

Darlington Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Report 2017-18



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Introduction from the Independent Chair

I am pleased to be able to introduce this Annual Report of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board. This year, once again, it has been very evident that public services are having to work hard to respond to the many challenges that arise in this severe period of austerity. Aside from the continued financial pressures they endure, many services, including schools and colleges, are developing positive approaches to the way in which they commission, integrate and deliver essential services. It is to their credit therefore that they have continued to maintain an important focus on safeguarding, combining the need to innovate with recognition that effective safeguarding also requires stability and continuity. However amongst Independent Chairs both nationally and regionally I am not alone in being concerned about the continued risk to effective safeguarding the longer this period of austerity continues.

Unfortunately the Board functioned for a significant part of the year without a permanent Board Manager and I would like to acknowledge the efforts of the Business Unit in ensuring that we continued to sustain progress.

The continued maturity of local partnership working and strategic planning has helped me, as Independent Chair, to have a clear relationship with other key partnership groups including the Health and Wellbeing Board, and enables the escalation of safeguarding concerns when necessary. In this regard, I am especially grateful to Darlington College for their willingness to support both the Children and Adult Safeguarding Boards with the further development of our website

However, this year I am extremely pleased to be able to highlight the significant improvement in Children's Services delivered, by the Council and its partners and which is acknowledged by Ofsted in the recent Re-Inspection report (further referenced later in this annual report). This represents an important step forward in the Local Authority and its Partners being able to realise their ambitions for young people and their families in Darlington.

I am also pleased to see Durham Constabulary continues to be rated as 'outstanding' in its annual (PEEL) Police efficiency inspection (including leadership) in September 2017.

Some particular achievements and commitments over the year include:

- The Board has maintained its support to the Children's Service Improvement programme and at the time of the Re-Inspection was considered by Ofsted 'to provide strong and effective leadership across the multi-agency partnership'.
- The successful introduction of the new Safeguarding Audit process which delivered strong returns from agencies demonstrating confidence in local safeguarding arrangements.
- The consolidation of the Young People's Conference into our annual programme with outstanding commitment and support from schools.
- Strong improvements have been made and consolidated in relation to engagement and timeliness in the Child Protection Plan process which is a most necessary and welcome development following on from the 2015 Inspection. This is well evidenced in the Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report.

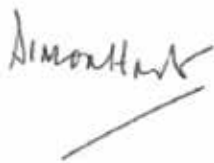
- The consolidation of a regular Practitioner Forum meeting to help the Boards understanding of frontline practice, and which is now assuming a more influential role within the Board's governance and engagement arrangements.
- The Board has recognised continued resilience in developing an understanding of workforce stability with a realistic recognition of national workforce pressures that may impact future recruitment and retention.

I am also pleased that having confirmed arrangements to formally co-ordinate the work of partnership boards including Darlington Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership this has already led to a gathering under the banner of 'The Big Conversation' being a significant piece of work with all local agencies involved in mitigating the impact of Domestic Abuse. This helps to ensure that safeguarding is at the forefront of consideration in Darlington especially on cross cutting issues such as domestic abuse. Along with the other Chairs I am confident that plans are already emerging that will deliver further collaboration and development of practice.

However whilst there is evidence of continued improvement across the partnership, safeguarding assurance in Darlington remains challenging and in part lacking consistency. Nevertheless the direction of travel is encouraging with strong evidence emerging of matured performance management. Practitioner Forums indicate a continued need to support front line workers in their understanding and application of information sharing protocol and thresholds. Similarly audits and inspection confirm that there remains inconsistency in some areas of practice. However, management response to this type of concern continues to be swift and effective.

Whilst there are some strongly performing services in Darlington, inspections remain challenging to some Partners which means that safeguarding arrangements remain inconsistent. However there remains a strong commitment to improvement and undoubted encouragement from the Ofsted Re-Inspection.

Nevertheless ours is an unrelenting task often carried out in the most difficult of circumstances and on behalf of the Board once again, I would like to acknowledge the dedication of all practitioners working with and supporting young people and their families in Darlington.



Simon N Hart,
(Interim) Independent Chair,
Darlington Safeguarding Children Board

About the Annual Report

The Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) annual report provides a transparent overview and assessment of the effectiveness of safeguarding and the promotion of child welfare in Darlington. DSCB has a particular focus on child protection and seeks to ensure all children and young people in Darlington are protected from physical injury, emotional abuse, neglect, sexual abuse or exploitation or harm caused by witnessing violence or abuse.

