2</b>	210	Average time between Placement Order and a match, across Tees Valley  Govt. threshold : 121 days Current national average: 178 days	210
Number of approved adopter families waiting to be matched <b>ASGLB scorecard A11</b>	7	Number of adopter families waiting to be matched	22
Percentage of adopted families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to match <b>ASGLB scorecard A12</b>	75%	Percentage of adopted families matched to a child who waited at least 3 months from approval to match	71%
Number of adopters in assessment <b>ASGLB scorecard A13</b>	28	Number of adopters in assessment	35
Number of children looked after with a plan for adoption, not yet placed <b>ASGLB scorecard A9</b>	92	Number of children with a plan for adoption, not yet matched	76

Number of children with a plan for adoption and Placement Order, not yet placed <b>ASGLB scorecard A14</b>	53	Number of children with a plan for adoption and Placement Order, not yet placed	56
Number of children in a Foster For Adoption placement ( on the 31 <sup>st</sup> March) <b>ASGLB scorecard A17</b>	5	Number of children in a Foster For Adoption placement, on the 31.3.20	3
Number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds adopted from care in the year <b>ASGLB scorecard A6</b>	5	Number of children from ethnic minority backgrounds adopted from care in the year	5
Number of children aged 5+ adopted from care in the year <b>ASGLB scorecard A7</b>	12	Number of children aged 5+ adopted from care in the year	2
Number of sibling groups waiting to be adopted	32	Number of sibling groups waiting to be adopted	30
Number of children in sibling groups waiting to be adopted, or placed, together	68	Number of children in sibling groups waiting to be adopted, or placed, together	68
New Agency decisions that a child should be adopted within the year <b>ASGLB Scorecard A15</b>	106	New Agency decisions that a child should be adopted within the year to date	82
Number new Placement Order granted within year <b>ASGLB scorecard A16</b>	74	Number new Placement Order granted within year to date	67
Number of children for whom permanence decision has changed away from adoption <b>ASGLB scorecard A5</b>	35	Number of children for whom permanence decision has changed away from adoption	19

\*Data is provisional and will be verified in August 2020

Analysis of performance information within ATV:

- Adoptions from care have reduced from the previous year. Due to the time lag for adoption, this is reflective of the start-up year for the RAA, when it took time to establish procedures, and referral mechanisms, both within ATV, and between the Local Authorities and ATV. The data

in section 9 shows that placement activity has been higher this year, and so the dip in adoption orders granted during 2019-20 is not reflective of a general trend downwards in adoption activity in the region. In 2018-19 an additional 14 children were placed with ATV adopters from outside of the region.

- Average time for a child from entering care to moving in with their adoptive family (A1) has reduced this year. There is a significant range between Local Authorities, and in some LA's a very small number of children with delay in being placed for adoption can impact on the overall average.
- Average time between Placement Order to Match (A2) has remained the same, but the same principle exists that a small number of children can impact on overall figures.
- The number of adopters waiting, not yet matched at the year's end has increased to 22, from 7 last year. This is reflective of more adopters being approved, and moving through the process of approval, and matching. Although approved adopters were not yet formally matched, on the date of 31.3.20, in practice there are very few who are not linked quickly following the approval panel, and ADM. Section 5 shows that ATV has recruited and approved 50 adoptive families this year, and although this is positive, demand for placements exceeds this number, and prospective adopters are usually linked following approval.
- The percentage of adoptive families who wait at least 3 months from approval to match is 71 %, highlighting that many adopters are matched quickly following approval.
- The numbers of adopters in assessment has increased.
- The number of children with a plan for adoption, not yet placed has reduced, and with a Placement order, not yet placed, has slightly increased, from 53 to 56. Further exploration of these figures is undertaken regularly, to understand how many children are waiting, with no link being pursued with a specific family. In reality these numbers are very low, and are often less than 3 in a given Local Authority. Children are still considered to be waiting, not matched, until the matching panel considers their case and the Agency Decision Maker confirms the decision.
- The numbers of children in a fostering for adoption placement on the 31.3.20 was 3. Throughout the year, there have been a total of 16 children in EP placements at some point.
- The number of children with a revocation of their adoption plan has reduced this year, from 35 to 19.

For ATV, there are clear challenges to ensure that children referred are enabled to be matched with a suitable adoptive family in a timescale

that meets their needs. This depends on a number of factors: a strong sufficiency strategy, which is targeted and based on analysis of the needs of children coming through the system for whom adoption will be their final care plan. Sufficiency is dependent on achieving recruitment and approval of adopters who can meet the needs of children in this region. Also on securing a strategic approach to working with VAA's in the region to provide additional regional placements for children. The RAA has improved on recruitment of adopters this year, however, has relied on external VAA's, and some LA's, to support the sufficiency required for the increase in numbers of children requiring placement this year.

Timely placement for adoption also relies on good practice in referring children to the RAA, and provision of timely information, and documentation, to support family finding, as illustrated in case study 1. There have been some challenges in this arena over the last year, and ATV continue to work closely with all 5 LA's at an operational level to support best practice, and resolve delays, where these are evident.

Finally, where children are a little older they require help to be prepared for a move to a new family. This takes time, but should not be underestimated as a vital part of adoption and permanence planning, for children's long term wellbeing.

## **5. Marketing**

In total last year ATV received 292 enquires by people wishing to consider adoption. The agency social media channels grew steadily and there are now over 1,000 followers across Facebook and Twitter. [@AdoptTeesValley](#)

The ATV Marketing Officer summarises the work undertaken this year, to promote Adoption Tees Valley to prospective adopters within the regional "footprint" and

In the past year we have improved ATV's branding to give us a more competitive, modern edge and make us stand out in a crowded market. Alongside this we launched our new website which is much more user friendly and most importantly is "mobile phone compatible" which the previous website wasn't. Adopters were consulted on both projects and we have received positive feedback from them. As the website has just been launched, in March 2020, it is too soon to see its impact at the time of this report.

Last year small campaigns were run throughout the year, using key times to promote adoption. For example, Christmas was a good time to engage with prospective adopters in the region, and promote information about children waiting, which generated a lot of interest.

It was agreed that ATV would collaborate with the national adopter recruitment campaign, in National Adoption Week (October) which was being planned and supported through the RAA Heads of Service group, and DfE. While a lot of national preparation work was done for a longer term sustained approach to marketing for adoption, the national promotional campaign wasn't ready to fully launch in October. The follow up plan has unfortunately been **impacted by Covid, but we continue to work** closely with the national steering group, to benefit from centralised funding for marketing and promoting awareness of adoption.

We have however run regular smaller campaigns across digital platforms such as social media and google ads. Across Google Ads we reached 216,000 people which generated 13k clicks through to our website, on Facebook we reached 218,300 people via a range of methods including sponsored adverts, sponsored events and video adverts, this converted to 2,657 engagements with us via clicks to website and event responses. We were also featured on Radio including TFM and BBC Tees though this was via PR and not paid media.

We continue to update our mailing list which is now at over 300 people and regularly keep in touch with our adopters by sending out a monthly newsletter. The newsletter always includes a written piece from our adopters which we call 'adopter voice' the newsletter has been very well received.

## **6. Recruitment, Assessment and Approval of Adopters**

*Louise Addison, Recruitment Manager, summarises:*

During the last year there has been a lot of focus on improving the recruitment process in terms of improving timescales of assessments and working on increasing the number of adopter approvals. There has also been an emphasis on supporting adoption applicants to consider a wider range of children including sibling groups and harder to place children and early permanence placements.

The ongoing recruitment campaign on social media sites has proven to be successful and enquiries continue to rise. The new web page has launched which is more efficient and accessible to the user. Navigation around the page has been streamlined and data can be monitored more efficiently.

The impact of Covid -19 has brought some challenges to the recruitment process which has meant we have had to work quickly to adapt and continue to offer a service. We have revised the processes and are now offering virtual information evenings and preparation training. The volume of enquiries has risen significantly during this period which was unexpected

however it is a positive that people who have been considering adoption are now coming forward.

The main aims for the forthcoming year include strengthening the recruitment campaign to provide a wide range of adoptive placements for our children including early permanence carers, adopters who can care for a sibling group and children with more complex health needs.

The Service set out a challenging target of 60 new approvals for the year. This was based on projected need, generated through review of placement activity in 2018-19, and Placement Orders (PO) granted through the Courts within that period.

Recruitment processes have become more established, and the service is offering information events to provide more information to prospective adopters. During the year these have been improved, to deliver a presentation, and now all Information Events are supported by one of the ATV approved adopters, who will provide feedback and answer questions. This has been welcomed by prospective adopters.

### “Pipeline” – Prospective Adopters in Assessment

	April- September	October-March	Totals
Enquiries to Adopt	101	191	292
Initial Visits to prospective Adopters	23	42	65
Stage 1 Starts	33	28	61
Stage 2 Starts	29	25	54
Adopter Approvals	27	23	50

### Timescales for Assessments

- The national target for assessments is 182 days.

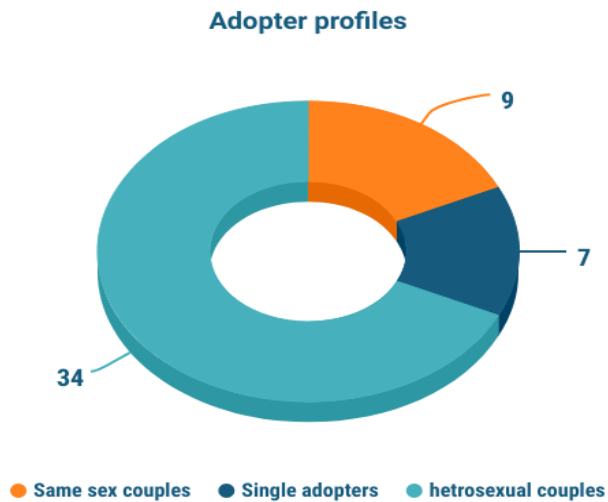
In ATV the average timescale for assessments completed is 202 days, which is outside of the government threshold.

The main reason for this delay is length of time for return of stage 1 medical checks, and length of time generally for some of the additional stage 1 checks, including DBS. In almost all cases, stage 2 is completed within the required 4 months period, i.e. 121 days

- The national target for “fast track” assessments is 121 days.

The ATV average timescale for fast track is 130 days, which is slightly outside of government timescale.

### Characteristics of prospective adopters approved



1 family approved was of BAME heritage

34 families were first time adopters

7 were foster carers for the child, going on to adopt

9 were second time adopters

### Preparation Training Groups

There have been 6 Preparation for Adoption Groups held over the year, with a total of 49 families attending.

Of the 49 families within this year,

- 9 were single applicants (19 %)
- 33 were heterosexual couples (67%)
- 7 were same sex couples (14%)

1 family were of BAME ethnicity.

Preparation groups are held bi-monthly, and take place over 4 days.

All applicants, including foster carers for a child they wish to adopt, are required to attend the full Preparation training course, if they have not previously adopted.

Applicants who have adopted previously are not required to attend again, but are encouraged to do so.

The Preparation group is delivered by 2 social workers, with one lead social worker who has responsibility for the preparation training in ATV.

The course covers, a range of information which helps to prepare applicants for becoming adoptive parents, and is a starting point for gaining an understanding of the loss, trauma and abuse which adopted children may have experienced, and importantly, what the long term impact of these adverse early experiences may be. They also consider the long term identity needs of adopted children, and are introduced to an understanding of the importance of birth family; life story work; letter box; indirect and direct contact. Applicants are provided with information about the potential benefits of considering a meeting with birth parents, where it is safe to do so. There is a session on parenting needs of adopted children, including therapeutic parenting.

The Team Manager delivers an introduction to parenting with PACE, which is a recognised approach for therapeutic parenting: playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy.

Applicants have the opportunity to meet with a range of key people during the 4 day preparation training course, including:

- Adopters
- Foster carers
- A Birth Mum who has had her children placed for adoption
- Virtual School Head
- Childcare Solicitor, giving information about legal processes in adoption

Applicants are asked to reflect on their learning and development during the training course, and to consider this within their assessment.

***"Excellent, very thought provoking, probably the most useful session of the 4 days"***

An applicant on the session by a birth mother.

***"Very useful and I will definitely do more research around this"***

An applicant on the session on therapeutic parenting and the PACE approach

***"Most useful session by far. An expertly compiled selection of adopters"***

An applicant on the sessions providing opportunity to talk to, and ask questions of adoptive parents.



*"I'm feeling very supported and looking forward to the next stage"*

An applicant on the support offer provided by ATV.

Adoption Tees Valley would like to acknowledge and recognise the many adoptive parents, foster carers, and the birth mothers who give up their time, to help families at the start of their journey gain the best possible insights into all aspects of adoption, and who care deeply about getting the very best for children.

## **7. Adoption Panel**

As agency business has increased so too has the business put before the Adoption Panel. Reviewing information from the first 6 months of the year, through into the second half, business has been increasing, most especially in relation to adoption matches.

Adoption Tees Valley operates a weekly Panel meeting, each Wednesday morning, which will hear a maximum of 5 cases.

It has been necessary to put on additional panels, in the afternoon, to manage the business, and allow either approvals or matches to proceed, without undue delay caused by panel scheduling.

The agency has recruited 2 Vice Chairs, who are now able to support the work of the agency, and have chaired the panel on a small number of occasions over the year.

There is no dedicated role of Panel Advisor to the agency. Team managers have operated this role, as part of their duties. Due to the volume of panel business, and a weekly panel, the agency has extended the role of Panel Advisor to Assistant Team Managers also. This means that there are now 4 managers operating as panel Advisor, in rotation.

	April- September		October to March		Totals
Panels	23		23		46
Panels Cancelled	2		2		4 ( due to no cases, or Panel training)
Cases presented, per panel	<b>1</b>	2	<b>1</b>	2	
	<b>2</b>	8	<b>2</b>	3	
	<b>3</b>	12	<b>3</b>	13	
	<b>4</b>	1	<b>4</b>	4	
	<b>5</b>	0	<b>5</b>	1	

Total number cases	58	68	126
Adopter Approvals	27	24	51
Single Adopters	2	6	8
M/F Couple	22	13	35
Same Sex couple	3	5	8
Brief reports	1	0	1
Adoption Matches	29	43	72
Total numbers of children		57	
Child's plan for adoption-relinquished baby	1	0	1

There is a 6 monthly meeting between Panel Advisors, Panel Chairs and the ADM.

The meeting considers panel business, mechanisms for panel working, feedback and quality, and improvement areas.

Panel members have reported finding business heavy, and difficult to manage within scheduled time, especially where there are 3 matches, and where siblings are considered for matching. The agency seeks to distribute cases where possible, however, timescales for matches and for approvals also mean that cases need to be presented to schedule. The majority of panels consider 3 cases, however, there are panels where 2 cases are presented, or occasionally just 1. Where the cases exceed 3, the panel extends into an afternoon session, which is resourced additionally.

Although not technically within this year, ATV has responded to Covid, by moving Panel to a video conferencing meeting.

This has presented some technical challenges, but Chairs, panel members, and the agency have learned together and developed together, to ensure practice is robust, and meets the requirements. More time has been allowed for cases, and where the panel is extended to the afternoon, a different chair is used for that session.

Appraisals have taken place for the majority of panel members within the first year, although some appraisals have been delayed, and these are being attended to.

There has been discussion around the question of Panel's role in considering and questioning the financial aspect of the adoption support plan, where a

match is being presented. Panel Chairs are of the view that considering financial implications or pressures on a family around adopting a child, are part of their remit when recommending a match and that they should offer advice in this respect.

There has been policy development work between the 5 Local Authorities, and ATV, to set out a clear process for seeking an adoption allowance, prior to panel, where one is required, to allow the prospective adopters to care for the child. A policy is now in place, which establishes that any financial element of the adoption support plan, which requires the LA agreement, must be authorised by the relevant LA, prior to matching panel.

Panel chairs have commented that the quality of PARs is generally of a high standard.

There is mixed feedback on the quality of CPR's and panel minutes are now identifying the quality of CPR, in order that the Agency Decision Maker for the child's match is aware of panel feedback on quality issues, and can take action accordingly.

### **8. Non-Agency Adoptions**

This area of work continues to be a significant challenge for ATV. In addition to the increased volume of adoption work for children in the care of the LA, and increased adopter approvals, ATV is responsible for provision of the step parent adoption assessments, and court reports.

	Total
Enquiries	34
In progress/allocated	10
Waiting allocation	44

The ATV Recruitment manager has allocated an adoption support worker to conduct initial discussions with applicants waiting to be assessed, and this has identified that in a number of cases, the situation has changed, or the family situation was unsuitable for such an order. It's important to recognise that where a step parent adoption is sought, this has the impact of dispensing permanently with the legal parental responsibility for one parent (usually the birth father), and this is a serious legal judgement, which Courts do not always agree is in the best interests of the child, or meets the threshold for such a drastic order.

ATV has within the year allocated one dedicated social work practitioner to the role of step parent assessor. It remains to be seen whether this will help to manage the focus, and reduce the waiting list.

## 9. Referrals of Children

The benchmarking information shows numbers of children with a Placement Order have slightly decreased on the previous year. This is suggestive that there will be a reduced demand for adoption placements for children, although early tracking is indicating a number of children coming through Court proceedings, where a PO is a likely outcome.

The now embedded procedure for all 5 Local Authorities with ATV is that children are referred at the earliest point at which adoption may become their plan: Early Notification.

Children referred are “tracked” by the Permanence Champion for ATV, for that Local Authority. The permanence champion maintains active links with their “link” Local Authority, providing advice and guidance to children’s social workers; once the ADM (agency decision that adoption is in the child’s best interest) is made by the senior officer in the Local Authority, the ATV permanence Champion and the Child’s Social Worker will hold an Adoption Process Meeting. This scopes out the timescales expected in Court, family finding activity, and the processes for permanence planning in adoption.

### **Early Notifications to ATV**

	April-September	October-March	Totals
Early Notifications 2019-20	88	76	164
Early Notifications 2018-19	58	111	169

## 10. Placements of Children for Adoption

This year has seen an increase in the numbers of children who are placed for adoption. 91 children have been placed for adoption, which means they have been matched with their adoptive parents, and placed in their new family.

	2018-29	2019-20: April-September	2019-20: Oct-March	Totals 2019-20
ATV children placed with ATV adopters	38	24	36	60
ATV Children placed with external adopters	15	9	22	31
External children	14	1	1	2

placed with ATV adopters				
Total ATV children placed	53	33	58	<b>91</b>
Total placements	67	34	59	93

Over this year, there has been a 72% increase in numbers of Tees Valley children placed, compared with the last reporting year.

Overall, there is a 39% increase in placement activity this year, compared with the previous year.

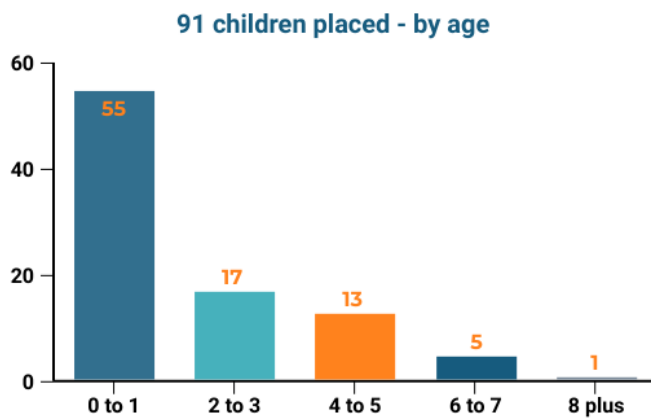
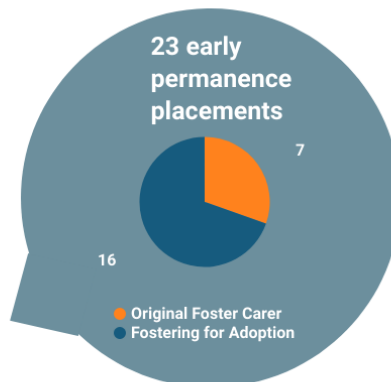
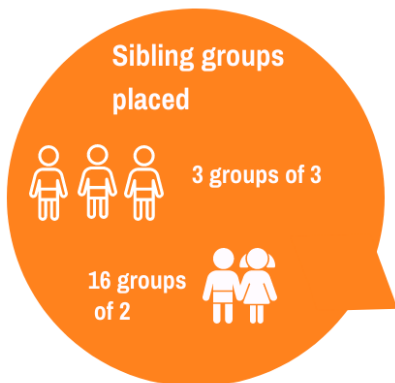
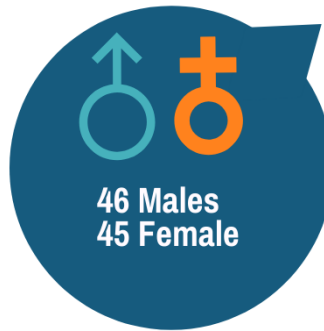
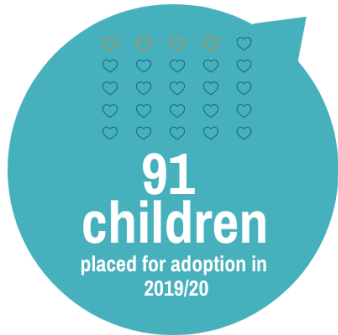
In addition to the 91 children matched for adoption, 3 children have been placed in early permanence/fostering for adoption placements, which means that the adopters have been temporarily approved as foster carers, in order that the child can be placed more quickly, with their permanent family.

Prospective adopters consider carefully whether they wish to consider becoming early permanence carers, and therefore take a child through Fostering for Adoption. There are some risks that the Courts may not authorise a placement for adoption, through a Placement Order, and the child may be returned to the birth family, or another family carer, as dictated by the Court authorised care plan. Careful assessment and planning underpins early permanence placements, and the level of uncertainty around likelihood of an adoption plan is discussed with prospective adopters.

For the child, early permanence placements mean that they are able to be placed with their likely permanent parents much earlier, which research indicates provides better outcomes for children. Additionally, the child, usually an infant, has reduced moves in foster care, which also is an indicator of better outcomes.

Adoption Tees Valley has a strategic and operational development priority for early permanence, and is working with key stakeholders to deliver on this plan for more children.

**Profile of Children Placed for Adoption**



The biggest area of need for ATV in family finding is to find families who wish to adopt a sibling group. There continues to be a high referral rate of siblings requiring placement together.

Other key areas of need are children with some developmental uncertainty, including children who have a pre-natal history of maternal alcohol abuse, which may indicate potential Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

These needs, along with promoting wider thinking about early permanence, are key features of the marketing and recruitment strategy.

### **11. Disruptions**

There have been 3 disrupted placements this year.

One was a sibling group of 2 children, and one was a single child.

A disruption meeting has been held for the sibling group. Due to Covid, the disruption meeting for the single child has not yet been convened.

Additionally, 2 sibling groups of children, and one single child had their planned adoption placements stopped during introductions, due to adopters withdrawing during the introduction period.

Appropriate permanence planning has secured permanence via adoption, or permanent fostering in all cases.

### **12. Adoption Support**

One of the key priorities for ATV is to enhance the level of support available to adoptive families. This is a government objective, and is held as a key aim in Adoption Tees Valley. We know that many families enjoy a rewarding family life, following the adoption of their child. However, we also know from extensive research, and our own experience and feedback as a Regional Adoption Agency, and through the prior work of the individual Local Authority adoption services, that many adoptive families need support in the future, or from the point of placement.

We aim to recognise and value this, and create a community for adopters and children in ATV, which helps, and supports families, and recognises that throughout the child's childhood, and beyond, it is quite expected that additional help, support, and advice will be required.

*Lynne Cardwell, Adoption Support Team Manager summarises:*

There has been a steady but significant increase in the number of families requesting Adoption support from Adoption Tees Valley. This should not be viewed as a negative indicator of families struggling to cope, but is likely to be as a result of Adoption Tees Valley being well embedded and more widely known about within the Adoption Community. Work has continued

to ensure the knowledge about our more comprehensive service offer is more widespread and this ensures more families know where to come when they need support. We are a product of our own success, however this sadly leads to waiting times for families due to the high demand for this service.

Adoption Tees Valley have a dedicated Post Adoption Support Team with a wealth of experience.

Workers understand that while adoption is rewarding, like any other parenting journey, it can also be challenging. Our team offers a range of support services to families throughout their adoption journey and beyond using a tiered approach, which has been designed to offer the right level of support at the time our families need it.

The support we offer ranges from picking up the phone for an informal chat right through to therapeutic support services. We work closely with a range of accredited providers to enable access to therapeutic services. If at any point you need further support access outside of what Adoption Tees Valley offer we will manage your application to the Adoption Support Fund to enable you to do so.

As part of our support services we also have a dedicated Education Support Worker who specifically focuses on supporting adopted children and their families with key transitions, to access education support services and assisting schools in meeting the needs of these children, including pupil premium plus.

On Services during Covid:

The team have supported 132 families this last year and have secured funding to have bespoke therapeutic services delivered as needed by accessing the Governments Adoption Support Fund. During this COVID-19 crisis the team has ensured that the adoption support service is still available although most of the sessions are now held by virtual means. Therapeutic providers have been creative in how they can still support families when not able to hold face to face sessions. Indeed ATV have managed to hold sessions for our children's group that had just got up and running before the lockdown began. This is an area we still wish to continue although more difficult using remote virtual sessions however, the staff team all have a "can do" attitude and I am proud and delighted at their constant dedication to this much valued area of our service.



**Adoption Support: support services delivered**

	April-September	Oct-March	Total
Adoption Support Referrals	Full year only counted		147
Adoption Support Assessments undertaken	33	99	132
Adoption Support Fund-applications	98	77	175
Adoption Support Fund-value of applications	£278,460	£414,373	£692,833
Education Support – number of children/families	Full year only counted		28 ( to June 2020)

The increase in applications to the ASF reflects more group applications which have been made to deliver Therapeutic parenting training to families.

**The 3 Tier Model**

ATV continues to operate and deliver a 3 Tier model of adoption support, with Tier 1 being available to all families, Tier 2 being targeted and Tier 3 being for those families and children in greatest need of support.

Tier 1	Continued adoption support to all families for the first year post Adoption Order, by the assessing adoption social worker; Engagement Events; Support Groups; General Support; Access to on line support group; Newsletters for adopters; closed Facebook site, offering information; membership of the Adopter Hub (new under Covid 19 adopter support provision);
Tier 2	Themed Workshops and Training Events; Mentoring and Buddying; Education Support- advice, information
Tier 3	Assessment for post adoption needs; Specialist psychological assessments; Application to ASF; therapeutic

	<p>interventions, including DDP; Play Therapy; Child Counselling; Cognitive and Behavioural Therapy; Sensory Integration; Creative Therapies.</p> <p>Case allocation to a social worker; Multi Agency working; Education Support for direct case involvement.</p>
--	---

Over the last year, the service has increased the range of supports available to adopters and children through the service.

The following additional supports have been developed, and are now part of the formal "Adoption Support Offer" to adoptive families in Tees Valley.

**Education Support to Adopted Children, and their Families**

ATV works in partnership with the 5 Virtual Schools across Tees Valley. The Virtual School heads meet quarterly with the ATV Service Manager, and Adoption Support Manager, and have agreed to co-fund the Education Support Worker post within the agency, using the Government grants for the extended duties of Virtual schools to adopted children.

Leanne Albesson has been working as an Education Support worker in ATV, for almost one year, and her post has been extended for a further year, by agreement with the VS heads. Leanne has offered direct support to achieve the best outcomes where children are struggling in school; advice and information about levels of additional needs provision, to assist parents and schools advocate for the right level; information and training to schools around adoption; advice and information to Designated teachers about ATV, and additional therapeutic support available.

Leanne has recently completed the Thrive training for practitioners, and has been well positioned to share information, and support literature with families during the Covid 19 pandemic, and "lock down".

Some comments from adoptive families where education support has been provided are included here:

"It has been so helpful to have your input, without it, we would definitely not have an IEP or a forthcoming educational psychologist assessment. Thank you so much for all your help again. It is really appreciated".

"We don't have to worry that he is going to be excluded anymore, now that you have helped him to get in to a school with the right support, he is much happier in himself".

"Thanks for meeting with me and supporting us, I feel a lot more positive about his future within school".

### **Children's Group**

ATV has started a children's group, with young people, with the aim of helping children in the age group 7-11 years to link to ATV, and to other children who have adoption in common. Experience through the engagement events has highlighted just how isolated adopted children can feel, and how they can find a great sense of belongingness, and shared identity, just by knowing that they are not the only one who is adopted.

The first group had a closed group of 10 participants, and took place in the ATV building. The group was facilitated by Leanne Abelson, Abigail Hogarth (Adoption Support Worker) and Alyssa Dale (Post Adoption Social Worker).

The children were beginning to make friendships, and get comfortable with the group, when it unfortunately had to stop temporarily, due to Covid 19.

The group has continued to be facilitated, albeit in a different format, on line.

### **One Year Post Adoption Support offer to all families, following the Adoption Order**

ATV are now offering to continue with a low key adoption support offer to all families, following the granting of the Adoption Order. This is to help families to take up the opportunity to engage with Tier 1 and Tier 2 services, and Tier 3 where needed.

### **Adopter Hub Membership (PACT UK)**

Following the provision of emergency funding during Covid 19, ATV surveyed all adoptive parents, to seek views on how they are managing under Covid lockdown and what additional support would be of value. The vast majority of adoptive parents identified that they felt they are coping well.

Membership of an adopter support organisation was identified to be of value. The ATV Service manager and Adoption Support manager consulted with the 2 new Non-Executive Directors, and it was identified that Adopter Hub represented the best value and widest offer for adopters.

### **Therapeutic Parenting Training**

The service is now offering a regular opportunity for adoptive parents to undertake therapeutic parenting training, according to their needs, and the age/stage of their child's developmental needs.

The following training has been offered over the course of the year:

Nurturing Attachments	3 days- April/May 2019	Kim Goulding company	20 families
Therapeutic Life Story Work- telling about adoption	2 days- July 2019	Bridgett Betts	13 families
Nurturing Attachments	3 days- September/Oct 2019	Kim Goulding Co.	8 families
Future Stars Early Intervention	10 week programme, started September	Integrate Families	3 families
SEND Law	0.5 day session		4 families
Therapeutic Life Story Work- telling about adoption	2 days- September	Bridgett Betts	10 families
Future Stars Early Intervention- Sensory	10 week programme January 2020	Integrate Families	5 Families
An Introduction to Non Violent Resistance	3 days- November 2019	Gail Humphries Future Families	8 families
An Introduction to Non Violent Resistance	3 days- January 2020	Gail Humphries Future Families	5 families
Nurturing Attachments	3 days	Kim Goulding Company	8 Families

### **Framework of Preferred Therapeutic Providers**

Within this period a significant amount of work was undertaken by ATV supported by Stockton Procurement team, to establish a framework of therapeutic providers, who can deliver high quality, therapeutic interventions for children and families, based on the assessment of needs in the Adoption Support Assessment. A provider list for specialist assessments has also been established through the procurement process.

This planning concluded with a new framework being implemented, of preferred providers, commencing 1.9.19 which meets EU public procurement regulations. 8 providers were awarded preferred provider status, with a further 5 selected as providers of specialist assessments.

ATV values the work done by the Therapeutic Providers, recognising this offers families a range of specialist provision, according the needs identified

through the adoption support assessment. Providers work creatively, and in partnership with ATV to deliver high quality tier 3 support to children and families.

## Case Study 2- Adoption Support

ATV were contacted by parents, who were concerned about their 15 year old daughter. They had adopted her when she was 18 months old, but she had been experiencing some emotional problems of late. They had subsequently discovered that she had made contact with her birth mother through social media and more recently she had arranged a face to face meeting with her.

A Post Adoption Support Assessment was undertaken. It was evident that parents had developed a secure relationship with their daughter and had a good understanding of her needs. While they were initially quite shocked about her meeting up with her birth mother they had been able to take stock of the situation and asked for help to put in place the support they thought she needed. As part of the assessment we discussed how Therapeutic Life Story Work had the potential to help their daughter make sense of her past history and improve her emotional well-being. If she wished to have further contact with her birth mother, then support would be provided to all to ensure that this was maintained in a way that met their daughters needs and made her feel safe. This was discussed with the young person who felt happy to engage in the help that was being offered.

ATV has developed a commissioning process with partner service providers in the region. This was the first time that this process was put into practice. The assessment report was sent out to relevant service providers inviting them to offer a plan of work to the family in line with the recommendations from the assessment. We received two proposals back, which we were able to share with the family who made the final decision on which service to go with.

An application was made to the Adoption Support Fund, which was agreed and therapy started at the beginning of the year. The young person has developed a good relationship with her therapist. She trusts her to talk about her thoughts and feelings. This is long term work and in March we were worried that it might be disrupted due to face to face meetings having to end. This has not been the case though and therapy has continued with the assistance of video conferencing and it is expected to continue for the remainder of the year. Parents are pleased with the service and have noticed a positive difference in their daughter's overall wellbeing - even in such challenging times.

**Support for Birth Families and Adult Adoptees**

ATV previously commissioned services for birth parents, birth relatives, and adult adoptees from After Adoption. Unfortunately, this Voluntary Adoption Agency closed at the end of March 2019, and some very rapid remedial work was undertaken, to seek an appropriate new provider, who could offer these vital independent support services.

Adoption Matters (formerly DFW Adoption, a local VAA) had provided a similar service previously to Darlington Children's Services, and so were approached to take on this service for the whole of the Tees Valley, through ATV.

The contract was reviewed, and quickly agreed, through Stockton Procurement Team working together with ATV, and Adoption Matters.

A new contract was put in place in early April, and ATV have worked together with Adoption Matters, to establish and extend the previous services offered to birth relatives and adult adoptees in this region.

The services include:

- Direct Support to birth parents whose children are going through, or have been adopted.
- Access to the adoption files for adult adoptees
- Access to appropriate records by birth relatives, according to legislative permissions

The contract took a little time to establish, which was very much to be expected. New leaflets were produced, and the information about how to access the service needed to be set up with Adoption Matters. Referral and procedures for requesting the service also needed to be developed over the initial weeks of the new contract.

ATV have been very appreciative of the work that Adoption Matters have undertaken, and good working relationships have been built between ATV and those delivering the service in Adoption Matters.

Referrals have been as follows:

Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total Hours
0	22	34	15	322

Adoption Matters have delivered training to ATV staff, on Access to Records, which is a specialist area of work, and legislation, for adopted people and their birth relatives.

A review of the Contract has been undertaken and ATV have consulted with birth parents and other key stakeholders to determine optimal new contractual requirements. As a result, of review and consultation, a new contract will be tendered in September, 2020, for Birth Parent Support, and Access to Records.

### **Post Box**

Post box (sometimes also called letter box) is the arrangement for indirect contact between adopted children and their birth families. Letters/cards are exchanged through Adoption Tees Valley, who act as a means of ensuring that the new address of the child is kept confidential, and that post box arrangements take place, as planned through the care plan, prior to the placement of the child. Although this seems a small element of the service delivery, it is incredibly important for the wellbeing of children and their birth parents/families. Birth families rely on this indirect contact, to allow them to know how their child is doing, and to know they are safe and well. For children, their developmental needs will change through childhood and into adulthood. These letter box arrangements can be a means for children to understand more about their birth family, as they grow up.

The birth mothers who regularly contribute to preparation training all tell the prospective adopters how important these exchanges are, and how much they value them in their lives.

ATV have now brought all Post box/letter box arrangements in house, and have recruited a Post Box Co-ordinator, who works 3 days per week, and manages these arrangements.

Over the last year, approximately 1,620 post box transactions have taken place.

### **Life Story Books**

Adoption Tees Valley is tasked with creating the Life Story Book for each child who is placed for adoption. This work is usually allocated to one of the Adoption Support Workers.

Life Story Books are a unique and individually created book for the child, which tells the story of their birth, their history, family members, and their journey to adoption, in their new family.

This work is significant, and takes some time to complete, especially as the worker undertaking it must liaise with a number of individuals to get all of the right information.

As ATV has placed more children, the waiting list for Life Story Book grew, and the agency has struggled to manage the volume and demand.

ATV have worked with colleagues within the 5 Local Authorities to seek a resolution to the backlog of Life Story Books, which by Regulation are required to be made available to the adoptive family by the second review following placement. This timescale has not been met in many cases, and this challenge needed addressing. Some of the social workers for the child, in the LA have undertaken this piece of work for a child they have placed, and this has meant that a number of LS books have been completed.

Internal processes have been amended to make sure that at the earliest adoption planning meeting life story content is discussed, and the social worker is made aware of the need to provide the information in a timely way to ATV, and to gather more photographs, information and documentation, from relevant family and carers.

The Board of Directors approved an additional temporary worker, to assist with backlog, in February 2020. Unfortunately, the post was not filled, and Covid 19 meant that other work required attention, and focus for change and safety management.

The post has been re-advertised, and it is hoped to address the backlog, and future volume.

It's important to ensure that the book is sensitive and quality document, carefully tailored to each child, and that it tells the story in a constructive, and enabling way for the child for the future.

At the year end, the position is as follows:

Number of new LSB's requested in year	94
Number Completed	45
Number in progress	17
Number not yet allocated	32

The volume of life story book work remains a capacity issue for the service, and is an areas for service development in 2020-21.

### **13. Staffing**

1 x Service Manager	18.2 FTE Social Workers, (inc 1 FTE temp)	1 x Business Manager
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2 x Team Managers	3.5 Adoption Support Workers	3.1 x FTE Business Support Workers
2 x Assistant Team managers	0.9 x Education Support Worker	0.5 x Marketing and Recruitment Worker
	0.6 x Post Box Co-Ordinator	

Staffing has been a challenge with the increased numbers of children referred to the service.

The service has dedicated 3 full time equivalent staff to adoption support, which has been a significantly growing area of work, since the RAA went live.

One full time social worker has been allocated to step parent assessments.

During this year a review of the staffing structure has been undertaken, to consider an “invest to save” approach, to recruiting more adoptive families.

The service reviewed core business and has set out an approach to better use adoption support worker grade staff, for front line duty work, and support to stage 1 assessments. The Board agreed a further 2 full time adoption support workers, to enable a different model of workload, and with the aim of generating more in house adopters. These are included in the 3.5 posts above.

An education support worker post has been created, as detailed above.

A post Box Co-ordinator post has been created, to allow ATV to manage the internal post box work.

#### **14. Quality Assurance**

National Minimum Standard 25.

The following mechanisms are in place for managing and monitoring the work of the agency, and the quality of work.

- Tracking systems to enable regular monitoring of children and adopter journey's; timeliness, and outcomes.
- A quarterly performance, assurance and challenge meeting (PAC) has been held with the senior adoption lead for each LA. All children for each LA have been tracked and monitored, and agreement about direction, or decisions signposted where applicable. Performance, and issues for improvement are discussed, specific to each LA.
- ASGLB is generated quarterly, and scorecard data is reviewed for evaluation of performance, and any areas for improvement, or focus.

- Monthly management meetings are focussing on the key performance information required, and how this will be generated from Charms, and/or other sources.
- The quarterly performance balanced scorecard is presented to the ATV Board, which has a role in questioning, challenge and being satisfied of the effectiveness of the service.
- The Adoption Panel operates a quality monitoring mechanism for assessments/matches presented, which is monitored by the Panel Advisors and Chairs, for improvement.
- Quality of CPR's is now included in minutes of panel, for QA monitoring by each LA.
- The Adoption Panel Chairs provide a report bi-annually to the Service Manager, which will be presented to the Adoption Leads, Panel, and to the team, for learning and improvement where required.
- Staff performance is monitored via supervision, which is monthly for all staff.
- A case practice audit tool is in place, and cases are audited for quality assurance.
- Staff will have an annual appraisal, and Personal Development Planning will be aligned to appraisal and review.
- Central List members and Panel Chairs have had an annual appraisal.
- Team meetings take place monthly, and are used to convey policy and practice information, involve staff in developments and any quality improvements that are required.
- Adopter feedback has been sought most recently via a Consultation Survey, in April 2020, specifically to seek feedback on what supports adopters want during Covid. User feedback has been used to inform what services are commissioned.
- The Service Manager, and Team Manager, post adoption support, have reviewed and monitored work undertaken by external agencies for post adoption support, to ensure that work supports outcomes and delivers best value.

### **15. Service Plans for 2020-21**

- Recovery plans have been developed, and will require regular review. The first priority is to ensure that the Tees Valley adoption service adapts and continues to operate, to allow children to achieve permanence via adoption. The service will work with developing RAA guidance and the 5 Local Authorities to ensure practice is safe, and child centred, while minimising the opportunity for spread of coronavirus.

- Recover and refocus on life story work, and backlog. Seek solutions that better meet the needs for ensuring completion of life story books within the child's timescale.
- Focus on early permanence, and continuing to develop awareness and practice in EP, across Tees Valley.
- Recruit around 80 new adoptive families, within the year. This is an ambitious target, but we need to achieve a greater pool of internal adopters, for more financial efficiency, and better locally supported placements for children.
- Continue to build on the adoption support 3 Tier model, to develop excellence in the service offered to adopters and children.

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## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY 2 NOVEMBER 2020**

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### **DARLINGTON SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT – 2019/2020**

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#### **SUMMARY REPORT**

##### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Children and Young People Scrutiny to receive and comment upon the Annual Report of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership (DSP) for the period 2019/20.

##### **Summary**

2. Local Safeguarding Partnerships are required to produce an Annual Report to account for the Partnerships achievements over the previous year and make an assessment of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the local area.
3. The Annual Report is the first report provided by the Partnership under the new safeguarding arrangements and outlines what the Partnership has done over the period 2019/20, drawing upon a range of data and information to illustrate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.
4. It is recommended that:
  - (a) The Children and Young People Scrutiny note and comment on the DSP Annual Report for 2019/20 which will be published on the DSP website.

##### **Reasons**

6. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:
  - (a) Children and Young People Scrutiny have an understanding of the Partnership's work to date.
  - (b) To challenge and scrutinise the work of the DSP and raise any challenges as appropriate with the Independent Chair.
  - (c) To have assurance that the Safeguarding Partnership is effectively coordinating multi-agency safeguarding practice in Darlington and promoting the welfare of children and adults with needs for care and support.

**James Stroyan**  
**Director of Children and Adults Services**

**Background Papers**

Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report – 2019/2020

S17 Crime and Disorder	All children at risk of crime and disorder are a priority within this report. DSCB works alongside Youth Offending Services to help reduce crime and first time entrants into the criminal justice system.
Health and Well Being	The health and wellbeing of all children in Darlington are a priority within this report. DCSB works alongside all organisations to promote the health and wellbeing of children and their families.
Carbon Impact	There are no implications arising from this report.
Diversity	DSCB works to ensure that all groups are considered within their safeguarding agenda.
Wards Affected	All
Groups Affected	All
Budget and Policy Framework	N/A
Key Decision	N/A
Urgent Decision	N/A
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The work of the Safeguarding Children Board complements the priorities in One Darlington Perfectly placed.
Efficiency	N/A
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has not impacted on Looked After Children or Care Leavers.

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**Darlington  
Safeguarding  
Partnership**

Protecting Children and Adults

# Annual Report

2019-2020



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# 1. Introduction

## Foreword by Statutory Safeguarding Partners

This is the first annual report of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership which went live on 1 July 2020. The report outlines what we have done over the period 2019-20, drawing upon a range of data and information to illustrate the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements.

We all agreed that the requirement for new safeguarding arrangements for children provided Darlington with an opportunity to work together differently and to further strengthen, partnership working across adults and children to promote a 'whole family approach' to safeguarding to improve outcomes for children, adults and their families. We recognised the Child and Adult Boards were in a good position to progress and make these changes. Partner relationships have been strong and partnership engagement strengthened to enable a move forward to the new partnership vision of 'Darlington is a place where children and adults can live their lives safely.'

There were many challenges in establishing a joint partnership, however partners have fully embraced this new opportunity and saw the benefit of joining up with an aim to strengthen and develop partnership working to keep children, young people and adults with needs for care and support safe. This could not be achieved without the dedication of all partners and practitioners working on the frontline.

Our first year was spent determining the structure and governance arrangements to ensure we have the appropriate processes and systems in place, exploring how the Partnership could develop a more integrated approach with an aim of strengthening and developing safeguarding partnership arrangements.

We continue to ensure there are effective arrangements in place to protect and promote the welfare of children and adults with needs for care and support who are at risk of abuse, neglect, injury or harm and to ensure the voice of the child/adult is evident across multi-agency work. There has been a great deal of activity over the year to ensure we meet our statutory responsibilities, which are outlined in this report.

The COVID-19 pandemic affected everyone in the Darlington locality at the end of this reporting period and we recognise and acknowledge the efforts of the people and employees of all our partners, who continue to keep people safe during this time.

The report recognises the progress the Partnership has made throughout the year and the longer-term challenge is to ensure that the new arrangements have made a positive difference to children, young people and adults with needs for care and support in Darlington.

**Ann Baxter, Independent Chair/Scrutineer**

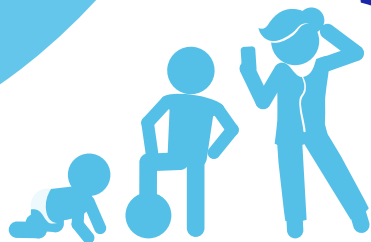
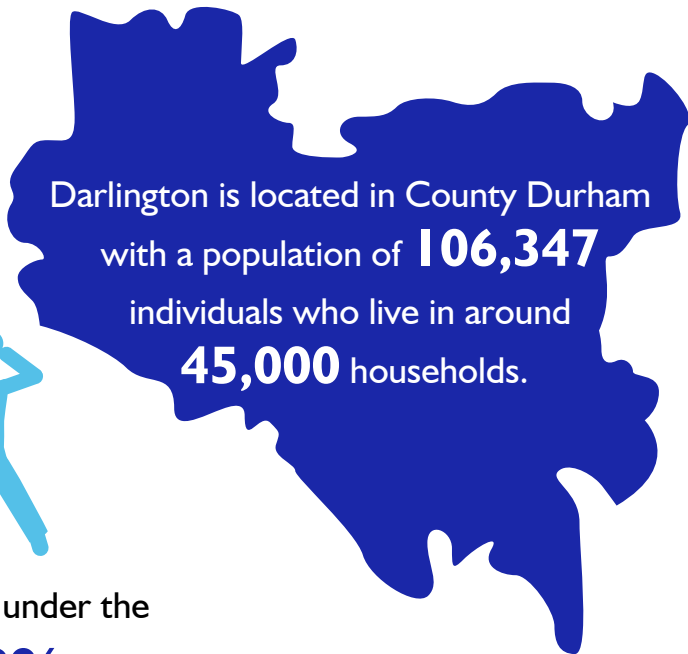
**Adrian Green, Detective Chief Superintendent, Durham Constabulary**

**Suzanne Joyner, Director of Children and Adult Services, Darlington Borough Council**

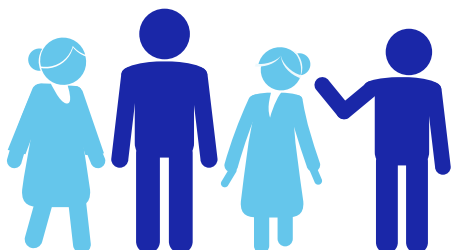
**Gillian Findley, Director of Nursing, Durham and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group**



## 2. Local picture



Children and young people under the age of 25 years make up **28%** of the population, which is a little lower than the England average at 30%.