DSCB Mission

'Safeguarding is everyone's business and everyone works together to protect children and young people from harm and promote their welfare which allows them to become confident adults'

DSCB identified three strategic improvement priorities:

Priority 1 - ensure effective arrangements are in place that enable children, young people and their families to access appropriate Early Help support when first identified and this support is well coordinated

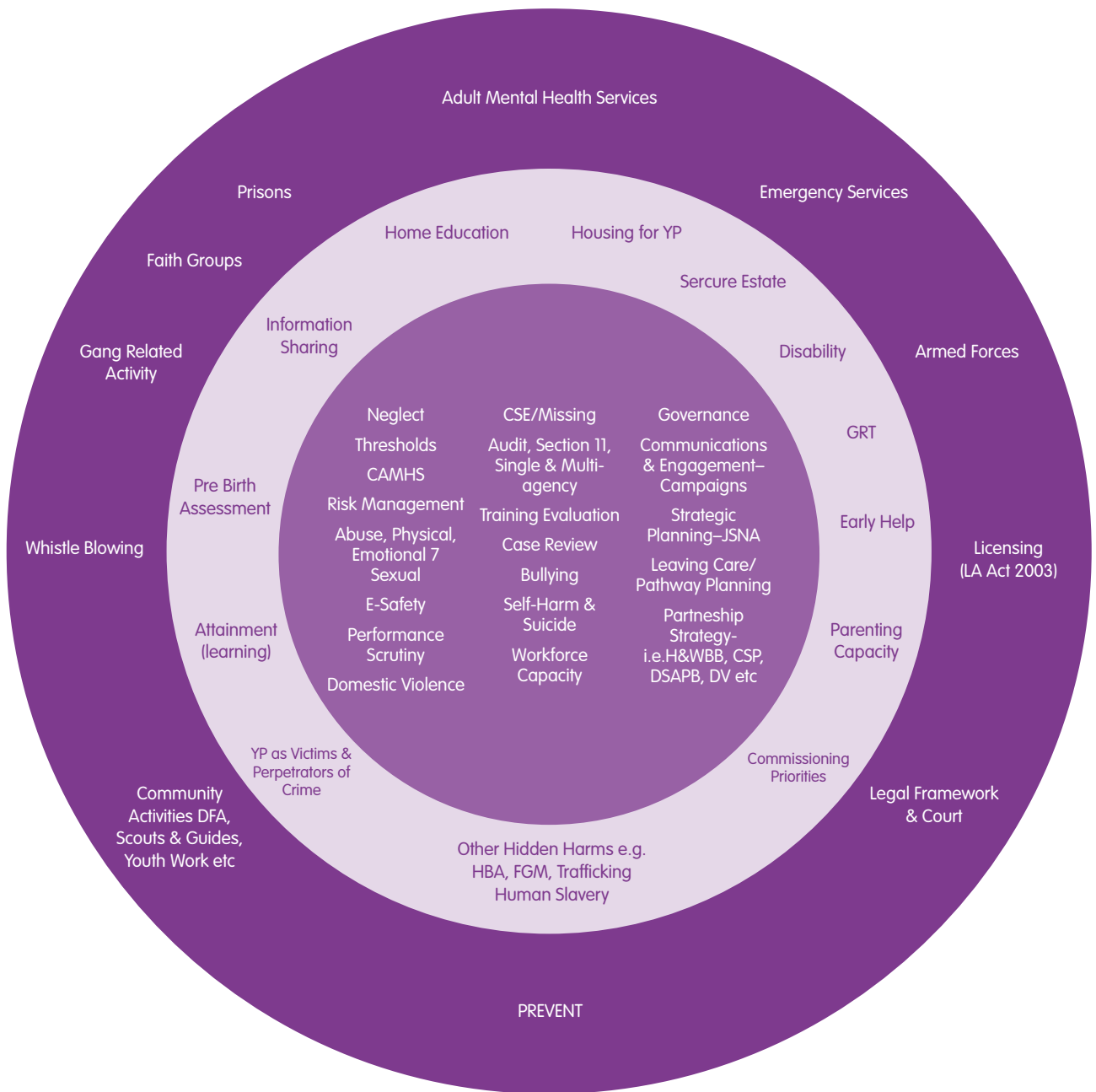
Priority 2 - ensure effective arrangements are in place to protect children from neglect, abuse and child sexual abuse.

Priority 3 - ensure partners work together to protect children from harm and ensure the voice of the child is evident in all multi-agency work.

A three year strategic plan was developed in 2017 which describes each year how the DSCB will deliver against these three priorities. The Board will monitor and challenge the effective delivery of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements through a number of key questions:

- Does our performance framework direct us to emergent risk in Darlington?
- Is the Board agile in responding?
- Do we know that our safeguarding training is effective?
- Do the outcomes of our case reviews really influence and change practice?
- Do our policies and procedures help practitioners to do their job?
- Do we engage well with children, young people and their families?
- Do we understand what makes young people feel unsafe?