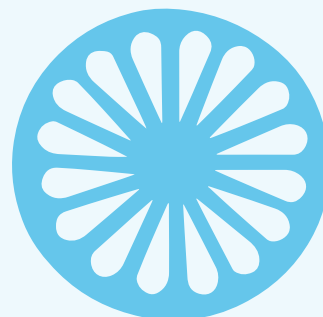


In terms of ethnicity, the 2011 Census reported 96.2% of Darlington's population as White and **3.8%** from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups.

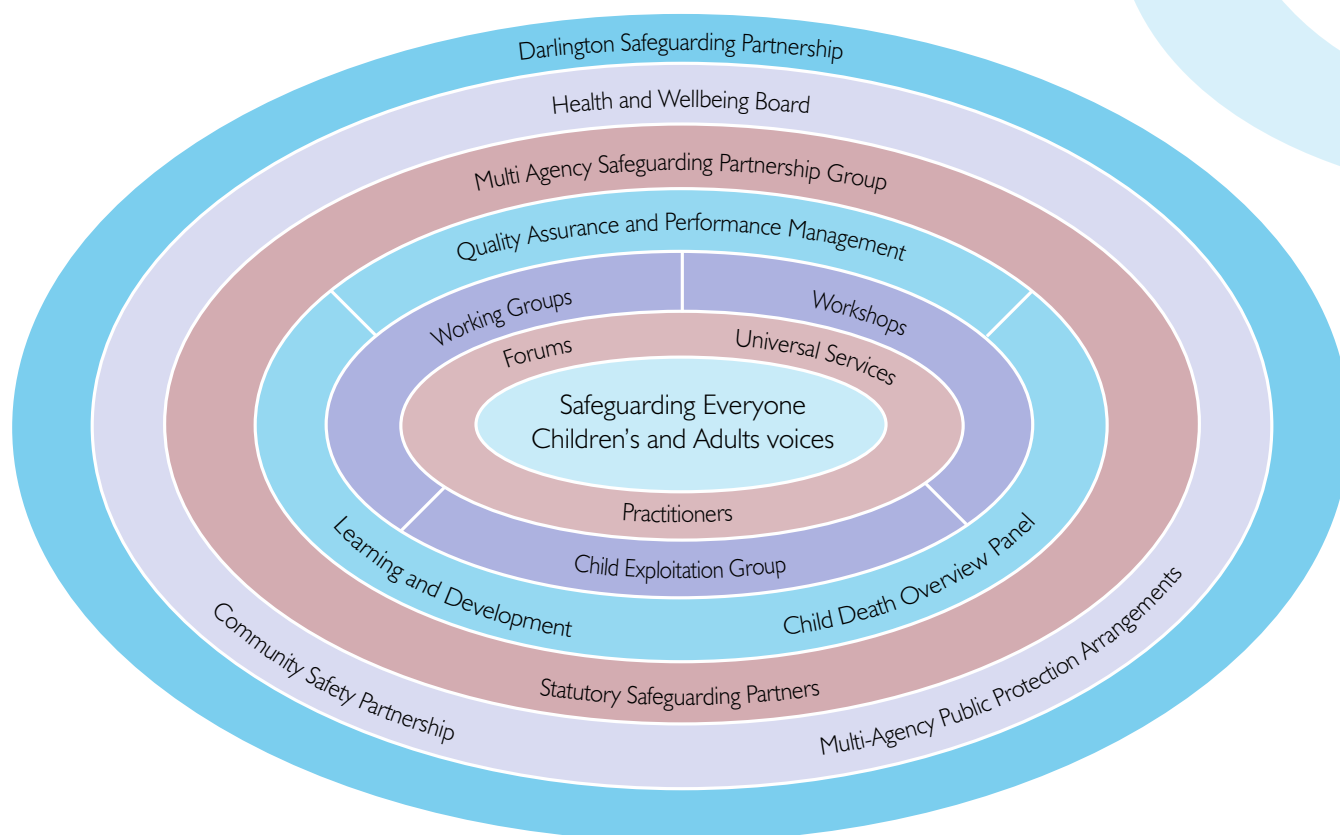


The number of people aged over 65 years old in Darlington is estimated at **21,700**

In County Durham and Darlington the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) community form the largest single ethnic minority group, the proportion of Darlington residents who identify themselves as GRT (2011 census) is **0.3%** which is three times higher than the national average.



# 3. Governance and Structure



Whilst the Statutory Safeguarding Partners are committed to meeting regularly to ensure the Partnership is efficient and effective, to enable them to oversee safeguarding arrangements and be sighted on issues affecting the local area, they established a number of sub-groups to oversee the quality of safeguarding work and to identify opportunities for learning.

- **Quality Assurance and Performance Management sub-group (QAPM)**

The QAPM group oversees the Quality Assurance and Performance Framework in order to provide a strategic overview of the quality of safeguarding work across the Partnership using a range of tools. By scrutinising, monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of safeguarding work across partner agencies and commissioned organisations, the group is able to highlight areas of concern or improvement as well as identifying what is working well.

- **Learning and Development sub-group (L&D)**

The primary purpose of the L&D group is to identify opportunities for learning and improvement and embed the quality of multi-agency frontline practice, for those practitioners working in child and adult safeguarding arenas to improve outcomes for children and adults. It ensures the effective development of multi-agency training, policy, procedure and practice guidance.

- **Child Exploitation Group (CEG)**

The primary purpose of CEG is to oversee, monitor and improve responses to tackle children missing from home, care and education and act as the strategic lead group for the reduction of Child Exploitation. It is a joint group with members of Durham Safeguarding Children Partnership. An operational group oversees individual cases of children at risk of exploitation in Darlington with a purpose to prevent, disrupt and deter them from being criminally or sexually exploited.

- **Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)**

CDOP is responsible for reviewing the available information on all child deaths, to confirm or clarify the cause of death, to determine any contributory factors and to identify any learning arising from the review, which may prevent future child deaths and share learning, patterns or trends with safeguarding partners.

The work of the Partnership can only be achieved by partnership working and continues to work closely with other key relevant agencies and Strategic Partnership Boards including the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership. These links ensure strong joint working arrangements across agencies which coordinate the vision, aims and priorities for Darlington and its population, ensuring the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements for children, young people and adults with needs for care and support are threaded throughout. The links help to promote effective communication and engagement to ensure 'safeguarding is everybody's business'.



# 4. Partnership achievements and impact

## a) Performance Data

The Safeguarding Partnership has developed its own quality assurance framework and developed a suite of performance indicators to build up a profile of the welfare and safety of children and adults at risk in Darlington. A dashboard highlights key performance indicators for agency responses relating to early help, prevention, presenting factors, strategy, child/adult protection, exploitation and missing, Making Safeguarding Personal and is based on data provided by partner agencies. The QAPM group considers issues such as referrals, volume, timeliness, engagement, attendance at multi-agency meetings, quality of practice and outcomes for children and families and adults with needs for care and support to provide assurance to the statutory partners and highlight areas for concern or improvement.

## b) Multi-Agency Audit Activity

### Self- Assessment Audit 2019-20

The Partnership completed a biennial multi-agency safeguarding self-assessment audit, in accordance with the requirements of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the Care Act 2014. Analysis of the returns provided evidence that the principles of safeguarding are generally embedded in practice and are effective in promoting the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk in Darlington. The responses demonstrate the majority of partners acknowledge the importance of ensuring compliance with the audit and can demonstrate they have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place which are effective and are compliant with statutory requirements.

### Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) generic self-assessment

A multi-agency forum was established to provide strategic oversight and challenge on how well the local area performs against the multi-agency JTAI criteria. The group was established to oversee organisation preparedness for a JTAI multi-agency inspection and to be assured on how well partners work together on the front line.

### Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment

In June 2019, the Partnership conducted a multi-agency audit based on the JTAI guidance on cases of familial child sexual abuse, for the purpose of seeking assurance across the multi-agency partnership that the causes and impact of familial child sexual abuse is understood across the multi-agency partnership. The audit highlighted a number of strengths/areas of good practice as well as areas for development.

### Children Living with Mental Ill Health

In February 2020, the Partnership agreed to focus a multi-agency audit on cases which involved children and young people living with mental ill-health, again the scope was based on the JTAI guidance. The purpose of obtaining an understanding on how services responded to children and their families, when they are identified as living with mental ill health and how well it is understood across the Partnership. Findings highlighted a number of strengths/ areas of good practice and areas for development.

## c) Quality Assurance Activity/Thematic Work

Throughout the year additional quality assurance activity and thematic work is undertaken dependent on issues or concerns that arise.

### Child Protection Conference Observations

Conference observations have been an integral part of quality assurance activity with a purpose of identifying areas of good practice and/or corrective action that may be required. Any themes are taken forward by the QAPM group.

### Strategy meetings - children

A thematic audit into strategies identified appropriate action was taken and there was good evidence of relational approaches. Professionals were clear regarding information they had concerns about and appropriately challenged one another. There were some inconsistencies in invitations for health professionals, scaling and timescales for actions. The audit highlighted a need to focus on current safeguarding concerns and not historic concerns.

### Missing Children

A deep dive into two cases of high risk children who frequently went missing from home across County Durham and Darlington provided feedback to individual agencies and the Partnership on opportunities for improved practice.

### Executive Strategy Process

Executive Strategy processes are held to address all concerns and issues relating to suspected organised or institutional abuse or neglect of adults. In 2019/2020 there was one residential setting in Executive Strategy process, the process is led by Darlington Borough Council and remains ongoing.

### Thematic work

The continuous identification of learning from Serious Case Reviews, Safeguarding Adult Reviews, Learning Lesson Reviews alongside learning highlighted through quality assurance audit activity is important and a priority of the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership. A thematic review was carried out which covered a number of child and adult reviews and audits over the past four years. Whilst each review or audit highlighted specific issues, over time themes started to emerge. The findings of audits echo the findings of reviews and the following key themes were identified:

- a. **Neglect**
- b. **Self-Neglect**
- c. **Communication and Information sharing**
- d. **Voice of the Child/Adult**
- e. **Engagement**
- f. **Family circumstances**
- g. **Professional Responsibility/Practice**
- h. **Specific learning**
- i. **Good practice**

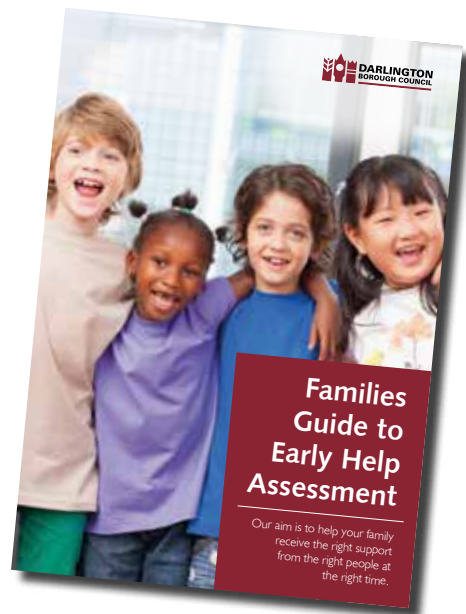
It is widely acknowledged that recommendations of reviews and audits are often neither unexpected nor surprising. The thematic work highlighted a number of key themes for the Partnership to consider and the Learning and Development sub-group is addressing the learning and practice issues.



# 5. Analysis on effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements

## Early Help

The Partnership has recognised early help is much greater than that provided by the local authority and the pressure on ‘universal’ services such as schools and mental health services has increased year on year. During 2019-20 there were 893 early help assessments completed, 42% of these being completed by external agencies which is evidence of effective partnership working.



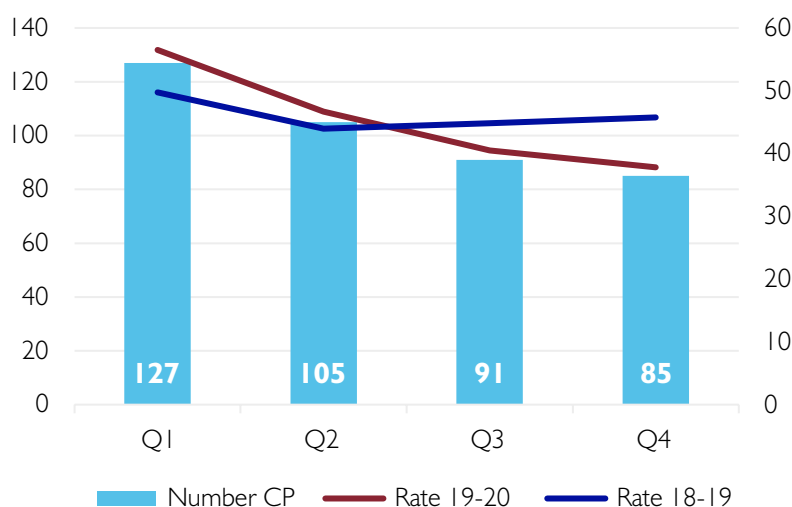
## Children in Need (CiN)

In March 2020, there were 357 children in Darlington identified as CiN, compared to 334 England average.

## Child Protection Plans (CPP)

At the end of March 2020, 85 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan in Darlington (a rate of 37.8 per 10,000). This is lower than: regional average (63.1); statistical neighbour (50.4) and the national average (43.7).

Rate and Number of Children subject of a Child Protection Plan at each quarter end



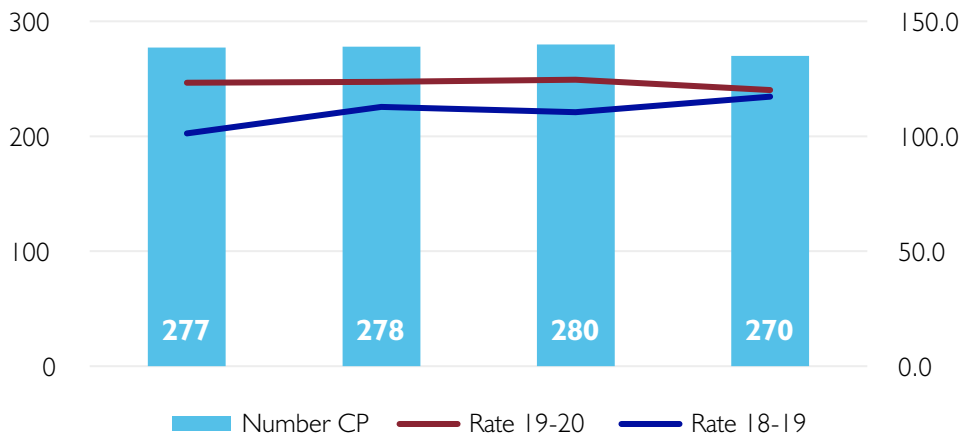


Risk Factors associated with Child Protection were due to:			
Neglect	Emotional Abuse	Physical Abuse	Sexual Abuse
38%	45%	8%	8%

## Looked After Children

The number of Looked After Children (LAC) by the local authority at the end of March 2020 was 270 (120.1 per 10,000). Darlington is not statistically different across a range of measures of concern and difficulties for Looked After Children compared to England.

Rate and Number of Children in Care at each quarter end



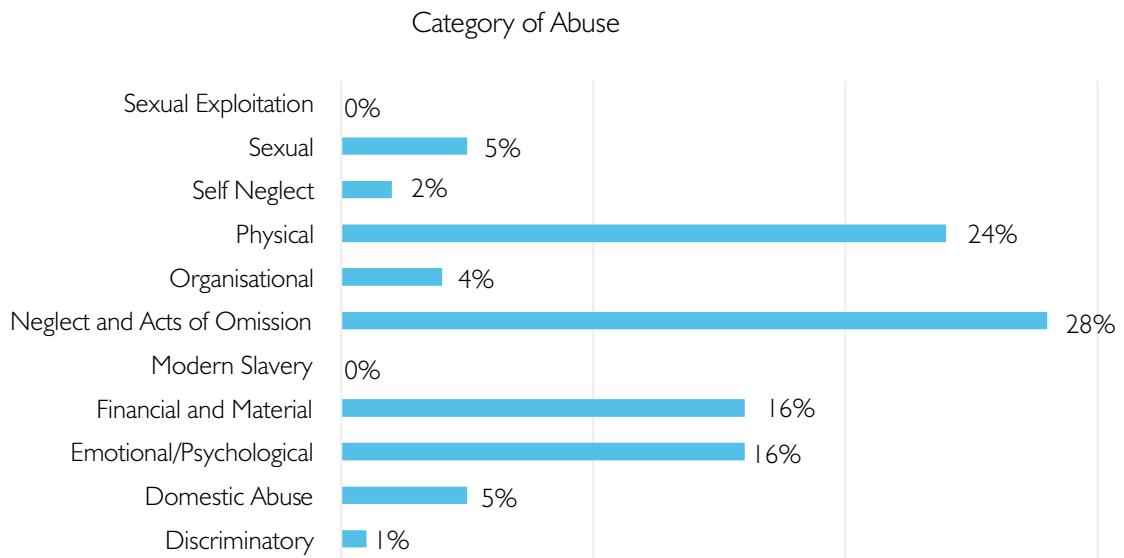
These placements were made up of:							
In house Fostering	Connected Carers	Private Fostering	Residential Care	Placed for adoption	Independent Living	Placed with parent	Other
56	47	99	27	9	4	25	3

## Care Leavers

56 out of 57 care leavers in Darlington were in suitable accommodation by the end of 2019-20 and the percentage of care leavers (aged 19-21) who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) was 28.1%, below the target of 30%, these were either due to disability or illness, pregnancy or parenting or other circumstances.

## Adult Safeguarding

The number of reported concerns for abuse and neglect in 2019/20 was 1797, with 54% progressing to S42 safeguarding enquiry. Of the concluded S42 enquiries, in 92% of cases the outcome was that the risk was either reduced or removed.



Location of abuse:								
Own home	In the Community	Community Service	Care Home Nursing	Care Home residential	Hospital Acute	Hospital Mental Health	Hospital Community	Other
42%	5%	1%	3%	26%	4%	13%	0%	6%

## Elective Home Education (EHE)

There are effective measures in place for Elective Home Education following a real focus in Darlington with the EHE Advisor building up close working relationships with schools and families, to ensure all children receive suitable education. A local policy has been developed in line with 2019 EHE guidance and all cases have been RAG rated against the statutory guidance on evidence of receiving suitable education. Where there is no evidence of home schooling, additional visits are put in place. As at 31 March 2020, there were 182 EHE with 93 from Gypsy, Roma and Travelling (GRT) community with 94 planned home visits taking place since September 2019 and 80 unannounced visits to GRT site and families who did not respond to letters or calls.

Darlington has a higher than average GRT population, with a high proportion of EHE from this community. The EHE advisor works closely with the GRT teacher and the 'Moving on and Aiming High' project was well attended.

## Children Missing from Home, Care and Education

The total number of children who went missing from home or care during 2019-20 was 270 with 100% of children being offered a return home interview, 85.5% within the 72-hour timescale. Of these young people who went missing, 17.7% were Children in Care.

The Philomena Protocol, aimed to protect children who go missing by promoting a joint investigation with an aim of returning the child to safety, has evidenced that there has been a reduction in children going missing from care homes who may also be at risk of exploitation.

The total number of children missing from education (CME) for 2019-20 were 65 and all children referred have been traced.



## Adults who go missing

Durham Constabulary provides assurance about the functioning of the Herbert Protocol which supports people at high risk of going missing and provides safeguards when people do go missing, which often results in people being found much more quickly.

## Exploitation of children and young people

Multi-agency work around child exploitation is coordinated through the Child Exploitation Group (CEG), which has been extended to reflect a broader focus and includes all forms of Criminal Exploitation, County Lines, Organised Crime and Modern Day Slavery.

In 2019, there was an increased focus on boys and young men at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation through awareness raising sessions and activity to provide focus on them as victims and not perpetrators.

The Partnership continues to obtain an understanding of the risks posed to young people as they grow and become influenced by a whole range of environments and people outside the family home such as school/college, their community, peer groups or online.

A cross agency Child Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker was launched in November 2019, originally designed to track County Lines. The tracker is used across Darlington and County Durham to identify children at risk and has highlighted a number of cases which would not have ordinarily been identified for multi-agency involvement.



## Child Deaths

During 2019/2020 there were a total of four child deaths. Due to the low numbers reported, it is not possible to go into specific detail to avoid any of the data being identifiable. The 2019-20 CDOP Annual report will be available on the DSP website.

## Domestic Abuse

The vision of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is for all agencies to work together to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and to provide a co-ordinated community response. It is recognised that domestic abuse is a serious crime that cuts across all social, geographical and cultural groups and can be experienced by any person, although the majority of victims in Darlington are women, many with children.

The safeguarding partnership is committed to reducing the prevalence of domestic abuse in Darlington, including a co-ordinated community response to prevention, support and protection services and services for perpetrators.

Operation Encompass addresses shortcomings in the early sharing of information with schools to enable them to provide proactive support to children and young people who are affected by domestic abuse within the family home. During the period April 2019 to March 2020 there were 309 incidents which involved 362 children, all notified to schools.

Domestic abuse remains a key training module to raise awareness and to ensure frontline practitioners are aware of the impact domestic abuse can have on victims, children and vulnerable adults. It also includes an emphasis on coercion and control.

The Domestic and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG) monitor local arrangements on the role key partners have in tackling domestic abuse in Darlington which provides some assurance about multi-agency response to tackling domestic violence and abuse. Darlington also has a separate plan to address sexual violence.

## Communication, Engagement and Voice of the Child/Adult

The voice of children, young people and adults with needs for care and support and their families is at the heart of all partnership activity. It is a recurring theme highlighted in reviews and audit activity. The Partnership structure includes the provision for actively seeking the voice of children and adults, ensuring their voices are threaded throughout each layer of the structure and to find out what works well for them. Agencies are also expected to provide evidence of how they ensure they have captured the voices of children, young people, adults and their families in their work.

Where possible, the Partnership will involve families in Child and Adult Safeguarding practice/learning reviews, audit activity and events. Information from such engagement is used to inform and develop practice and also helps set the priorities and audit and performance activity.

The Partnership's Communication and Engagement strategy was revisited to embrace the 'Think Family' approach to ensure the work of the Partnership is effectively communicated to relevant audiences which includes: children, young people and adults with needs for care and support, their families as well as practitioners and the wider community in Darlington.

There is some evidence of how the Partnership has engaged and communicated with a broad audience including, children, young people and adults with needs for care and support and their families and practitioners throughout this period, however recognises there is much more that can be achieved.





## Young People Conference 2019

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership held its annual Young People Conference in July 2019 at Darlington College. Over forty young people from six secondary schools in Darlington attended the event which is aimed to engage with young people and to improve their understanding of safeguarding issues which may be relevant to them.

The themes for the conference this year were Internet Safety – the perceptions and consequences of sexting and risk taking behaviour associated with alcohol and drugs. The themes were identified in consultation with young people and following a survey taken at the end of the conference, 93% of those who attended indicated they had learned something new to take back to school to share with their friends and peers.

## Making Safeguarding Personal

Making Safeguarding Personal (MSP) is an initiative applicable to all agencies, which aims to develop a person centred and outcomes focus to safeguarding. In Darlington MSP and the involvement of service users or their representative in safeguarding enquiries is measured from the outset and is evaluated as part of the safeguarding process. Significant progress has been made in ensuring the adult at the centre of the enquiry (or their representative or advocate) is fully involved in the discussions about the safeguarding concern. In 2019/2020, 97% of cases consistently involved the individual (or their representative or advocate) in the safeguarding enquiry. The partnership continues to seek assurances that the principles of MSP are embedded within partner agencies.

## Case Study - Self-Neglect, Non-Compliance and Making Safeguarding Personal

A service user with chronic kidney disease required dialysis treatment three times a week and concerns were raised that the service user had failed to attend dialysis treatment and was likely to die as a result of self-neglect. No concerns were highlighted regarding capacity however, the medical team involved in the case found it very difficult to engage the service user in discussions around the deterioration in health and desired outcomes of the safeguarding process. All attempts at communication failed and without the service user's consent, it was not possible to contact a family member who visited daily. Therefore, the progression to a strategy meeting was made without consent, considering the severity of the risk (death). Due to the level of risk involved with the concern raised, it was necessary to look at the options available to safeguard the individual.

It was clear the service user had disengaged from meaningful discussion with health colleagues and had resisted contact from the safeguarding team. Further dialogue with the service user was attempted and the suggestion to involve an advocate was accepted. This proved to be a more successful approach with the individual able to express the desired outcomes. These included:

- being listened to and not always being “told what to do” in relation to health needs
- having more control about treatment
- the opportunity to explore the impact of not receiving treatment.

Shifting the focus from the presenting issue of non-compliance of essential medical treatment to engaging in what was important to the individual was crucial in breaking through barriers the service user had constructed. Highlighting strengths and providing the opportunity to discuss views and wishes clearly, without initiating conversation with concerns about non-attendance, ensured the service user felt more in control.

The introduction of an advocacy worker was a significant factor in allowing the service user to feel able to talk about their fears and anxiety in a safe way and the service user remains engaged in the support from the advocacy worker who acts as a first contact for further service provision.

## Strengthening Families Programme – Review of Front Door

Darlington Borough Council implemented its new strengthening families programme which was to see relational and restorative practices at the centre of practice to help make children in Darlington safer and able to remain with their families. A review highlighted families were seeing too many changes in social workers and a disproportionate number of assessments being carried out resulting in cases being either stepped down or closed, causing anxiety for families.

Darlington invested heavily in this programme and saw a shift from the current model of written contacts to a telephone-based service with no requirement to submit a written referral. The changes went live early March 2020. It is still early days and the Partnership will be presented with key findings from interim reviews at specific timelines over the course of the next 12 months.



## Independent Chair Engagement

During the year the Independent Chair held multi-agency meetings with relevant agencies of the Partnership and attended other forums such as primary and secondary forums to talk about current issues, what is working well and what needs to change relating to current safeguarding arrangements.

## Lay Members

Added strength is brought to the Partnership by its Lay Members whose role is to develop links between the Partnership and the community groups to support stronger public engagement in local safeguarding issues as well as helping to improve public understanding of safeguarding.

## DSP website and briefings

In January 2020, the Partnership launched a new website.

The website provides key safeguarding messages to practitioners and to the wider public as well as useful information and resources to not only support those working with children and adults, but the wider community to help keep children, young people and adults with needs for care and support safe. Since the new website was launched in January, there have been over 6000 unique visitors to the site, pages aimed at professionals and training being the most visited.

The Partnership developed a number of briefings to update on national, regional and local information which highlighted the key headlines the Partnership should be sighted on, including bulletins to support partners through the beginning weeks of the COVID-19 Pandemic.

**[www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk](http://www.darlington-safeguarding-partnership.co.uk)**





# Training and Development

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of both Children and Adults is one of the key priorities of the Safeguarding Partnership in Darlington and remains the focus of the learning and development activity for learners whether from statutory, voluntary or independent sector.

The Partnership is committed to a culture of learning and this is outlined in the joint training strategy which sets out the strategic aims and objectives of the Partnership’s approach to ensuring that everyone working with children, young people and adults in the Darlington locality has the right skills, increased confidence and knowledge in the work they undertake to protect them from abuse and harm.

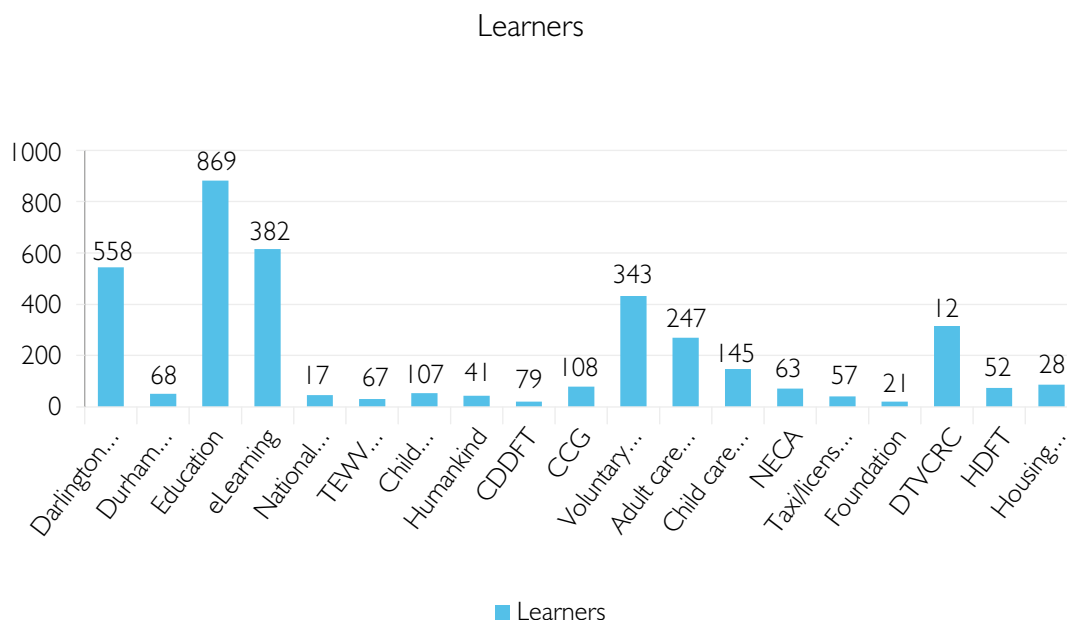
The training programme is updated and revised, based on information provided through the training needs analysis, feedback from the training delivered and post course evaluation of impact for both learners and the organisation. The multi-agency trainer has full access to performance data, information from lessons learnt reviews and audits, to ensure the training programme is regularly updated to meet the needs of practitioners. Courses are delivered through face to face training and the provision of eLearning modules. The Partnership receives an annual training report which for 2019 - 2020 highlighted:

- 99% of delegates who completed the post course evaluation, three months after the course stated that their confidence and skills were now very good/outstanding.
- 281 delegates completed the newly introduced programme of Neglect workshops which were developed to reflect learning from reviews multi-agency neglect audit where it was highlighted neglect may not be fully understood.

The total attendance on face to face training for 2019 – 2020 was 2,861. A total of 383 delegates accessed and successfully completed eLearning modules provided by the Partnership.

Further information and a breakdown of the training figures can be found in the training annual report 2019/2020 available on the Safeguarding Partnership website.

The chart below outlines the attendance for face to face training accessed by partner agencies during the period April 2019 – March 2020.





## Policy and Procedure

Enabling continual improvement and learning for partners and practitioners is important to the Partnership. The development of local multi-agency policy, procedure and practice guidance is undertaken through the Learning and Development sub-group which ensures that learning points from case reviews and audits as well as changes to national policy and identified good practice are captured. The ongoing review of policies, procedures and guidance documents is important to support front line practitioners with both prevention, early intervention and awareness raising.

During 2019/20, there was a focus on revisiting policy, procedure and practice guidance documents to support and strengthen partnership working across adults and children's services. With an aim of promoting a 'whole family approach' to safeguarding to improve outcomes for children, adults and their families. Information on the DSP website

provides support to front line practitioners to enable them to easily access multi-agency safeguarding procedures and practice guidance as well as providing advice and guidance to members of the public on how to report safeguarding concerns. A number of policies were revised which include:

- Multi Agency Child Protection Procedures and Adult Safeguarding Procedures
- Multi-Agency Practice Guidance on Domestic Abuse and Safeguarding to incorporate referral pathways, Honour Based Abuse, Forced Marriage and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)
- Child and Adolescent Violence towards Parents (CAPVA), a less understood form of Domestic Abuse
- Practice Guidance on Fabricated and Induced Illness (FII)
- Joint child and adult Professional Challenge Procedure and guidance
- Partnership Information Sharing Protocol
- Child Safeguarding Practice Review Procedure and the Serious Child Safeguarding Incident Procedure - to reflect legislative changes and the introduction of the requirement to notify the national panel
- The Safeguarding Adult Review (SAR) protocol - to improve timescales and to reflect similar process for children where appropriate
- A joint Communications and Engagement strategy

Revised policies specifically on Honour Based Abuse and Forced Marriage and transitional ages are currently in development and due to rising concerns nationally in childhood obesity, a local policy on Childhood Obesity and Safeguarding is currently being developed.

# 6. Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adult Reviews

Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (CSPR) were introduced in 2019, and replaced Serious Case Reviews. During 2019-20 there were no new Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or Safeguarding Adult Reviews (SAR). There were two ongoing reviews carried forward from the Children's Board, one Serious Case Review and a Local Learning Lessons Review. The reviews were completed and signed off by Statutory Safeguarding Partners in October 2019.

It is acknowledged the number of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews or Safeguarding Adult Reviews in Darlington is low, however the processes have been reviewed and revised over the course of the year. All reviews are reported to the Statutory Safeguarding Partners and Independent Scrutineer/Chair and they use this information to determine and direct the work. All cases are referred to the Learning and Development sub-group in the interests of openness and transparency and to enable the group to discuss and analyse processes to determine if appropriate decisions have been made. The group will consider whether there may be single or multi-agency learning or whether practice issues have been highlighted which may need to be explored further through quality assurance processes. The group will oversee and monitor cases to ensure that identified improvement actions are completed and any barriers or slippage in achieving outcomes are responded to or escalated where appropriate. It also has responsibility for embedding learning and the quality assurance of recommendations for improving safeguarding practice by all partner organisations.

Although there is no requirement for formal notification for an adult review (SAR), it was agreed it would be beneficial to adopt a similar process and timelines as is in place for Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews

The Serious Case Review was published in line with Statutory Guidance on the DSP website. The learning from these reviews were shared using a range of methods, including the development of briefing documents and themed workshops. Partners were asked to use these tools within their own organisation to support and improve learning and practice.

Moving forward, the Partnership is considering how it is going to take forward the learning on the themes identified into the next year. The Chairs of the two sub groups (Learning and Development and Quality Assurance and Performance Management) will be undertaking a mapping exercise to determine the areas the Partnership needs to focus on during the next reporting period.



# 7. Looking Ahead

Darlington begins the year 2020-21 with the challenge of responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic and of ensuring vulnerable children and adults remain the focus of all organisations. The partners began working together to develop new ways of working to ensure there was a strong collective oversight of all safeguarding arrangements to seek the assurance that everyone is working closely together to get through this and appropriately adapting ways of working to ensure the most vulnerable are supported and safeguarded.

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership will continue to invest in its children, young people and adults with needs for care and support and their families. Our vision of ensuring Darlington is a safe place for children and adults to live will be paramount in the work we do. We recognise there is still much to do and have identified gaps and areas for learning, however are assured that there is multi-agency commitment by all agencies to work collaboratively to address these and strengthen existing practice with a focus on a 'whole family approach'.



# Appendix 1

## Staffing and Budget

Darlington Safeguarding Partnership is supported by the following staff within the Business Unit:

- Business Manager
- Development Officer/Designated Officer
- Multi-Agency Trainer
- Business Support Officer
- Analyst (seconded from Durham Constabulary to work jointly across Durham and Darlington Safeguarding Partnerships)

Contributions from Partner Agencies for 2019-20 period	
Darlington Borough Council	£115,616
Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group	£41,310
Durham Constabulary	£34,404
Schools Forum	£10,000
Darlington College	£2,525
County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust	£16,973
Queen Elizabeth 6th Form College	£1,515
Community Rehabilitation Company	£1,000
National Probation Service	£770
Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust	£2,000
CAFCASS	£550
Course and Training Fees	£7,025
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>£233,666</b>

# Appendix 2

## Relevant Agencies

The Partnership is led by the Statutory Safeguarding Partners which is the key Statutory Leads. The Multi-Agency Partnership Group is the wider partnership group which includes representative from the relevant agencies. Details of relevant Agencies as shown below:

- Darlington Local Authority - Housing, Public Health, Youth Offending
- Health agencies – County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT), Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV), Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT), North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Foundation Trust, North East Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust (NEAS)
- Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS)
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service (DDFRS)
- Early Years Settings
- Education (Primary, Secondary, Further Education, SEN)
- Support organisations for issues such as Substance Misuse/Domestic Abuse/Sexual Exploitation/Sexual Abuse (SARC)
- Family Justice Board (FJB)
- National Probation Service (NPS)
- Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC)
- Voluntary and third sector organisations (including Healthwatch)
- Primary Care Darlington General Practices
- Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS England (pharmacy, dentist and optometrists)
- Independent providers including private hospitals, children's homes, nursing and care homes, domiciliary providers
- Youth groups – e.g. sport, scouts, brownies
- Faith settings
- Minority Communities
- British Transport Police (BTP)
- Chairs of other key local boards
- Representatives of other National Partners
- Darlington Partnership – which includes business and community organisations
- Coroner







## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020

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### PERFORMANCE INDICATORS Q1 2020/21

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#### Purpose of the Report

1. To provide Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators.

#### Summary

2. This report provides Quarter 1 (April – June) 2020/21 performance information in line with an indicator set agreed by Monitoring and Coordination Group on 2 July 2018, and subsequently by Scrutiny Committee Chairs.
3. It is suggested monitoring focuses on issues and exceptions, and relevant Assistant Directors will be in attendance at the meeting to respond to queries raised by the committee regarding the performance information contained within this report.
4. Where indicators are reported annually, quarterly updates will not be available.

#### Where are we performing well?

5. 16.7% of re-referrals were repeated within 12 months, better than the target of 18%.
6. 89.7% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days from the Strategy meeting being held/Section 47 being initiated, which remains higher than our statistical neighbour, regional and national average benchmarks.
7. 100% of children with a Child Protection Plan and 100% of Children Looked After have an allocated social worker.
8. 93.6% of children received a statutory Child Protection (CP) visit during Q1 2020/21 within 10 working days. This is above the target of 90% and an improvement on the timeliness of visits when compared with the same period last year (81.9%).
9. 94.3% of statutory children in care visits were completed within timescale.
10. 6.5% (19/291) of Children in Care (CiC), as at June 2020, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months. This is below the internal target (10%), national (10%), statistical neighbour (9.2%) and regional averages (9%) and an improvement on the 13.0% as at June 2019.
11. 29.6% of Care Leavers were not in employment, education or training (NEET) and 100% were in suitable accommodation.

### Where do we need to improve?

12. 79.8% of referrals were screened and completed within 1 day, below the target of 90%.
13. Timeliness of assessments is 74.7% which is below the target of 90%, reasons for this are analysed and monitored by the Head of Service.
14. The number of children in care has increased to 291, this continues to be closely managed. However, delays in children ceasing care have occurred during the period due to closure of courts in response to government guidance regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, which has kept the number high.
15. 69.9% (51/73) of children due a review health assessment in Q1 2020/21 had one completed, which is an improvement on the 60.4% at the end of June 2019.
16. As a result of dental surgery closures during lockdown, 4.3% of children in care that were due a dental check assessment have had one completed.

### **Recommendation**

17. It is recommended:
  - a) That performance information provided in this report is reviewed and noted, and relevant queries raised with the appropriate Assistant Director.

**James Stroyan**  
**Director of Children and Adult Services**

### **Background papers**

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Sharon Raine Head of Performance and Transformation: Extension 6091

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report supports the Council's Crime and Disorder responsibilities
Health and Well Being	This report supports performance improvement relating to improving the health and wellbeing of residents
Sustainability	This report supports the Council's sustainability responsibilities
Diversity	This report supports the promotion of diversity
Wards Affected	This report supports performance improvement across all Wards
Groups Affected	This report supports performance improvement which benefits all groups
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework
Key Decision	This is not a key decision
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) by involving Members in the scrutiny of performance relating to the delivery of key outcomes
Efficiency	Scrutiny of performance is integral to optimising outcomes.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report may have an impact on their emotional and physical health, social development, education and future employment.

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# Children's Social Care Performance & Quality Assurance Report

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Quarter 1 2020/21 (April - June)

Scrutiny

## Quarter 1 2020/21 Performance Summary

### Referral:

79.8% of referrals have been completed in 1 working day during Q1 2020/21. Extensive work regarding referral enquiries has been required for some cases, resulting in completion taking longer than the statutory timescale. However, the additional work has been to the benefit of the child.

### Re-Referrals:

16.7% of children have been re-referred to Children's Social Care within 12 months of a previous referral, which compares favourably with the most recently available statistical neighbour (19.9%), regional (21.4%) and national averages (22.6%) (LAIT 2019).

### Early Help:

119 Early Help Assessments have been completed during Q1 2020/21.

### Missing:

Of the children who go missing from home, 91.3% have been offered a return home interview within the 72-hour timescale. Where the coordinator cannot engage the young person, discussion takes place with parents, carers, teachers or social workers to offer insight around reducing the missing episodes. Of those young people who went missing 36.1% were Children in Care.

### Children & Families Assessments:

142 children were assessed by the end of Q1 2020/21, which is a decrease on the 336 assessments completed during the same period last year. The rate of assessments was 63.2 per 10,000 of the population at the end of June 2020.

### Timeliness:

Social workers completed 74.6% of assessments on children within timescale: a decrease from the same period last year (88.1%), and below the target of 90%.

### **Section 47 enquiries:**

Section 47 enquiries concerning 95 children have been started during Q1 2020/21, none of which were for children already subject to an existing Child Protection (CP) plan.

### **Child Protection Conferences:**

89.7% of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days from the strategy meeting / section 47 being initiated, excluding transfer-in conferences, against our target of 95%. Darlington's performance is higher than the most recently available statistical neighbour (82.4%), regional (82.1%) and national averages (78.7%) (LAIT 2019).

### **Child Protection Plans:**

95 children were subject to a Child Protection (CP) plan during Q1 2020/21, this is a 25.2% reduction when compared with Q1 2019/20 (127). Darlington currently has a 42.3% rate per 10,000 for children subject to a CP. However, the latest published figure is 45.4 (relating to 2019), which is lower than the regional average (63.1%) and statistical neighbour average (50.4%) but is higher than the national average (43.7%) (LAIT 2019).

Page 5

100% of CP cases were allocated to a social worker and all the CP reviews were carried out in timescale. During Q1 2020/21 there were no children ceasing CP who had been subject to the plan for 2 or more years.

### **Child Protection Statutory visits:**

93.6% of children received a statutory Child Protection (CP) visit during Q1 2020/21 within 10 working days. This is above the target of 90% and an improvement on the timeliness of visits when compared with the same period last year (81.9%).

### **Children in Care:**

By the end of Q1 2020/21 the number of Children in Care (CiC) was 291. During Q1 2020/21 a total number of 29 children came into the care of the Local Authority, this is lower than in Q1 2019/20 (37). During Q1 2020/21, 8 children ceased to be in care. This figure reflects the inability and delay to progress adoption orders being granted or care orders being discharged by the court due to the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting court closure.

## **Statutory visits of Children in Care**

94.3% (941/998) of Child in Care (CiC) statutory visits have been completed in timescale at June 2020. This is an increase on the 86.0% CiC statutory visits completed in timescale at June 2019 and above the target of 90%.

### **Placements:**

6.5% (19/291) of Children in Care (CiC), as at June 2020, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months. This is below the internal target (10%), and the most recently available national (10%), statistical neighbour (9.2%) and regional averages (9%).

66.3% (61/92) of our Children in Care aged under 16, (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) have been in their current placement continuously for at least 2 years. This is a lower percentage compared with June 2019 at 72.2%, however there was a smaller cohort of 79 young people.

The percentage of children placed 20 miles or more away from home is below our target at 8.8%. This relates to 25 young people who have been placed in residential care due to their disability / placed with family / or placed for adoption, and this provision was not available within 20 miles.

### **Dental and Health Review:**

69.9% (51/73) of children due a review health assessment in Q1 2020/21 had one completed. This percentage has increased compared with 60.4% at the end of June 2019.

As a result of dental surgery closures during lockdown, 4.3% of children in care that were due a dental check assessment has had one completed.

The percentage of children who have refused their medical checks has continued to decrease, with only 6 refusing their health review and 6 refusing their dental review. Although they are refusing, they are continually reminded of the benefits of having a check-up and encouraged to take part.

### **Care Leavers:**

100% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation at the end of Q1 2020/21.

The percentage of care leavers who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) continues to exceed the target set of 30% at 29.6% at the end of Q1 2020/21.



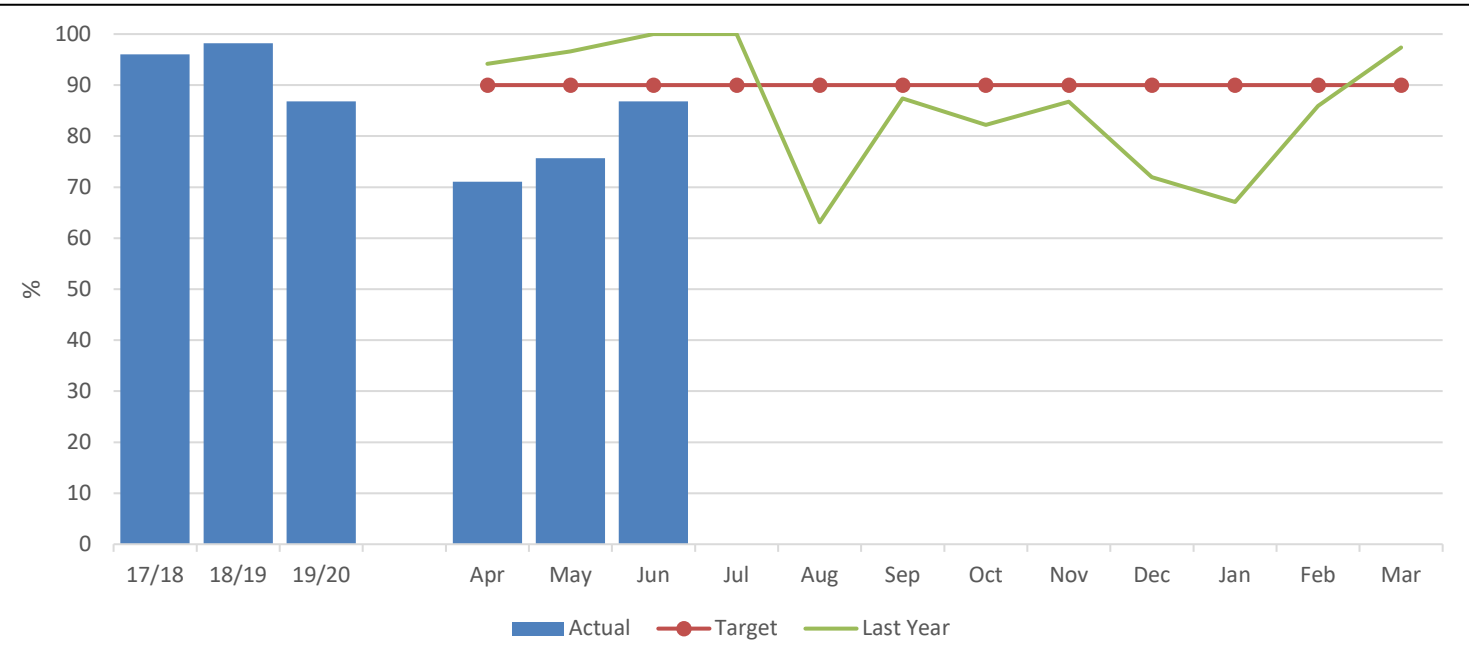
**REFERRALS - TIMELINESS**

**DEFINITION** Percentage of referrals completed within 1 working day and over 3 working days. Referrals completed within 1 working day indicates that decisions regarding the services required are made in a timely manner to minimise drift and delay and to ensure that children are safe.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 79.8% of referrals were completed within timescale during Q1 2020/21.