The Board's focus can best be illustrated through the diagram below, the central area illustrates the Board's current key focus of attention. This report outlines the key achievements and work completed by the Board over the past year; identifying the strengths and weaknesses against the above questions based on these key focus areas.



About Darlington

Local Data and Geography

Darlington is a unitary authority and covers an area approximately 200km² and sits at the western end of the Tees Valley Combined Authority area. It is bordered to the North and West by County Durham, to the South and West by North Yorkshire and to the East by Stockton Borough. The Borough is centred on the town of Darlington which contains the administrative centre including, the Town Hall, as well as main Police and Fire Services. Darlington Memorial Hospital, a district general hospital providing services such as A&E, paediatrics, inpatient and maternity services.

The current population is 105,646, rising by almost 8% since 2001. Of this 64,745 are of working age (16-64 years old). Within the working age population, 79% are economically active (in work or unemployed).

The number of children and young people under the age of 18 is 22,519 (2016 mid-year), equating to 21% of the current population. Over the last five years, birth rates have fallen from 1,357 in 2010 to 1,198 in 2016. Children and young people from minority ethnic groups account for 6% of all children living in the area, compared with 22% in the country as a whole. The largest minority ethnic groups of children and young people in the area are Asian and mixed.

The proportion of residents that identified themselves as Gypsy and Travellers in the 2011 Census was three times higher than the national average but equates to only 0.3% of the population. The Census return showed 350 individuals declaring as Gypsy or Irish Traveller locally. School Census 2017 information shows that 1.4% of the school population is from the Gypsy and Traveller community, 2.8% are Asian, 2.2% are mixed race, 0.5% are Black, and 0.3% are Chinese.

The proportion of children and young people whose first language is other than English:

- 7% in Primary schools (national average – 21%)
- 5% in Secondary schools (national average – 16%)

This provides important context for the safeguarding of children and young people in the Borough.



Number of children and young people

21% 22,519



Falling Birth Rates

1,357 2010

1,198 2016

The Gypsy, Roma, Traveller community

0.3%
of population

3X
higher than the National average



The Health and Wellbeing of Children and Young People

The Health and Wellbeing of children and young people is a crucial element of our local safeguarding context, which can be affected by a range of factors from birth to adulthood.

There are specific groups of young people who are more vulnerable to these factors, which can inhibit their life chances and cause inequalities for health and wellbeing. These include children in need, children subject to Child Protection Plans, children at risk of sexual exploitation, those living in poverty or caring for a parent or sibling.

It is important therefore, that the Board is able to maintain an overview of health and wellbeing and the Darlington Children Health Profile provides signals that are helpful to the Board in its assessment of risk.

Health and Wellbeing

The health and wellbeing of children in Darlington is generally below the England average, some important illustrations include:

- Infant and child mortality rates (2016/17) are similar to the England average.
- The teenage conception rate in girls under the age of 18 in Darlington has historically been higher than England, although has continued to fall over a period of years and is now statistically similar (2016/17) to England at 24 per 1000 conceptions.
- 16.2% of women smoke while pregnant, which is statistically worse than the average for England (10.7%) but statistically similar to the North East Region (16.1%).
- Breastfeeding rates for Darlington 6-8 weeks after birth at 34.3% which are statistically worse than England average of 44.4% but statistically better than the North East average of 31.4%.
- Dental health is statistically similar to England with 26.4% of five year olds (2016/17) had one or more decayed, filled or missing teeth. The England average is 23.3%.
- Obesity rates for Children in Darlington (2016/17) are 10.6% of children aged 4-5 years and are statistically similar to England. For those children aged 10-11 years there are 22.5% of these children who are recorded as obese which is statistically worse than England.
- The rate of A&E attendance and emergency hospital admissions in Darlington for children of all ages is statistically worse than England. The rate of A&E attendances for children and young people under the age of 18yrs is statistically worse with the rate of 944 per 1000. The rate of emergency hospital admissions for children under five years in Darlington at 1,534 per 1,000 is statistically worse when compared to England at 602 per 1,000. Hospital admissions caused by injuries in children under the age of fifteen years is also higher at 166.5 per 10,000 compared to an England average of 101 per 10,000.
- Uptake of childhood immunisations in Darlington has historically and consistently been higher than England average with 97.9% of Darlington children receiving vaccination (Dtap/IPV/Hib immunisation) by age two, meeting minimum recommended coverage and compared to 95.1 % England average. More than 95% of children in Darlington (the minimum recommended coverage) have received their first MMR vaccination by the age of two years which is significantly higher than the England average.

Health Behaviours

Nationally the rate of hospital admissions of children and young people for conditions wholly related to alcohol is decreasing and this is also the case in Darlington. However; teenagers in Darlington continues to show a statistically significantly higher rate for hospital admission for teenagers under the age of 18 due to alcohol specific conditions, with 51.6 admissions per 100,000 in 2016/17 compared to England at 34.2 per 100,000. The rate of admissions due to substance misuse in those aged 15-24 years in Darlington remains statistically significantly higher at 126.0 per 100,000 compared to England at 89.8 per 100,000.