**CSC 022** CSC 022: Monthly % of referrals completed within 1 working day.

Monthly % of referrals completed within 1 working day.



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	90%
	Apr-20	71.1
	May-20	75.7
	Jun-20	86.8
	Jul-20	
	Aug-20	
	Sep-20	
	Oct-20	
	Nov-20	
	Dec-20	
	Jan-21	
	Feb-21	
	Mar-21	

ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	96.0
	2018/19	98.2
	2019/20	86.8
	2020/21 YTD	79.8

**REFERRALS - RE-REFERRALS**

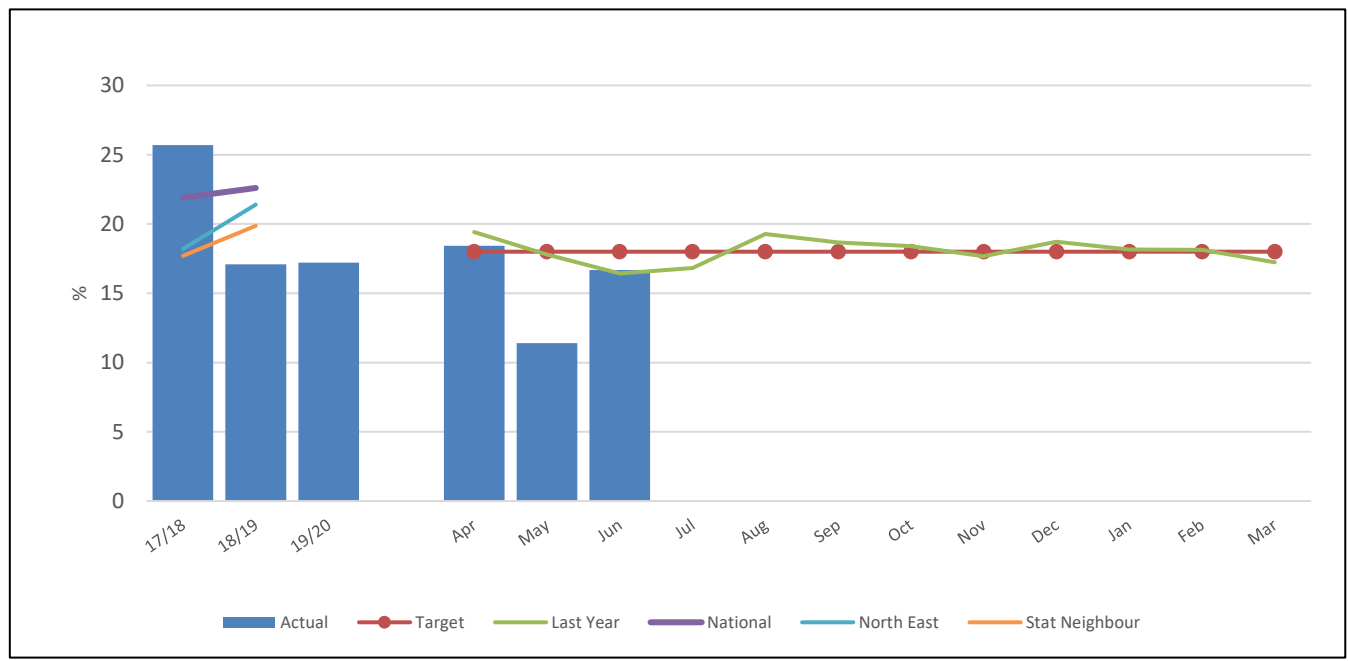
**DEFINITION** Percentage of re-referrals that are received within 12 months of a previous referral (based on referral start dates)  
 A re-referral to Children's Social Care could be an indication that the previous referral was inappropriately closed down without addressing the initial concerns or issues.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 34 re-referrals from 14 families have been made during Q1 2020/21. This equates to 16.7% of our referrals being repeated within 12 months. This is below the internal target of 18%, our statistical neighbour (19.9%), regional (21.4%) and the national average (22.6%) (LAIT 2019) of children being re-referred within 12 months.

CSC 034	CSC 032
Monthly number of re-referrals that are repeat within 12 months	% re-referrals that are repeat within 12 months (cumulative)

CSC 032: % re-referrals that are repeat within 12 months (cumulative)

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target		18%
	Apr-20	7	18.4
May-20	6	11.4	
Jun-20	21	16.7	
Jul-20			
Aug-20			
Sep-20			
Oct-20			
Nov-20			
Dec-20			
Jan-21			
Feb-21			
Mar-21			



ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	247	25.7
	2018/19	205	17.1
	2019/20	171	17.2
	2020/21 YTD	34	16.7

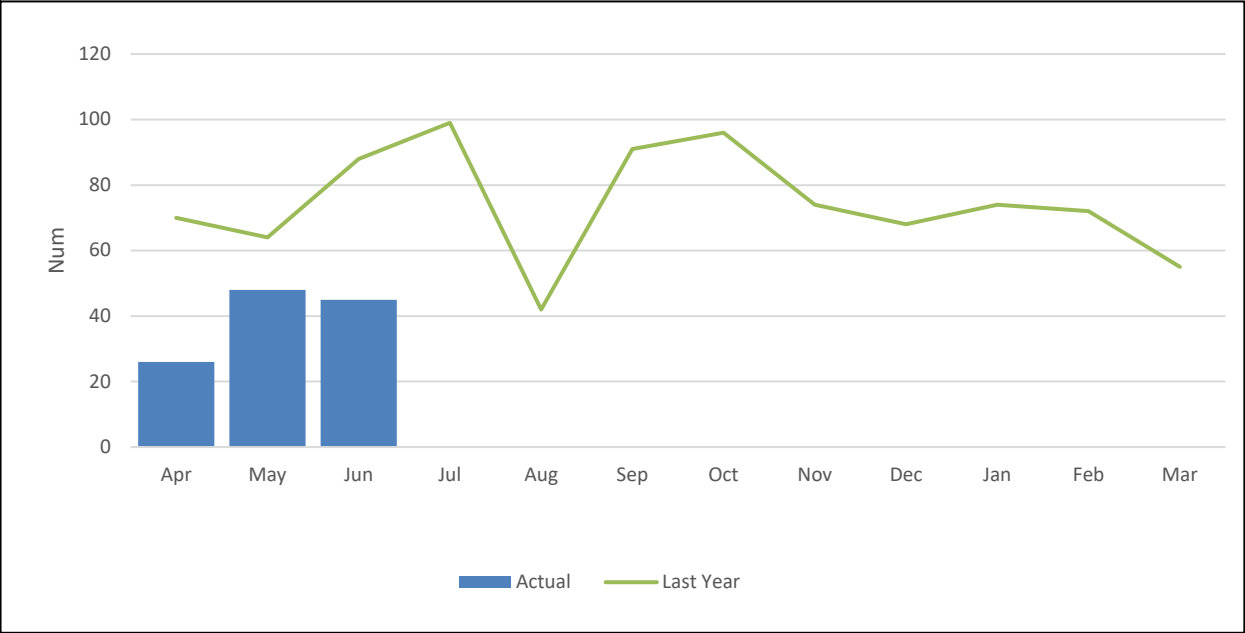
**EARLY HELP ASSESSMENTS - STARTED**

**DEFINITION** The number of individual Early Help Assessments (EHA) started in month and year to date, including those initiated by external agencies. The start date of the EHA is taken from the form created date in Liquid Logic and the start date of the external EHA is taken from the contact date when the agency informed us of the EHA.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 119 Early Help Assessments (EHA) were started during Q1 2020/21.

CSC 002  
Total number of individual EHA's started in month (inc. external)

CSC 002: Total number of individual EHA's started in month (inc. external)



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	
	Apr-20	26
	May-20	48
	Jun-20	45
	Jul-20	
	Aug-20	
	Sep-20	
	Oct-20	
	Nov-20	
	Dec-20	
	Jan-21	
	Feb-21	
	Mar-21	

ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	877
	2018/19	869
	2019/20	893
	2020/21 YTD	119

**MISSING EPISODES**

**DEFINITION**

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 13 Children in Care (CiC) were reported missing in Q1 2020/21. Where children are looked after by other authorities but cared for in Darlington, the ERASE Team have been alerted and provided with relevant information to ensure that the young people have been appropriately placed.

CSC 246  
 Number of missing relating to Children in Care with DBC

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Ep.	Child.
	Apr-20	9
May-20	12	8
Jun-20	7	6
Jul-20		
Aug-20		
Sep-20		
Oct-20		
Nov-20		
Dec-20		
Jan-21		
Feb-21		
Mar-21		

ANNUAL TREND child counted once	2018/19	199	36
	2019/20	129	24
	2020/21 YTD	28	13

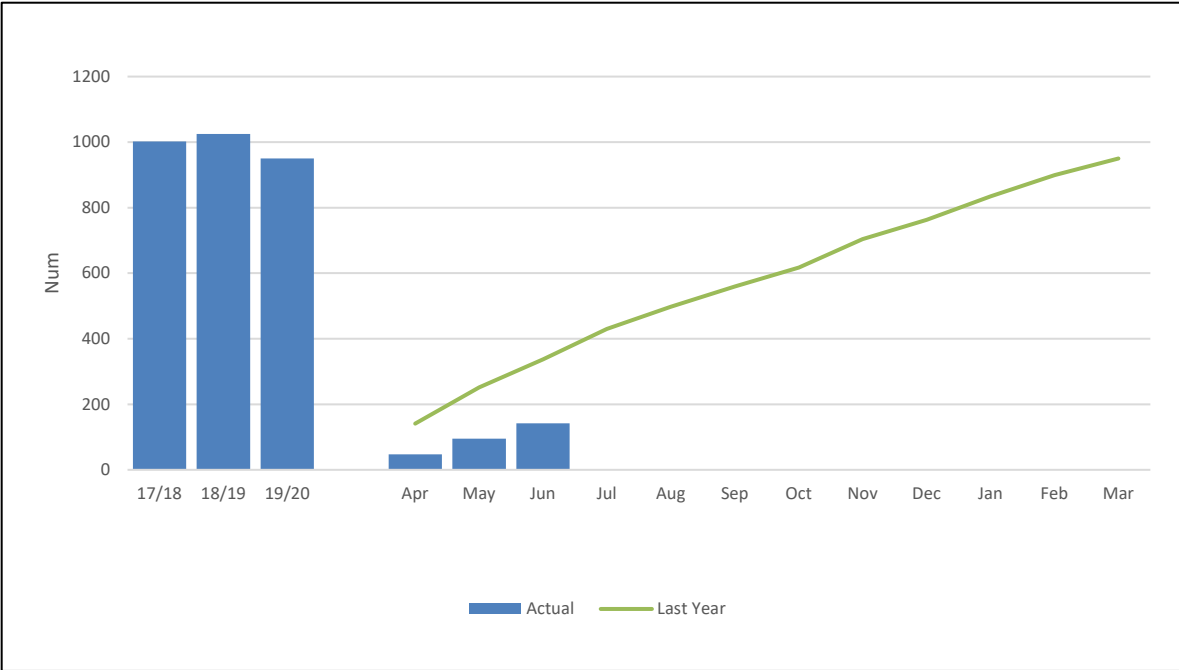
**ASSESSMENTS**

**DEFINITION** Monthly and cumulative number of Children & Families assessments completed.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 142 C&F assessments have been completed in Q1 2020/21.

**CSC 036**  
 Number of children & families assessments completed year to date

CSC 036: Number of children & families assessments completed year to date



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Apr-20	47
	May-20	95
	Jun-20	142
	Jul-20	
	Aug-20	
	Sep-20	
	Oct-20	
	Nov-20	
	Dec-20	
	Jan-21	
	Feb-21	
	Mar-21	

ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	1,002
	2018/19	1,025
	2019/20	950
	2020/21 YTD	142

**ASSESSMENTS - TIMELINESS**

<b>DEFINITION</b>	<p>Of those assessments completed in a period, the percentage completed within 45 working days. Day zero is the first working day on or after the start date of the referral, or strategy discussion decided to initiate S47 enquiries, or where new information indicates that an assessment should be undertaken. The end date is the first working day on or after the recorded date the Team Manager closes the single assessment.</p> <p>A process indicator as a proxy measure for improved child safety and how quickly services can respond when a child is thought to be at risk of serious harm. Local authorities should investigate and address concerns in a timely and efficient way.</p>
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<b>PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS</b>	<p>74.6% (106/142) of the C&amp;F assessments were completed within 45 working days in Q1 2020/21.</p> <p>Currently with 74.6% of our C&amp;F assessments completed within timescale, we are below our statistical neighbour (87.1%) regional (83.0%) and National (83.1%) average as recorded for 2019 in the LAIT, and our target of 90%.</p>
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CSC 038
% C&F Assessments completed within 45 working days (Year to date)

<b>IN MONTH PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>90%</b>
	Apr-20	70.2
	May-20	62.1
	Jun-20	74.7
	Jul-20	
	Aug-20	
	Sep-20	
	Oct-20	
	Nov-20	
	Dec-20	
	Jan-21	
	Feb-21	
	Mar-21	

<b>ANNUAL TREND</b>	2017/18	93.3
	2018/19	81.5
	2019/20	88.7
	2020/21 YTD	74.7

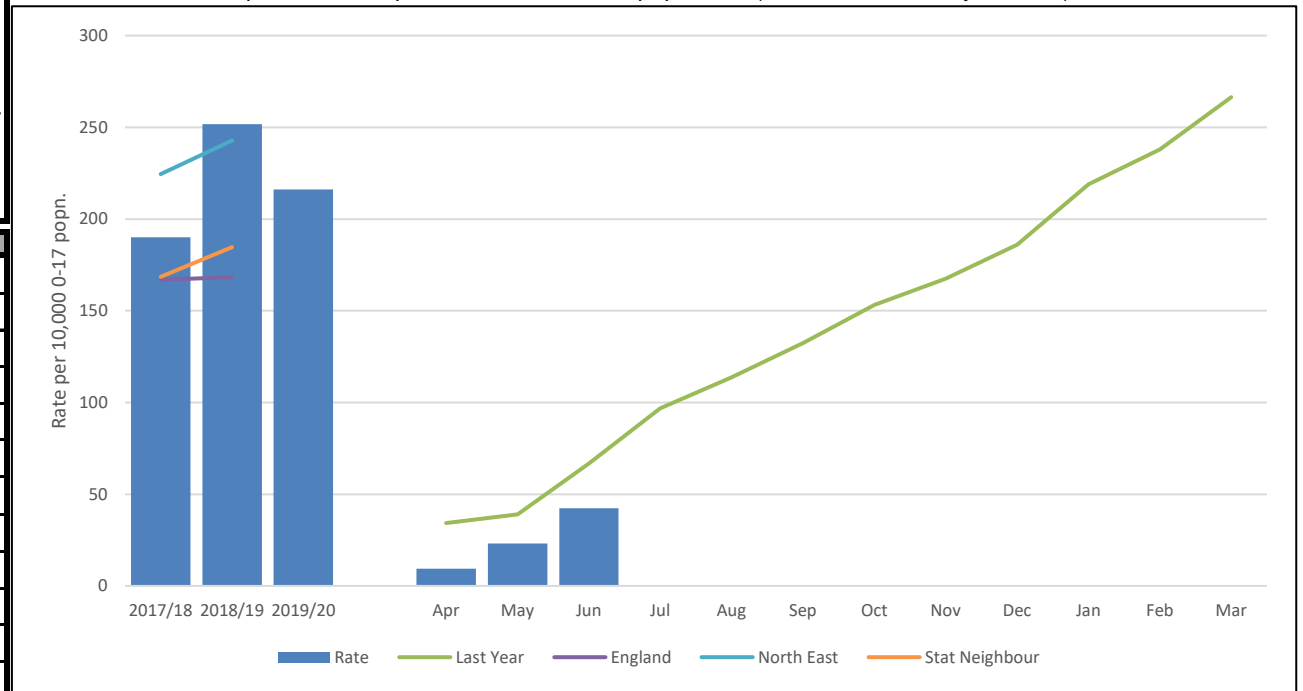
**SECTION 47 - STARTED**

**DEFINITION** Number of children who have had a section 47 enquiries started monthly and year to date and the actual number of enquiries started.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 50 section 47 enquiries were started during Q1 2019/20 involving 95 children, none of which were subject to a Child Protection plan (CP) at the time of the enquiry.

CSC 166	CSC 164
All children who had a section 47 enquiries started in the month	Rate of Section 47 enquiries started per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (Cumulative)

Rate of section 47 enquiries started per 10,000 of the 0-17 population (inc. children already on CPP)



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE		CSC 166	CSC 164
Apr-20	21	9.4	
May-20	31	23.2	
Jun-20	43	42.3	
Jul-20			
Aug-20			
Sep-20			
Oct-20			
Nov-20			
Dec-20			
Jan-21			
Feb-21			
Mar-21			

ANNUAL TREND		CSC 166	CSC 164
2017/18	426	190.0	
2018/19	646	251.8	
2019/20	484	216.2	
2020/21	95	42.3	

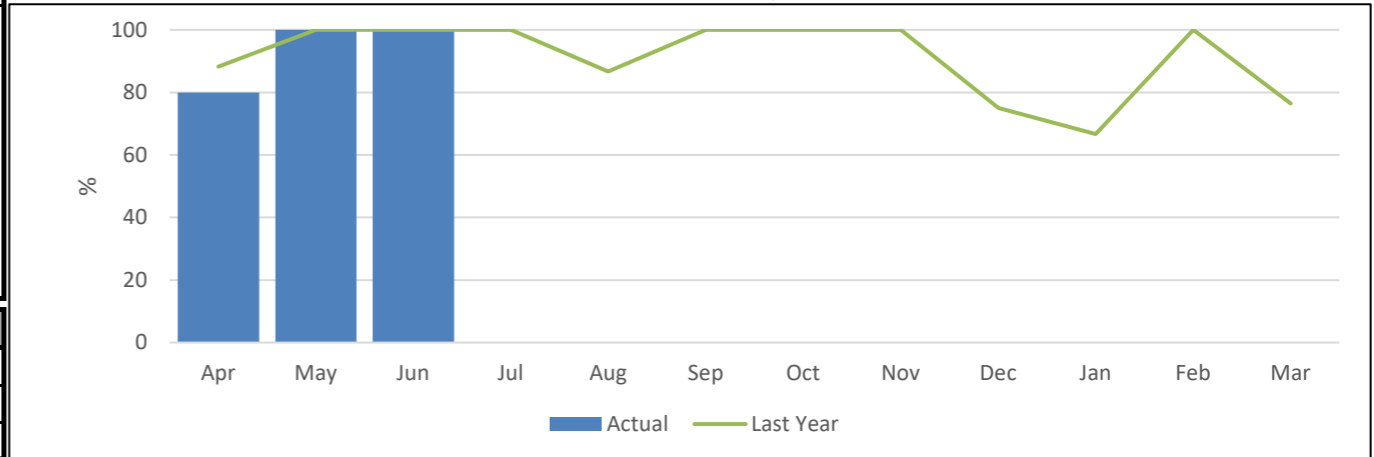
**INITIAL CHILD PROTECTION CONFERENCES - TIMELINESS**

**DEFINITION** Of those ICPC's held within the period (excluding transfer ins), the percentage held within 15 working days of the S47 enquiry. Provides an indication of how quickly the safety of children who are judged to be continuing to, or likely to suffer significant harm is being considered by a multi-agency meeting.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** Of the 39 children (who were not transferred in), 35 had their Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) within timescale (89.7%).  
Darlington's performance remains higher than our statistical neighbour (82.4%), regional (82.1%) and national average (78.7%) (LAIT 2019).

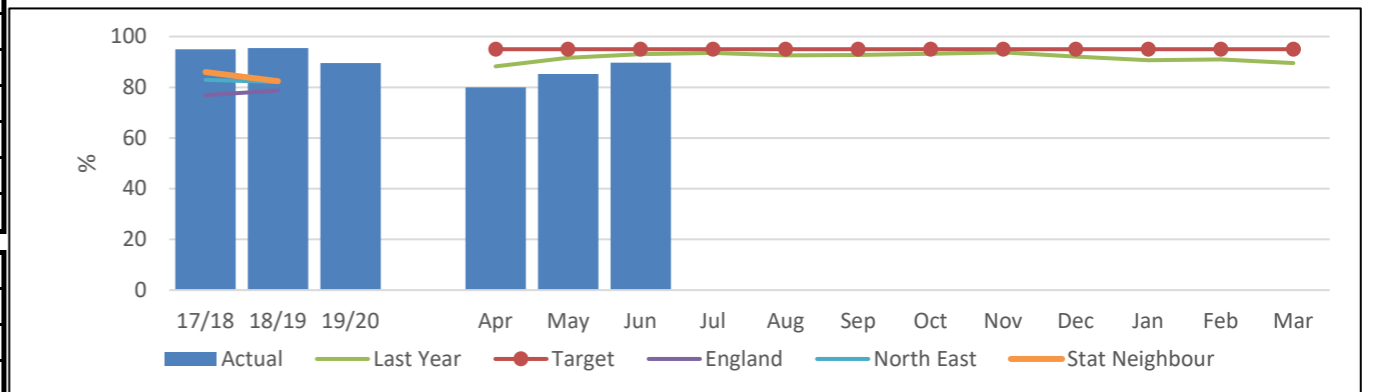
CSC 178	CSC 176
Monthly % of cases recorded in the Safeguarding Unit workbook where Child Protection strategy meeting / S47 start to initial child protection conference (ICPC) are within 15 days (CPP). Excludes transfer-in conferences.	% of cases where the initial child protection conference (ICPC) was within 15 days of the initiating strategy discussion / S47 start recorded in the Safeguarding Unit workbook (CPP). This EXCLUDES transfer-in conferences. Year to Date

CSC 178: Monthly % of cases recorded in the Safeguarding Unit workbook where Child Protection strategy meeting / S47 start to initial child protection conference (ICPC) are within 15 days (CPP). Excludes transfer-in conferences.



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	100	95
	Apr-20		80.0
May-20		100.0	85.2
Jun-20		100.0	89.7
Jul-20			
Aug-20			
Sep-20			
Oct-20			
Nov-20			
Dec-20			
Jan-21			
Feb-21			
Mar-21			

CSC 176: % of cases where the initial child protection conference (ICPC) was within 15 days of the initiating strategy discussion / S47 start recorded in the Safeguarding Unit workbook (CPP). This EXCLUDES transfer-in conferences. Year to Date



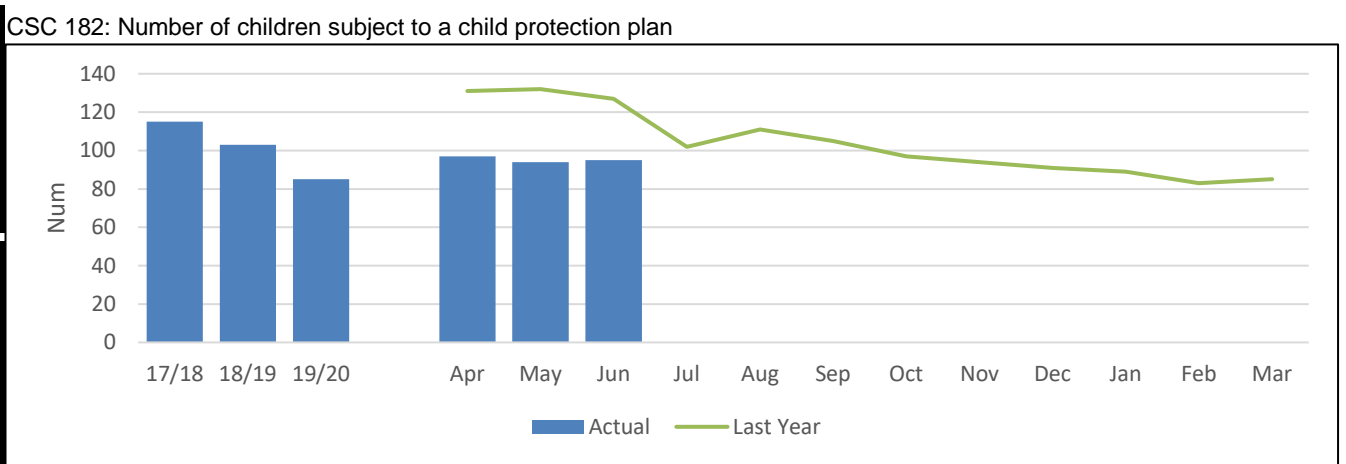


**CHILD PROTECTION**

**DEFINITION** Number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan at the end of the month.

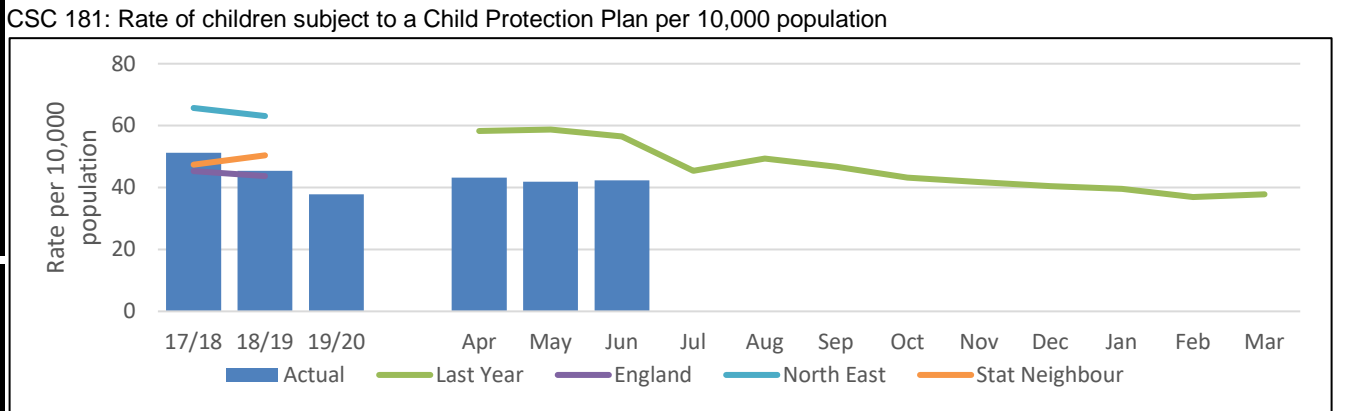
**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 95 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) as at the end of June 2020. This is a 25.2% reduction when compared with June 2019 (127). Darlington currently has a 42.3% rate per 10,000 for children subject to a CPP which is lower than the regional average (63.1%), statistical neighbour (50.4%) and the national average (43.7%) as reported in the 2019 LAIT.

CSC 182	CSC 181
Number of children subject to a child protection plan	Rate of children subject to a Child Protection Plan per 10,000 population



**IN MONTH PERFORMANCE**

Month	CSC 182	CSC 181
Apr-20	97	43.2
May-20	94	41.9
Jun-20	95	42.3
Jul-20		
Aug-20		
Sep-20		
Oct-20		
Nov-20		
Dec-20		
Jan-21		
Feb-21		
Mar-21		



**ANNUAL TREND**

2017/18	115	50.8
2018/19	103	45.7
2019/20	85	37.8
2020/21 YTD	95	42.3

**CHILD PROTECTION - ALLOCATION & REVIEWS**

**DEFINITION**  
 The percentage of children subject to a Child Protection Plan at the end of the month and who at that date had had a Plan continuously for at least the previous 3 months, whose case was reviewed within the required timescales.  
 Reviews are a key element in delivering Child Protection Plans and effective reviews should ensure the provision of good quality interventions. This indicator is a proxy for the measurement of effectiveness of the interventions provided to children subject to a Child Protection Plan. "Working Together to Safeguard Children" guidance requires that the first review should be within 3 months of the initial child protection conference and thereafter at intervals of no more than 6 months.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 100% of Child Protection Cases were allocated to a qualified social worker.  
 100% Child Protection reviews have been completed within the required timescales.  
 Performance remains higher than statistical neighbours (94.2%), regional (92.7%) and national averages (91.8%) as reported in the 2019 LAIT.

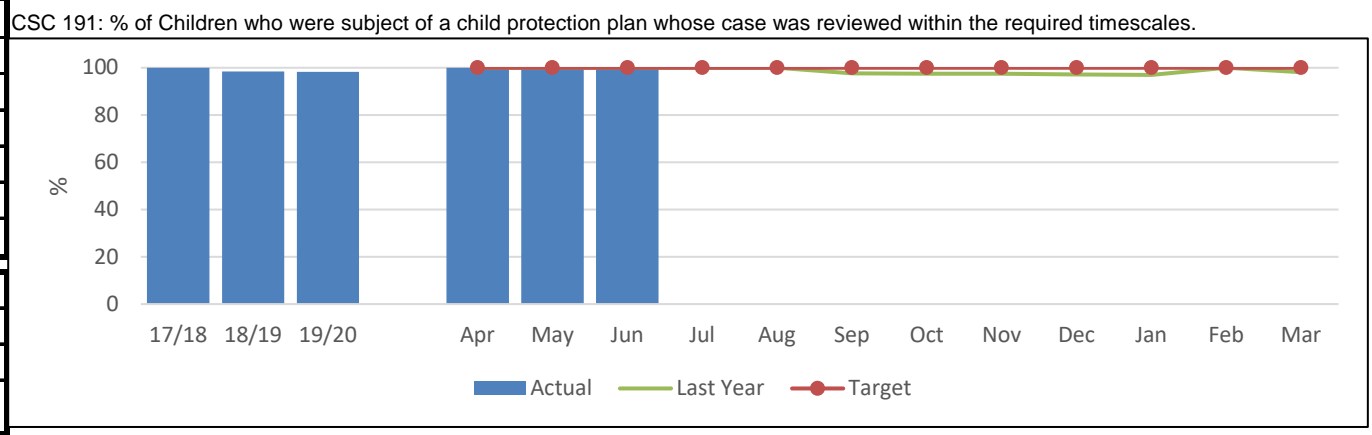
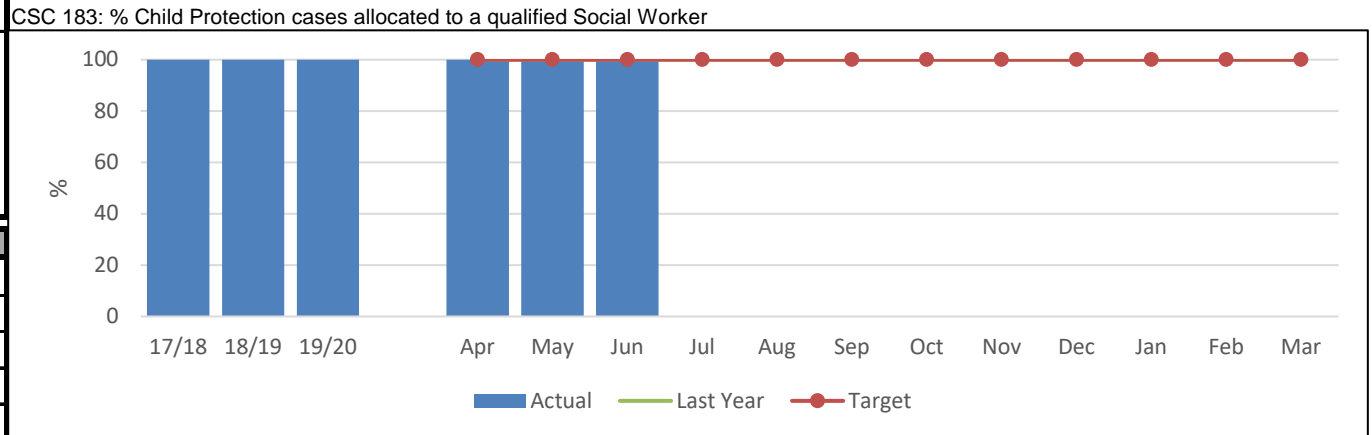
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CSC 183	CSC 191
% Child Protection cases allocated to a qualified Social Worker	% of Children who were subject of a child protection plan whose case was reviewed within the required timescales.

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	100	100	
	Apr-20	100.0	100.0	100.0
	May-20	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Jun-20	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Jul-20			
	Aug-20			
	Sep-20			
	Oct-20			
	Nov-20			
	Dec-20			
	Jan-21			
	Feb-21			
	Mar-21			

ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	100.0	100.0
	2018/19	100.0	98.4
	2019/20	100.0	98.2
	2020/21 YTD	100.0	100.0

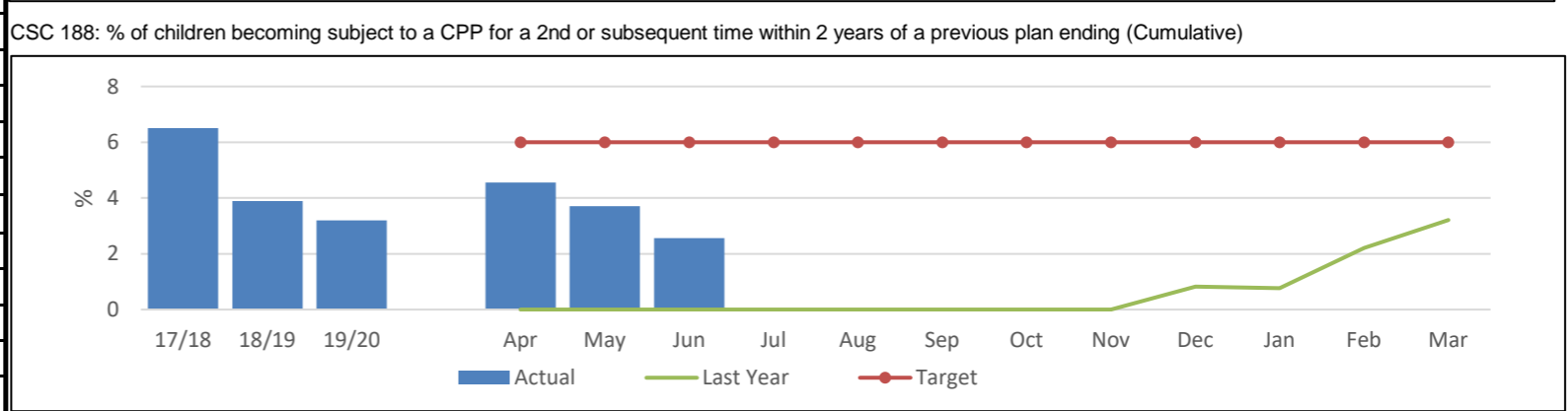
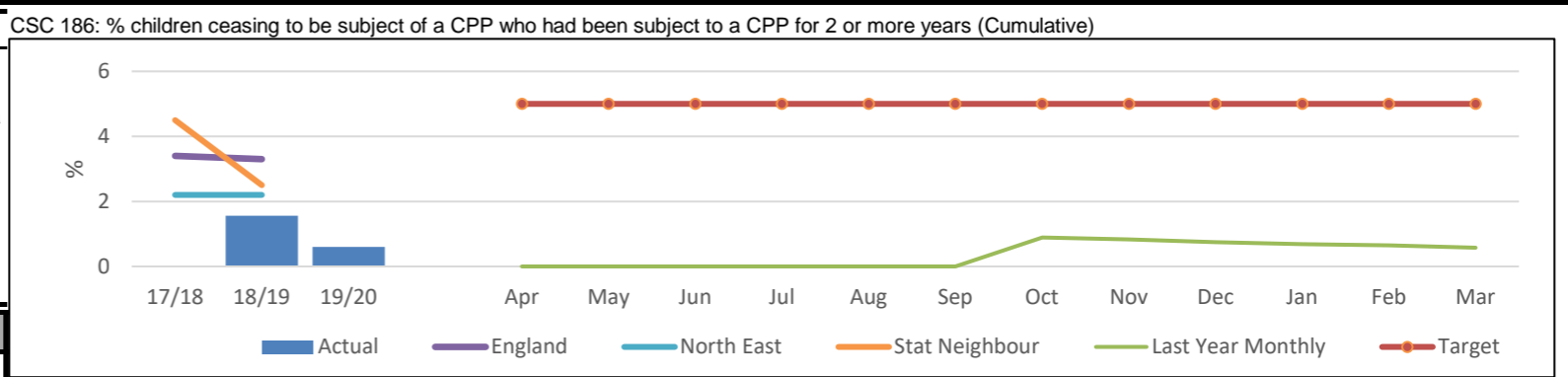


**CHILD PROTECTION - TIME PERIODS**

**DEFINITION**  
 Percentage of children ceasing to be subject to a Child Protection Plan who had been subject to a Plan for 2 or more years, and percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan for the 2nd or subsequent time within a) 2 years of a previous plan, and b) with a previous plan at any point.  
 These indicators reflect the underlying principle that professionals should be working towards specified outcomes which, if implemented effectively, should lead to all children not needing to be the subject of a Child Protection Plan within a maximum of two years, or becoming subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 At the end of June 2020, the figure for children becoming subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the previous plan ending was 2.6%.  
 Year to date no child has ceased to be subject to a CPP who had been subject to the plan for 2 or more years.

	CSC 186	CSC 188
	% children ceasing to be subject of a CPP who had been subject to a CPP for 2 or more years (Cumulative)	% of children becoming subject to a CPP for a 2nd or subsequent time <b>within 2 years of a previous plan ending</b> (Cumulative)
<b>ANNUAL TREND</b>		
	2017/18	2017/18
	2018/19	2018/19
	2019/20	2019/20
	2019/20	2019/20
<b>IN MONTH PERFORMANCE</b>		
	Target	5%
	Apr-20	0.0
	May-20	0.0
	Jun-20	0.0
	Jul-20	
	Aug-20	
	Sep-20	
	Oct-20	
	Nov-20	
	Dec-20	
	Jan-21	
	Feb-21	
	Mar-21	
	6%	



**CHILD PROTECTION - STATUTORY VISITS**

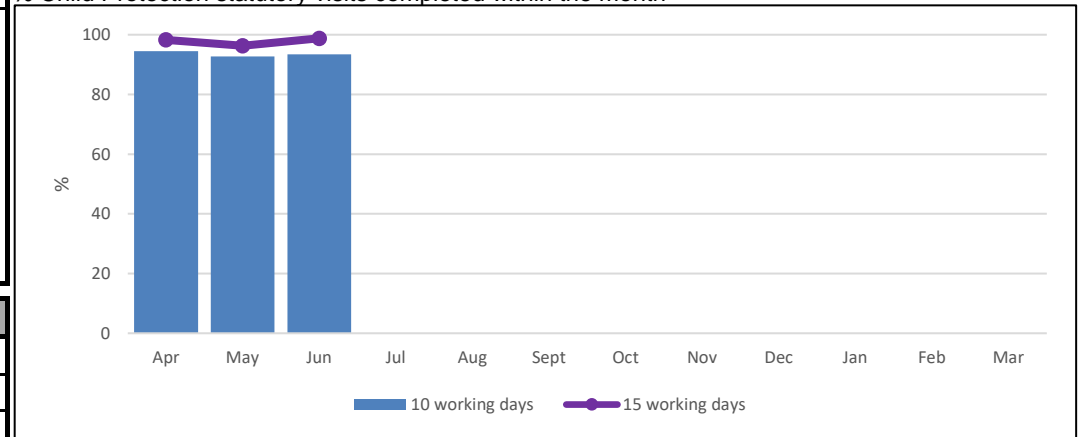
**DEFINITION** Percentage of children subject to a Child Protection Plan who had all statutory visits carried out within timescales and percentage of Child Protection statutory visits completed within timescale monthly and year to date.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 93.6% (727/777) of Child Protection statutory visits were completed within 10 working days in Q1 2020/21. This is an increase on the 81.9% (650/794) that was completed in this timescale in Q1 2019/20. Completed visits have been consistently above target throughout Q1 2020/21.

97.8% (760/777) of the cumulative visits were completed within 15 working days in Q1 2020/21.

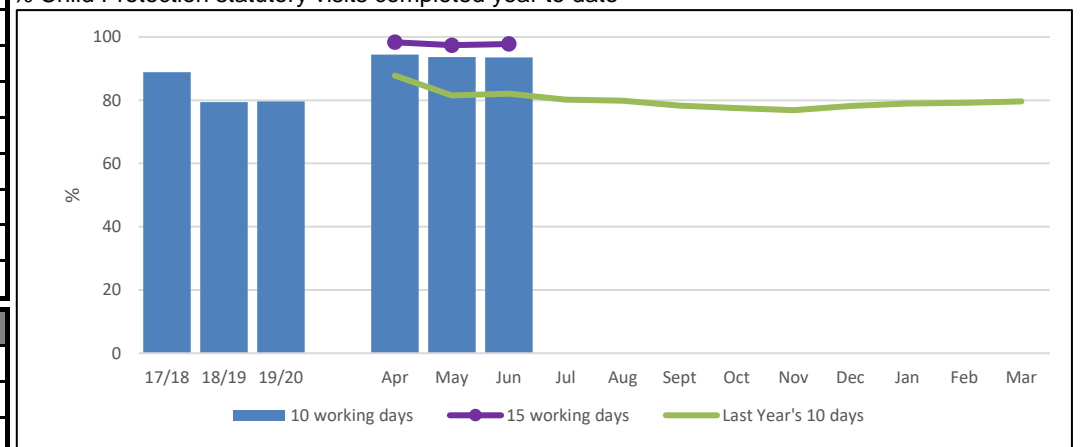
CSC 252a		CSC 252b	
% Child Protection statutory visits completed within 10 working days within the month	% Child Protection statutory visits completed within 15 working days within the month	% Child Protection statutory visits completed within 10 working days year to date (cumulative)	% Child Protection statutory visits completed within 15 working days year to date (cumulative)

% Child Protection statutory visits completed within the month



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	90	90	90	90
	Apr-20	94.4	98.3	94.4	98.3
May-20	92.7	96.3	93.6	97.4	97.4
Jun-20	93.4	98.8	93.6	97.8	97.8
Jul-20					
Aug-20					
Sep-20					
Oct-20					
Nov-20					
Dec-20					
Jan-21					
Feb-21					
Mar-21					

% Child Protection statutory visits completed year to date



ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	88.9		88.9	
	2018/19	79.3	95.7	79.3	95.7
	2019/20	85.9	92.0	79.6	93.8
	2020/21	93.4	98.8	93.6	97.8

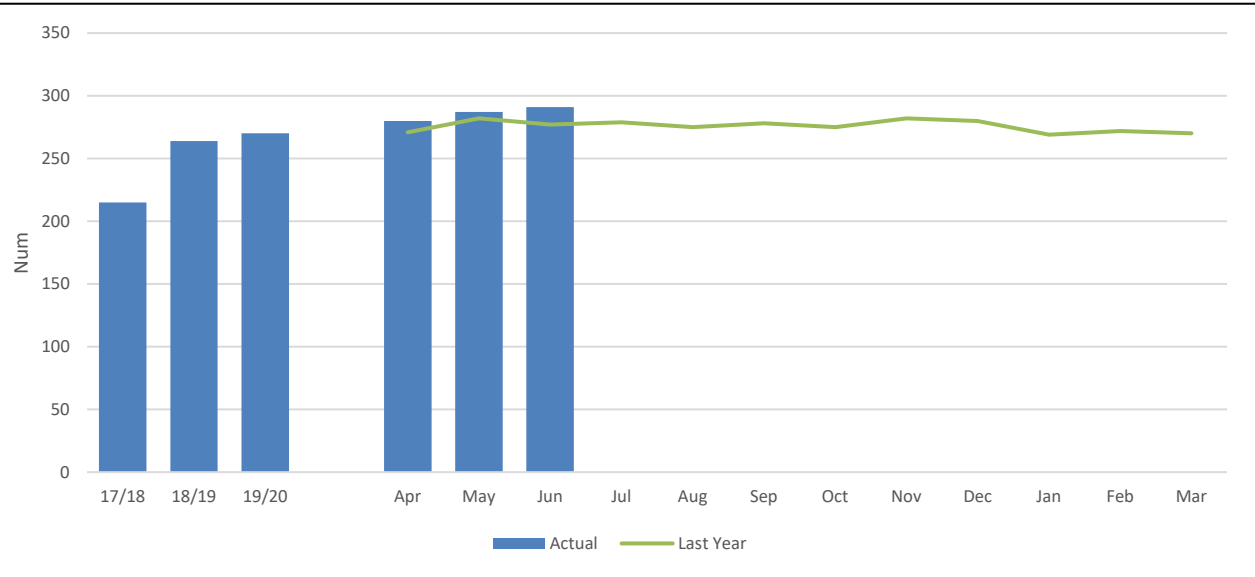
**CHILDREN IN CARE**

**DEFINITION** Number of Children in Care at the end of each month.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 291 children are currently being looked after as at June 2020 which is an increase on the number of children (277) that were in care as at June 2019.

CSC 201
Total number of Children in Care

CSC 201: Total number of Children in Care



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	
	Apr-20	280
	May-20	287
	Jun-20	291
	Jul-20	
	Aug-20	
	Sep-20	
	Oct-20	
	Nov-20	
	Dec-20	
	Jan-21	
	Feb-21	
	Mar-21	

ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	215
	2018/19	264
	2019/20	270
	2020/21	291

**CHILDREN IN CARE - ALLOCATION & REVIEWS**

**DEFINITION**

The percentage of Children in Care cases which should have been reviewed during the year ending 31 March that were reviewed on time during the year and the percentage of Children in Care cases that were allocated to a qualified Social Worker at the end of the month.

To improve compliance with local authorities' legal requirements under the Review of Children's cases Regulations 1991. The purpose of the review is to consider the plan for the child's welfare, to monitor the progress of the plan and amend it as necessary in light of changed information and circumstances. The statutory intervals are within 20 working days of placement, then within 3 months and 6 monthly thereafter, but reviews may be rescheduled or held inside these intervals if there are significant changes to the child's care plan.

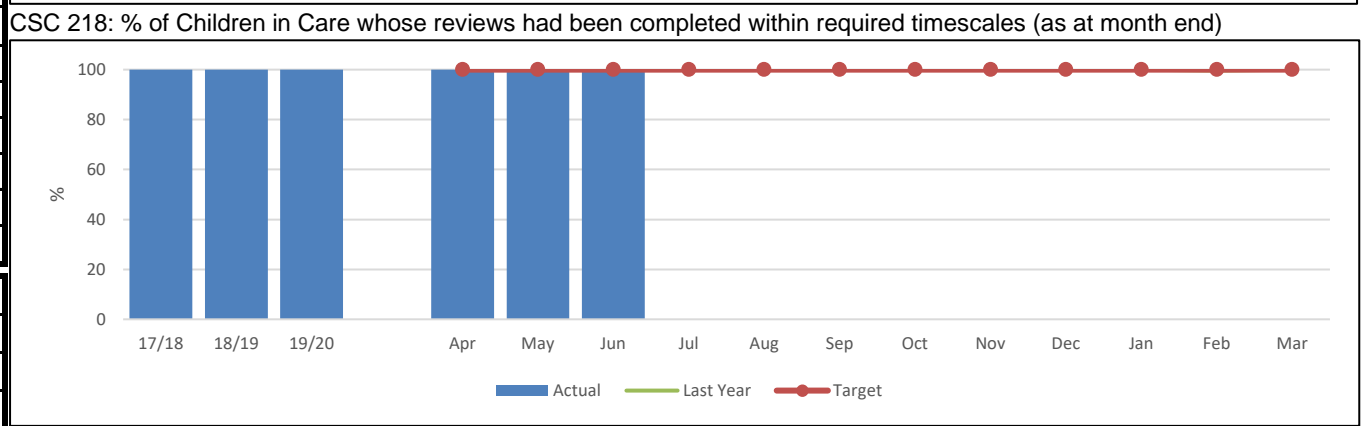
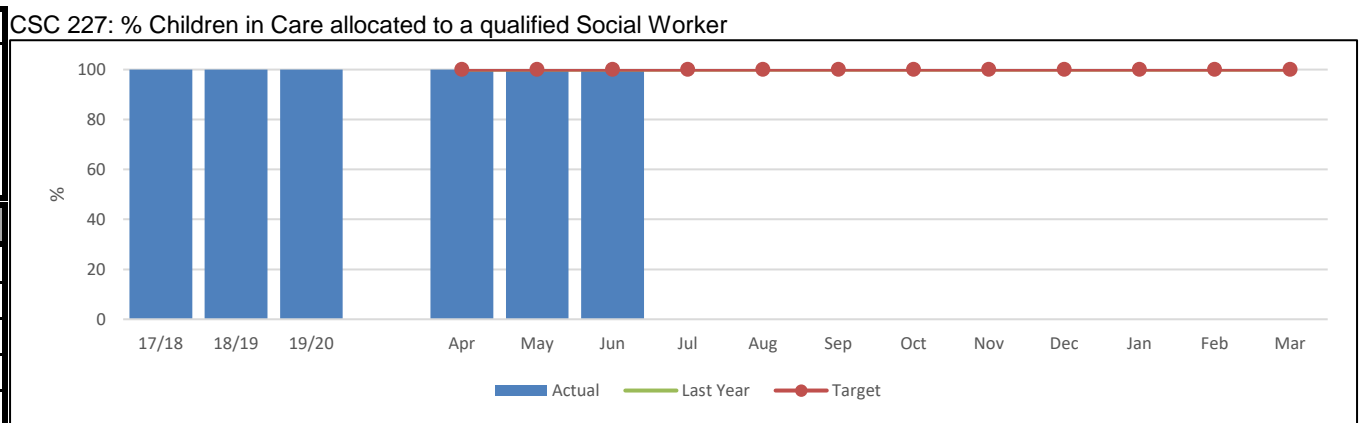
**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

100% of Children in Care (CiC) are allocated to a qualified social worker.  
All reviews have been completed within required timescales.

CSC 227	CSC 218
% Children in Care allocated to a qualified Social Worker	% of Children in Care whose reviews had been completed within required timescales (as at month end)

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	100	100	
	Apr-20	100.0	100.0	100.0
	May-20	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Jun-20	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Jul-20			
	Aug-20			
	Sep-20			
	Oct-20			
	Nov-20			
	Dec-20			
	Jan-21			
	Feb-21			
	Mar-21			

ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	100.0	100.0
	2018/19	100.0	100.0
	2019/20	100.0	100.0
	2020/21	100.0	100.0



**CHILDREN IN CARE - STATUTORY VISITS**

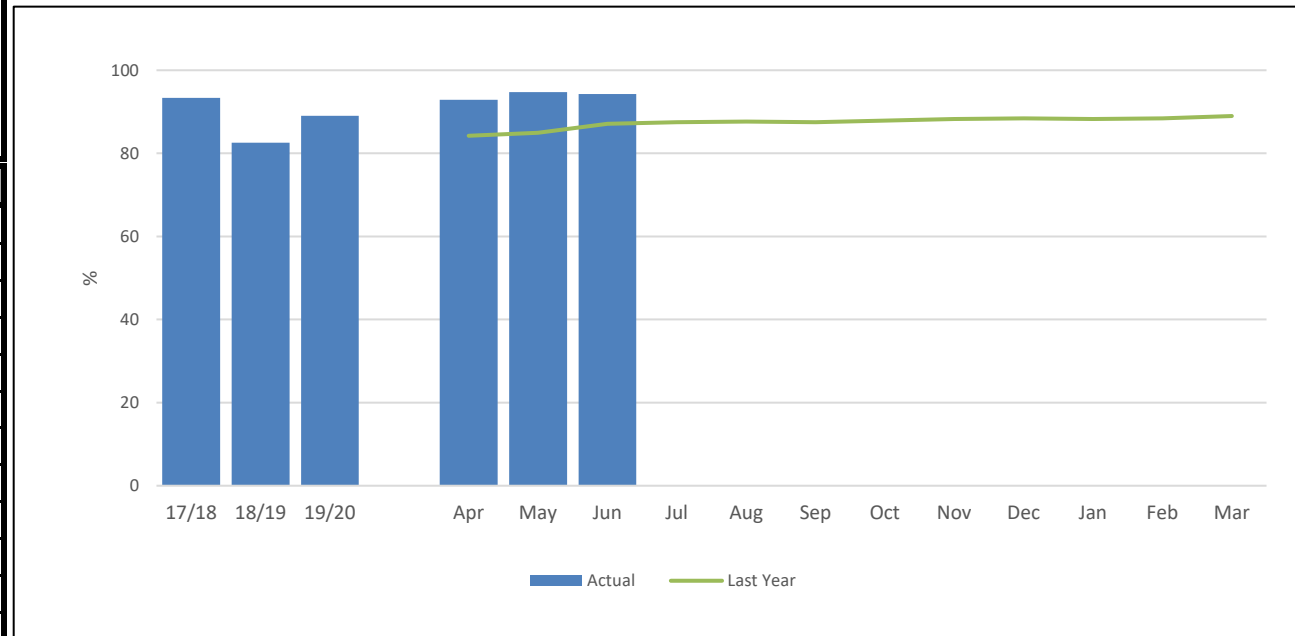
**DEFINITION** Percentage of Children in Care who had all statutory visits completed within required timescales and percentage of Children in Care's statutory visits completed within timescales each month and year to date.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS** 94.3% (941/998) of Child in Care (CiC) statutory visits have been completed in timescale at June 2020. This is an increase on the 86.0% CiC statutory visits completed in timescale at June 2019 and above the target of 90%.

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CSC 260b  
% Child in Care statutory visits completed in timescale year to date

CSC 260b: % Child in Care statutory visits completed in timescale year to date



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	90
	Apr-20	92.9
	May-20	94.8
	Jun-20	94.3
	Jul-20	
	Aug-20	
	Sep-20	
	Oct-20	
	Nov-20	
	Dec-20	
	Jan-21	
	Feb-21	
	Mar-21	

ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	93.4
	2018/19	82.6
	2019/20	89.0
	2020/21	94.3

**CHILDREN IN CARE - PLACEMENTS**

**DEFINITION**

Of those Children in Care at the point in time (excluding series of short-term placements), the percentage that had 3 or more separate placements in the previous 12 months; who had been in their current placement for 2 or more years. and who were placed more than 20 miles away from their home address.

On the whole stability is associated with better outcomes; placement instability has been highlighted as a key barrier to improving educational outcomes. Proper assessment and an adequate choice of placements to meet the varied needs of different children are essential if appropriate stable placements are to be made. Inappropriate placements often break down and lead to frequent moves. Nevertheless, the circumstances of some individual children will require 3 or more separate placements during a year if they and others are to be kept safe.

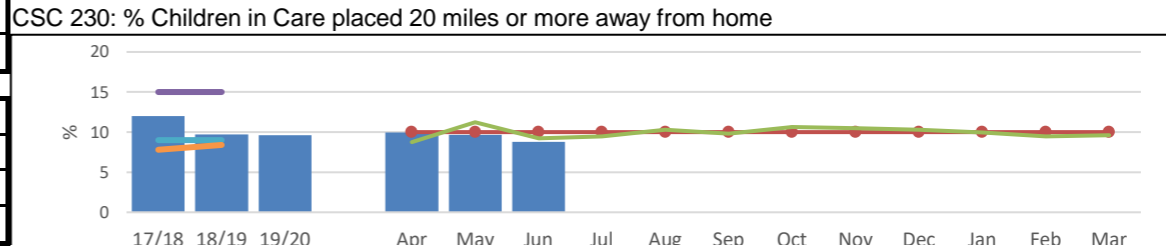
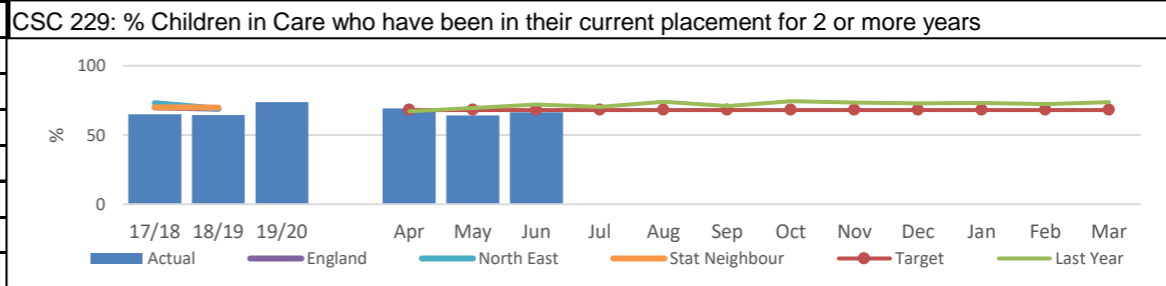
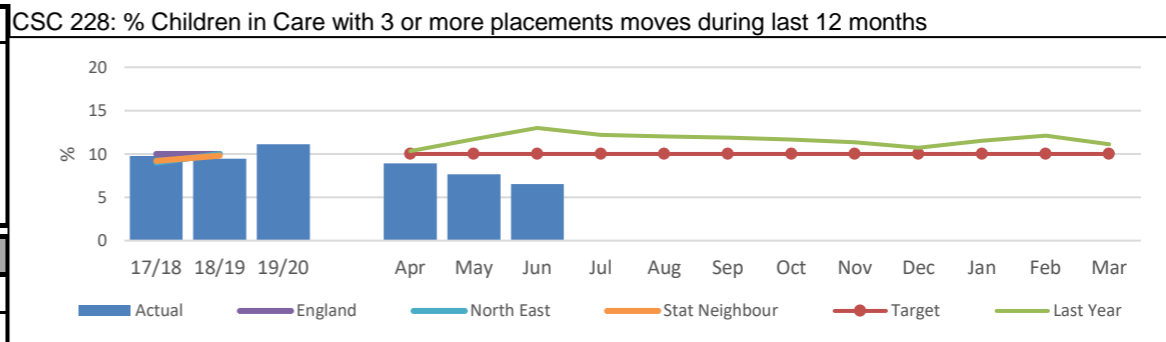
**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**

6.5% (19/291) of Children in Care (CiC), as at June 2020, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months. This is below internal target (10), national (10), statistical neighbour (9.2) and regional averages (9) and below the 13.0% as at June 2019.

As at June 2020, 66.3% (61/92) of Darlington's CiC aged under 16 (who have been looked after for at least 2.5 years) have been in their current placement continuously for at least 2 years. This is a lower percentage compared with June 2019 at 72.2% and below internal target of 68.0%.

8.8% (25 children) of our Children in Care have been placed 20 or more miles away from home as at June 2020. This is below internal target of 10%.

	CSC 228	CSC 229	CSC 230
	% Children in Care with 3 or more placements moves during last 12 months	% Children in Care who have been in their current placement for 2 or more years	% Children in Care placed 20 miles or more away from home
<b>Target</b>	10%	68%	10%
Apr-20	8.9	69.2	10.0
May-20	7.7	64.1	9.6
Jun-20	6.5	66.3	8.8
Jul-20			
Aug-20			
Sep-20			
Oct-20			
Nov-20			
Dec-20			
Jan-21			
Feb-21			
Mar-21			
<b>ANNUAL TREND</b>			
2017/18	9.8	65.1	12.0
2018/19	9.5	64.4	9.7
2019/20	11.1	73.6	9.6
2020/21	6.5	66.3	8.8





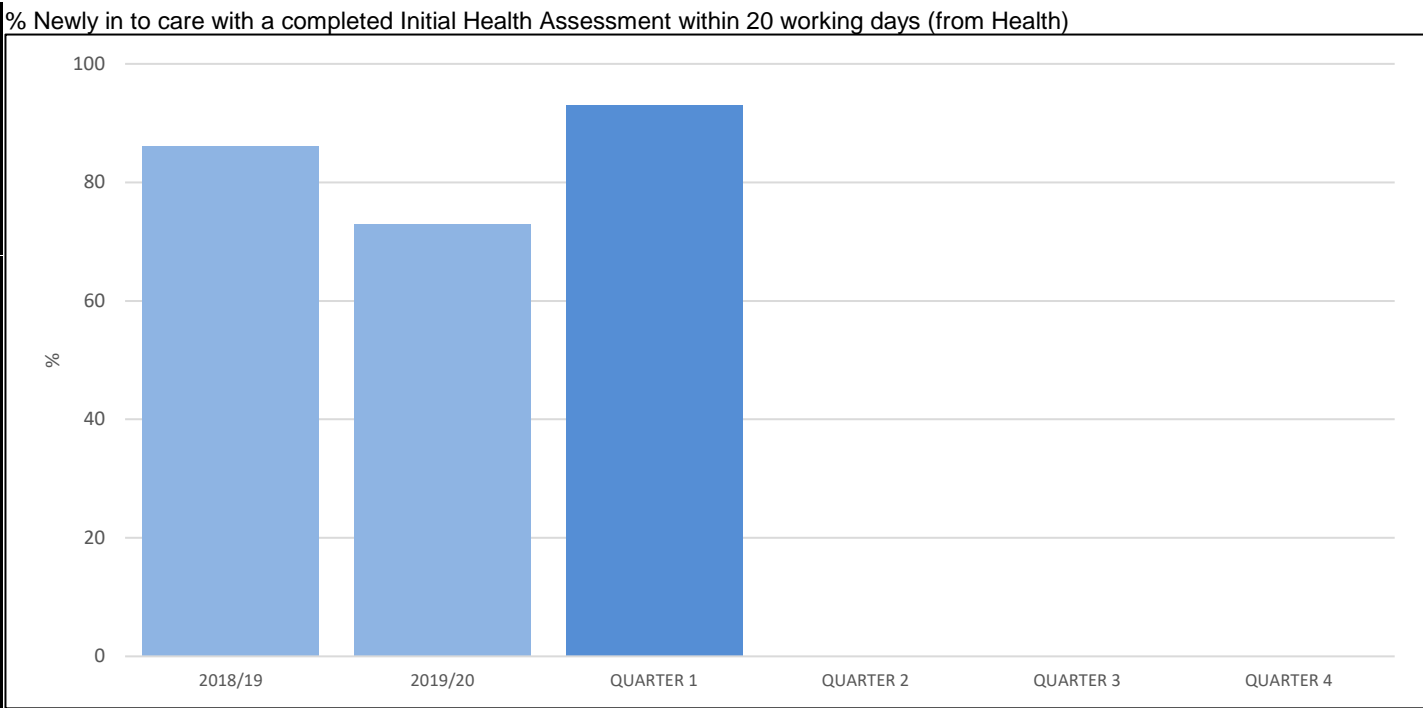
**CHILDREN IN CARE - INITIAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS**

<b>DEFINITION</b>	Percentage of Initial Health Assessments completed within 20 working days of a child coming into our care year to date (data from Health), and percentage of IHA forms returned to Health within 7 working days.
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<b>PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS</b>	93.1% of the children who required an IHA by CDDFT had them completed within timescale by Health.
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% Newly in to care with a completed Initial Health Assessment within 20 working days (from Health)



<b>IN MONTH PERFORMANCE</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>95</b>
	Apr-20	
	May-20	
	Jun-20	93.1
	Jul-20	
	Aug-20	
	Sep-20	
	Oct-20	
	Nov-20	
	Dec-20	
	Jan-21	
	Feb-21	
Mar-21		
<b>ANNUAL TREND</b>	2017/18	82.0
	2018/19	86.2
	2019/20	72.9
	2020/21	93.1%

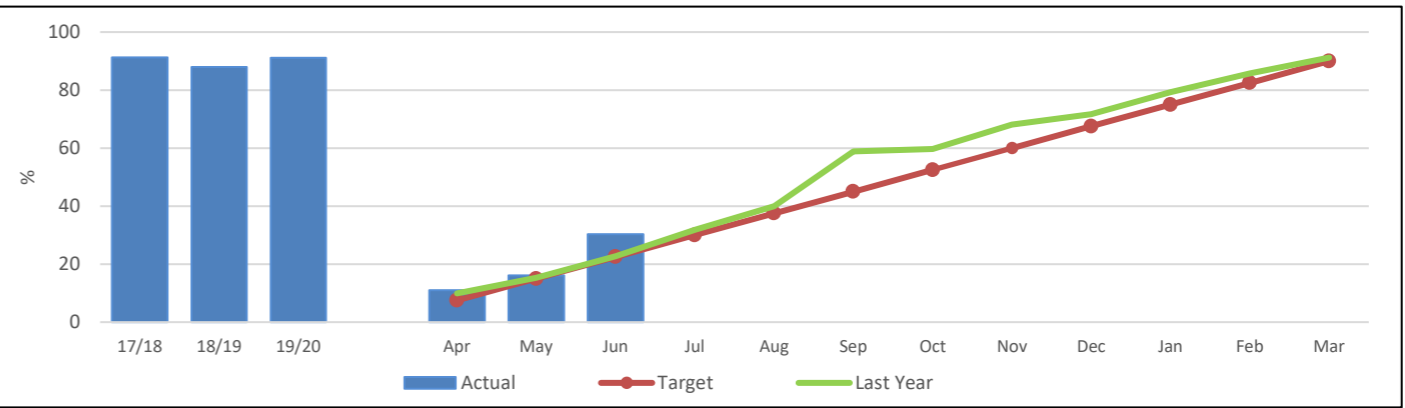
**CHILDREN IN CARE - HEALTH ASSESSMENTS**

**DEFINITION**  
 Of the Children in Care (CiC) at 31 March who had been in care continuously for at least 12 months, the percentage who have had their Review Health Assessment (RHA) completed and the percentage who have an up to date Health Check.  
 Children in Care share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. These indicators track the participation of our Children in Care's health as a proxy for monitoring the general health and wellbeing of the children, as well as providing a check on the effectiveness of joint working with Health to secure good health outcomes for Children in Care.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 69.9% (51/73) of children due a review health assessment in Q1 2020/21 had one completed. This percentage has increased compared with 60.4% at the end of June 2019.  
 8.2% of the young people are refusing to engage in their review health check, although they are continually reminded of the benefits of having a check-up and encouraged to take part.

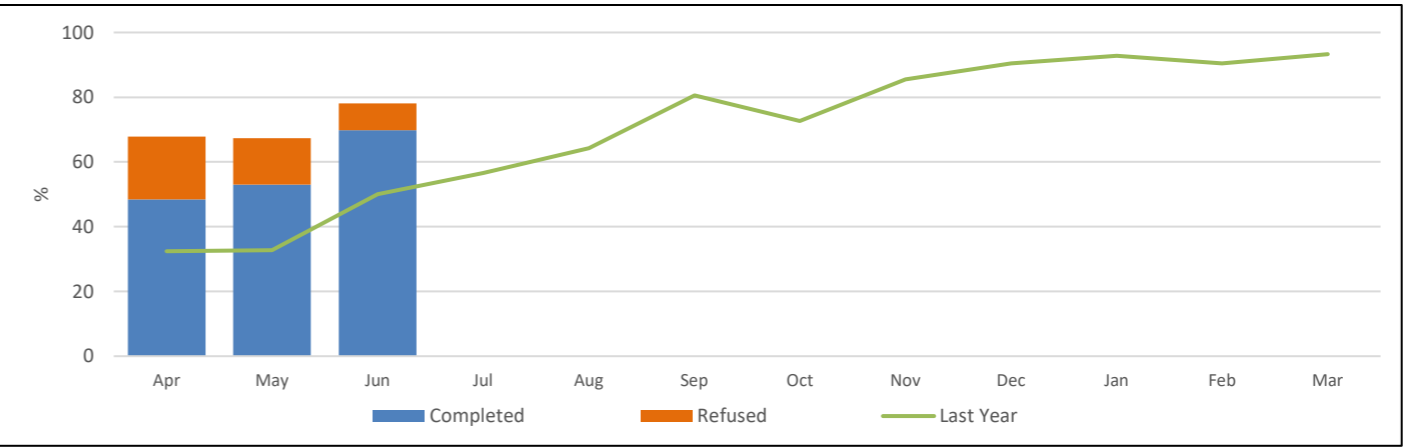
CSC 250		CSC 250b
The % of CiC who have an up to date Health Checks (excludes any who will turn 18 before 31st March)	The % of CiC who were due a Review Health Check (year to date) who refused to engage	The % of Children in Care who were due a Review Health Check year to date and were completed and recorded

CSC 250: % of CiC who are up to date for a Review Health Check at 31st March



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	90%	90%
	Apr-20	11.0	19.4
May-20	16.1	14.3	53.1
Jun-20	30.3	8.2	69.9
Jul-20			
Aug-20			
Sep-20			
Oct-20			
Nov-20			
Dec-20			
Jan-21			
Feb-21			
Mar-21			

CSC 250b: % of CiC due a Review Health Check during the year (to date) that have had one, and % that refused



ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	91.3		
	2018/19	87.9		87.9
	2019/20	91.2	3.1	93.3
	2020/21	30.3	8.2	69.9

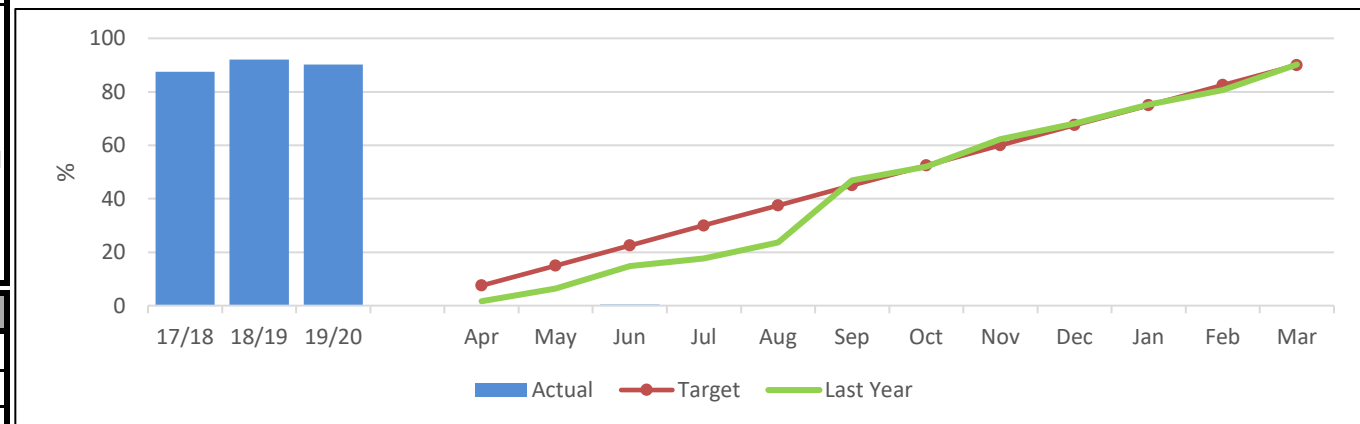
**CHILDREN IN CARE - DENTAL HEALTH ASSESSMENTS**

**DEFINITION**  
 Of the Children in Care (CiC) at 31 March who had been in care continuously for at least 12 months, the percentage who had had their teeth checked by a dentist during the previous 12 months, and the percentage who had had an annual health check during the previous 12 months.  
 Children in Care share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but often to a greater degree. These indicators track the participation of our Children in Care with dental checks as a proxy for monitoring the general health and wellbeing of the children, as well as providing a check on the effectiveness of joint working with Health to secure good health outcomes for Children in Care.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 4.3% (2/46) of children due a dental check assessment had one completed in Q1 2020/21.  
 13.0% of the young people are refusing to engage in their dental health check, although they are continually reminded of the benefits of having a check-up and encouraged to take part. Currently the majority of NHS dentists are closed due to the covid-19 pandemic which has resulted in the large majority of the children being unable to attend for their check-ups.

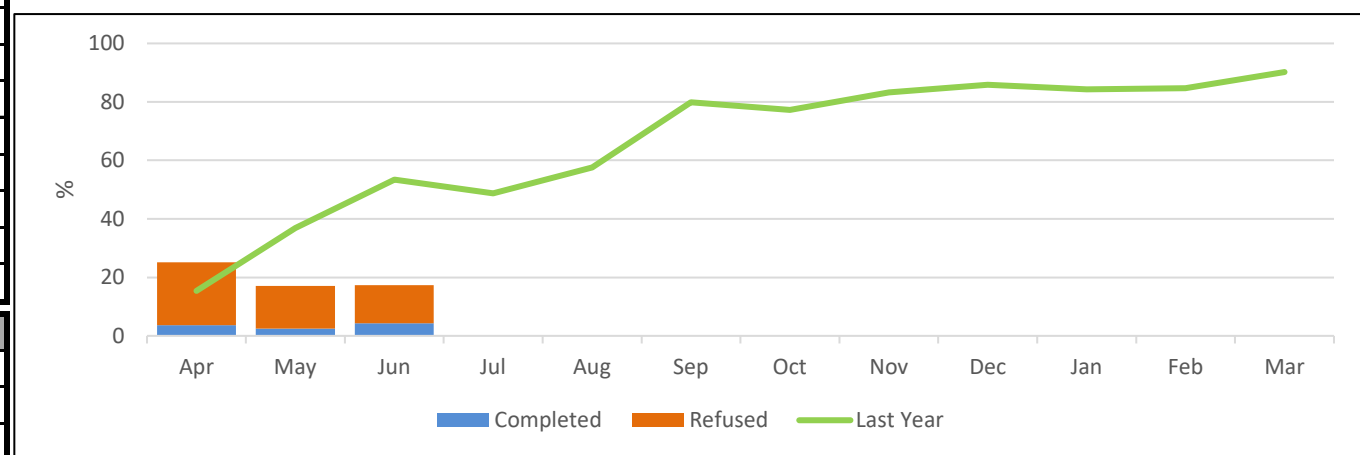
CSC 251		CSC 251d
The % of Children in Care with up to date Dental Checks (excludes any who will turn 18 before 31st March)	The % of Children in Care who were due a Dental Check (year to date) who refused to engage	The % of Children in Care who were due a Dental Check year to date and were up to date by the report date

CSC 251: % of Children in Care who are up to date for a Dental Check at 31st March



IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	CSC 251	CSC 251d
		90%	90%
Apr-20		0.0	21.4
May-20		0.0	14.6
Jun-20		0.4	13.0
Jul-20			
Aug-20			
Sep-20			
Oct-20			
Nov-20			
Dec-20			
Jan-21			
Feb-21			
Mar-21			

CSC 251d: % of Children in Care due a Dental Check (to date) that have had one, and the % that refused



ANNUAL TREND	2017/18	CSC 251	CSC 251d
		87.5	90%
2018/19		92.1	92.1
2019/20		90.2	3.1
2020/21		0.4	13.0

**CARE LEAVERS**

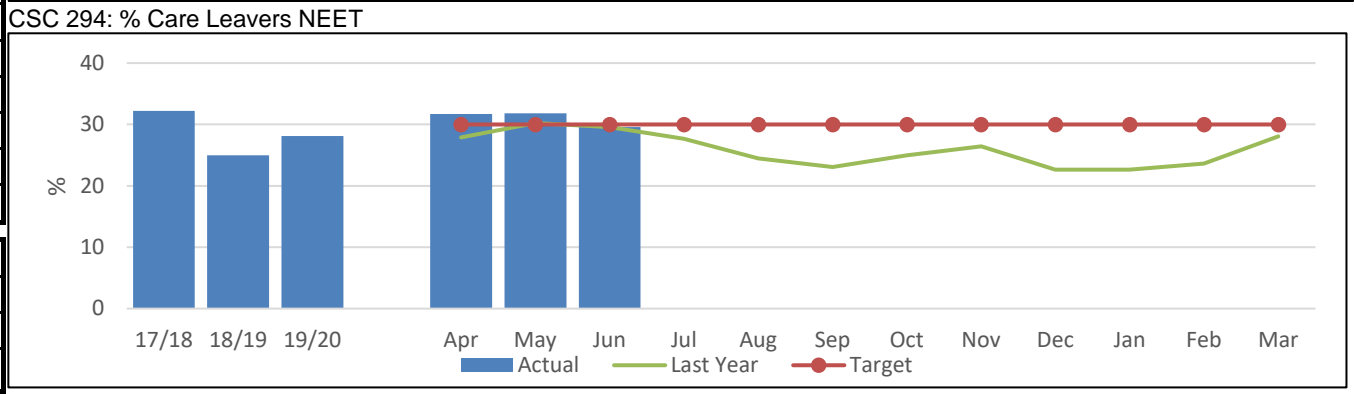
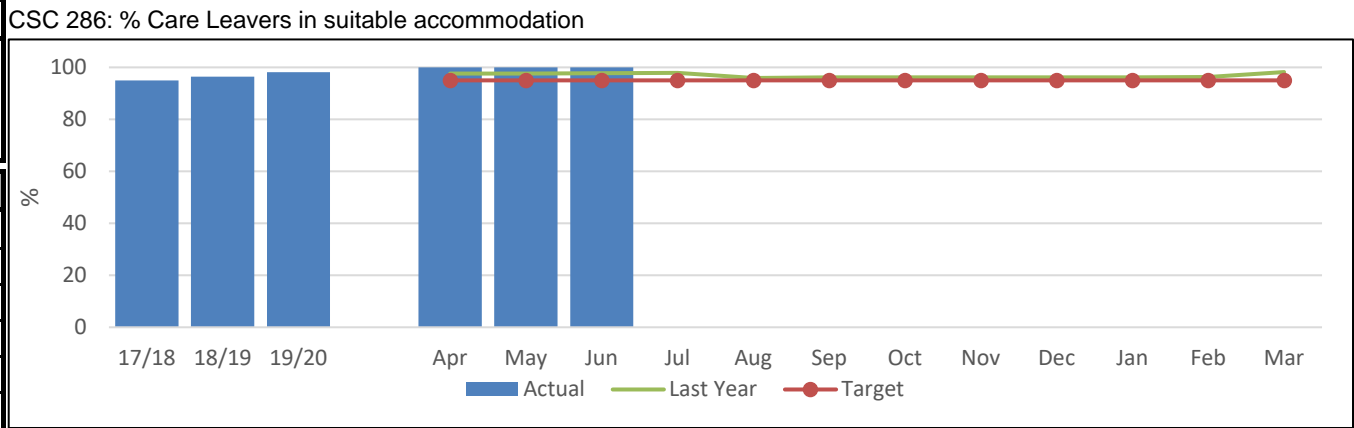
**DEFINITION**  
 The percentage of 'former relevant' care leavers aged 19-21 who were in suitable accommodation at their most recent contact, and the percentage who were not in employment, education or training at their most recent contact. Published data is included for comparison however data submitted to DfE by Local Authorities captures the young person's status around their 19th, 20th, or 21st birthday each year rather than the latest available information.  
 This measures accommodation and employment outcomes for young people formerly in care - a key group at risk of social exclusion. It is intended to increase the proportion of former care leavers who are in suitable accommodation and employment, education or training.

**PERFORMANCE ANALYSIS**  
 100% of our care leavers were in suitable accommodation at the end of June 2020. This is above our target of 95% of our care leavers to be in suitable accommodation.  
 29.6% of care leavers (aged 19-21) were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) at the end of June 2020, which is below our internal target of 30% NEET. Of these, 11.4% were NEET due to disability or illness, 6.8% due to pregnancy or parenting and the remaining 11.4% due to other circumstances.

CSC 286	CSC 294
% Care Leavers in suitable accommodation	% Care Leavers NEET

IN MONTH PERFORMANCE	Target	90%	30%
	Apr-20	100.0	31.7
	May-20	100.0	31.8
	Jun-20	100.0	29.6
	Jul-20		
	Aug-20		
	Sep-20		
	Oct-20		
	Nov-20		
	Dec-20		
	Jan-21		
	Feb-21		
	Mar-21		

ANNUAL TREND	2017/19	94.9	32.2
	2018/19	96.4	25.0
	2019/20	98.2	28.1
	2020/21	100.0	29.6



## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 NOVEMBER 2020

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### WORK PROGRAMME

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#### SUMMARY REPORT

#### Purpose of the Report

1. To consider the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during the 2020/21 Municipal Year and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included.

#### Summary

2. Members are requested to consider the attached draft work programme (**Appendix 1**) for the remainder of the Municipal Year which has been prepared based on Officers recommendations and recommendations previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee in the last Municipal Year.
3. Any additional areas of work which Members wish to add to the agreed work programme will require the completion of a quad of aims in accordance with the previously approved procedure.

#### Recommendations

4. Members are requested to note the work programme and consider any additional items which they may wish to include.

**Paul Wildsmith**  
**Managing Director**

#### Background Papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Author: Allison Hill

S17 Crime and Disorder	This report has no implications for Crime and Disorder
Health and Well Being	This report has no direct implications to the Health and Well Being of residents of Darlington.
Carbon Impact	There are no issues which this report needs to address.
Diversity	There are no issues relating to diversity which this report needs to address
Wards Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Ward is considered to be minimal.
Groups Affected	The impact of the report on any individual Group is considered to be minimal.
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not represent a change to the budget and policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	The report contributes to the Sustainable Community Strategy in a number of ways through the involvement of Members in contributing to the delivery of the eight outcomes.
Efficiency	The Work Programmes are integral to scrutinising and monitoring services efficiently (and effectively), however this report does not identify specific efficiency savings.
Impact on Looked After Children and Care Leavers	This report has no impact on Looked After Children or Care Leavers

## MAIN REPORT

### Information and Analysis

5. The format of the proposed work programme has been reviewed to enable Members of this Scrutiny Committee to provide a rigorous and informed challenge to the areas for discussion.
6. Each topic links to the outcomes and the conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy – One Darlington Perfectly Placed:-

<p>SCS Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Children with the best start in life</li><li>b) More businesses more jobs</li><li>c) A safe and caring community</li><li>d) More people caring for our environment</li><li>e) More people active and involved</li><li>f) Enough support for people when needed</li><li>g) More people healthy and independent</li><li>h) A place designed to thrive</li></ul>	<p>Three Conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Build strong communities</li><li>b) Grow the economy</li><li>c) Spend every pound wisely</li></ul>
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7. In addition, each topic links to performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework (PMF) to provide robust and accurate data for Members to use when considering topics and the work they wish to undertake. There are some topics where appropriate PMF indicators have not yet been identified however; these can be added as the work programme for each topic is developed.

### Forward Plan and Additional Items

8. Any Member seeking to add a new item to the work programme will need to complete a quad of aims.
9. A copy of the Forward Plan has been attached at **Appendix 2** for information.

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## APPENDIX 1

## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	SCS Outcome	Darlington Conditions	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
<b>Performance Management and Regulation</b>	Q1 performance <b>on the agenda for this meeting</b>  Q2 4 Jan 2021 Q3 12 April 2021 Q4 Sept 2021	Sharon Raine	Children with the best start in life  A safe and caring community  Enough support for people when needed  More people healthy and independent	Build strong communities  Spend every pound wisely	Agreed set of indicators	To receive quarterly monitoring reports and undertake any further detailed work into particular outcomes if necessary
<b>Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report</b>	<b>On the agenda for this meeting</b>	Ann Baxter, Independent Chair	A safe and caring community	Build strong communities	LSCB Annual Report	Annually monitoring
<b>Academy Trusts</b>	<b>On the agenda for this meeting</b>	Presentation by Katherine Cowell, the Interim Regional Schools Commissioner	Children with the best start in life			To examine safeguarding measures and health and safety training in place within the boroughs Academies and

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	SCS Outcome	Darlington Conditions	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
		for the North of England				attainment within Academy Trusts.
<b>SEND - Outcomes for Parents following Covid-19</b>	4 January 2021 (tbc)	Carla Scaith Darlington Parent Carer Forum				To continue to monitor SEND/ EHCPs. To receive the survey results from the Parent Carer Forum SEND Survey and to receive information relating to experiences of the Parent Carer Forum.
<b>2020/21 Childcare Sufficiency Review</b>	4 January 2021	Tony Murphy/ Nicola Davies	Children with the best start in life  A safe and caring community  Enough support for people when needed	Build strong communities		To provide an annual report to elected Members on how the authority meets its duty to secure sufficient childcare places.
<b>Children and Young People Plan 2017-22</b>	4 January 2021	Christine Shields	Children with the best start in life			Annual Update to Members

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	<b>SCS Outcome</b>	<b>Darlington Conditions</b>	<b>Link to PMF (metrics)</b>	<b>Scrutiny's Role</b>
<b>Medium Term Financial Plan</b>	4 January 2021	Elizabeth Davison	One Darlington Perfectly Placed	Spend Every Pound Wisely		To consider the Medium Term Financial Plan in relation to the areas within this Scrutiny's remit
<b>Adoption Tees Valley Annual Report</b>	<b>On the agenda for this meeting</b>	Vicky Davidson-Boyd, Service Manager, Adoption Tees Valley	Children with the best start in life			Annual monitoring
<b>Private Children's Homes and Planning Guidance</b>	TBA					Following an update to the Scrutiny meeting on 11 March 2019 Members agreed to monitor the number of private children's homes in the borough.
<b>Learning and Skills Service Annual Report</b>	September 2021	Paul Richardson	Enough support for people when needed			Annual Report to demonstrate challenge
<b>Local Designated Officer Annual Report</b>	September 2021	James Stroyan/ Amanda Hugill	A safe and caring community			To examine the Annual Report and assure Members that allegations made against staff who work with children are

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	SCS Outcome	Darlington Conditions	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
						reported and how they are actioned
<b>IRO Annual Report</b>	September 2021	Jane Kochanowski	Children with the best start in life		CSC201	To examine the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer for Looked After Children
<b>Children and Young People and Public Health</b>	September 2021	Ken Ross	Children with the best start in life  A safe and caring community Enough support for people when needed  More people healthy and independent	Build Strong Communities	PBH 009 PBH 013c PBH 016 PBH 018 PBH 020 PBH 021 PBH 054	Annual monitoring - Children and Young People's Profile, Healthy Lifestyle Survey, Childhood Healthy Weight Action Plan 2017-2022 and Oral Health Plan 2017-2022
<b>JOINT REVIEW WITH HEALTH AND HOUSING AND ADULTS SCRUTINY:</b>						
Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	SCS Outcome	Darlington Conditions	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
<b>Autism Provision Review Group</b>	Scoping Meeting held on 2 March 2020	Christine Shields	Enough support for people when needed			To review the provisions and services and contractual arrangements between this

Topic	Timescale	Lead Officer	SCS Outcome	Darlington Conditions	Link to PMF (metrics)	Scrutiny's Role
						Council and our providers who provide the Autism provisions, diagnoses and support services for Darlington.
<b>REVIEWS</b>						
<b>Adoptive Services</b>	Approved by Scrutiny at their meeting held on 29 June 2020					To examine how the Regional Adoption Agency is serving Darlington and to examine how the Coronavirus Pandemic has affected adoption

**ARCHIVED ITEMS**

<b>Looked After Children Missing From Care</b>	2 July 2018	Alison Poulter / Chris Bell	Enough support for people when needed			To examine the reasons why children in care go missing and the interventions in place to avoid
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						episodes and examine partnership working and parent engagement
<b>LAC Missing from Care – Reasons and Interventions</b>	10 September 2018	Joanne Stoddart	Children with the best start in life  Enough support for people when needed		CSC246	To examine the reasons why children in care go missing and the interventions in place to avoid. To invite the Police Liaison Officer to attend Scrutiny to discuss
<b>Educational Landscape</b>	Archived on 3 Oct 2018	Tony Murphy	Children with the best start in life	Build Strong Communities	CSC 044 Basket of LAIT KS1, KS2, GCSE & A Level indicators. Local Authority Interactive Tool (LAIT) academic year 2014/15/ Ofsted Sept 2014/ Department for Education (DFE) performance data	To examine school improvement including the decline in performance for maths and English and what action is being taking to address this.
<b>Stability of Places for Looked After Children</b>	10 December 2018	Joanne Stoddart	Children with the best start in life	Build strong communities	CSC 228 CSC 229	To monitor annually the stability of places

			Enough support for people when needed			for Looked After Children.  To be monitored via the regular performance reports in future
<b>Children Services Accessibility Strategy</b>	10 December 2018		Children with the best start in life  Enough support for people when needed			To give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to consider the Strategy prior to Cabinet.
<b>SEND High Needs Review:  Strategy and Funding</b>	29 October 2018  10 Dec 2018	Tony Murphy	Children with the best start in life  More People healthy and independent			To give Scrutiny Members the opportunity to consider 3 of the 4 core elements of the Review. Members to carry out a T/F Review on the proposals.
<b>Home to School Transport</b>	29 October 2018		Enough support for people when needed			Verbal update to Members
<b>SEND Strategy and Funding Consultation Review Group</b>	10 December 2018		Children with the best start in life			To give a Scrutiny response to the consultation on the SEND Strategy and Funding and SEND Travel Assistance Policy

<p><b>Childhood Obesity/ Oral Health/Mental Health Links</b></p>	<p>Review suspended –to continue to monitor the effectiveness of the Childhood Healthy Weight Plan.</p> <p>Update report on the Childhood Healthy Weight Plan to Scrutiny on 3 February 2020.</p>		<p>Children with the best start in life</p> <p>Enough support for people when needed</p> <p>More People Healthy and Independent</p>	<p>Build Strong Communities</p>		<p>To investigate the high incidence of childhood obesity in Darlington and the associated links to poor dental health; and whether the desire to promote good ‘self image’ has an impact on mental health issues in young people.</p>
<p><b>Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 to 2023/24</b></p>	<p>Special Meeting 13 January 2020</p>	<p>Elizabeth Davison</p>	<p>One Darlington Perfectly Placed</p>	<p>Spend Every Pound Wisely</p>		<p>To consider the Medium Term Financial Plan in relation to the areas within this Scrutiny’s remit</p>
<p><b>Council Plan 2020/23</b></p>	<p>Special Meeting on 13 January 2020</p>	<p>Paul Wildsmith</p>				<p>To consider the Council Plan</p>
<p><b>Voluntary and Community Sector Funding Update</b></p>	<p>3 February 2020</p>	<p>Christine Shields</p>				<p>Update report on the community based initiatives funded from Voluntary Sector Development</p>



						Fund monies, piloted during 2019/20.
<b>Home to School Transport</b>	3 February 2020	Tony Murphy/ Graham Easterlow				To update Members on the current position/ changes to regulations which may impact on the MTFP
<b>Extension of Funding to 21 for Children in Foster Care</b>	March 2020	Jane Kochanowski	Children with the best start in life  A safe and caring community  Enough support for people when needed  More people healthy and independent	Build strong communities		Annual monitoring – a duty on Local Authorities to facilitate, monitor and support staying put arrangements. Now monitored by quarterly performance reports.

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**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLAN**

**FORWARD PLAN  
FOR THE PERIOD: 7 OCTOBER 2020 - 28 FEBRUARY 2021**



<b>Title</b>	<b>Decision Maker and Date</b>
Regulatory Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA)	Cabinet 13 Oct 2020
Treasury Management Annual and Outturn Prudential Indicators 2019/20	Council 26 Nov 2020 Cabinet 13 Oct 2020
Land to the Rear of Tandridge Court, Woodland Road - Proposed Self Build Plots	Cabinet 13 Oct 2020
Schedule of Transactions	Cabinet 13 Oct 2020
Repair to the Victorian Indoor Market	Cabinet 13 Oct 2020
Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
Council Plan 2020/23	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
Construction of Hybrid Business Innovation Centre - Central Park	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 2	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 2	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
Council Tax Support - Scheme Approval 2021/22	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
Rail Heritage Quarter Tenant Leases and Stockton and Darlington Railway Walking and Cycling Route	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
Annual Procurement Plan 2020/21 - Update	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
Tenancy Policy 2020/25	Cabinet 10 Nov 2020
School Term Dates 2022/2023	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020
Climate Change Cross Party Working Group - Update	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020
Mid-Year Prudential Indicators and Treasury Management 2020/21	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020
Annual Audit Letter	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020
Tree & Woodland Strategy	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020

**DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL  
FORWARD PLAN**

2021-31	
Medium Term Financial Plan	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020
Complaints Made to Local Government Ombudsman	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020
Housing Revenue Account	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020
Greater Faverdale (Burtree Garden Village) - Design Code	Cabinet 8 Dec 2020
Schools Admissions 2021/22	Cabinet 9 Feb 2021
Revenue Budget Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet 9 Feb 2021
Project Position Statement and Capital Programme Monitoring - Quarter 3	Cabinet 9 Feb 2021
Calendar of Council and Committee Meetings 2021/22	Cabinet 9 Feb 2021
Skerningham Masterplan Report	Cabinet