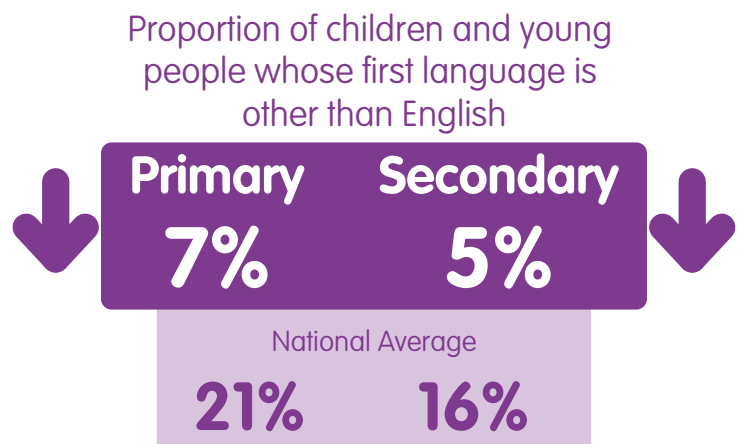
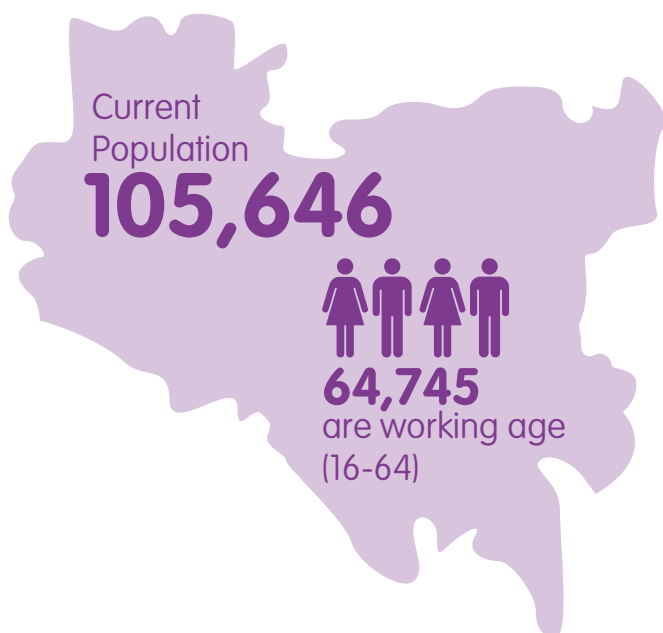
Vulnerability and Disease

Nationally, the rate of young people aged 10-24 years being admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm is increasing. In Darlington this rate has been decreasing with the admission rate for 2016/17 (472.8 per 100,000) statistically similar to that for England average (404.6 per 100,000). The rate of hospital admissions for mental health conditions for children age 0-17 years in 2016/17 was 97.7 per 100,000 which is statistically similar to the England average of 81.5 per 100,000. The rates of hospital admissions for children under the age of 19 due to asthma in Darlington are largely similar to England.

Poverty

Darlington is in the 30% most deprived local authority areas in England. It is ranked as the 97th most deprived local authority area out of 326 on the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD)¹ 2015. The number of children under the age of 16 years living in relative poverty in Darlington is 19.6% which is higher than the England average of 16.8%. The rate of family homelessness in Darlington is significantly better than the England average. Approximately 22% of children in Darlington are living in poverty, with the proportion of children entitled to free school meals being:

- 19% in primary schools (the national average is 14%)
- 14% in secondary schools (the national average is 13%)



¹ Index of Multiple Deprivation is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in England.

Analysis of Effectiveness in Safeguarding Children

Children Looked After

The numbers of Children Looked After (CLA) by the local authority at the end of March 2018 was 214 which equates to 95 per 10,000 of the relevant population. The rate has been relatively stable (with some fluctuation throughout the year).

The latest comparator figures available (as at 31 March 2017) indicate the rate of Children Looked After (CLA) in Darlington is higher than both the England average at 62 per 10,000 and that for the North East at 84 per 10,000 population, under 18 years.

Darlington is not statistically different across a range of measures of concern and difficulties for Children Looked After compared to England. The Local Authority had 54 registered in-house foster carers plus 22 connected carers, 53 children were placed with 41 in-house foster carers and 30 children with connected carers, with a further 61 children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies and 70 young people in residential provision.

Children in Need (CiN)

In March 2018 there were 372.1 per 10,000 in Darlington identified as CiN compared to 330.4 England average and 451.6 in the North East. This is a 37.6% reduction in Darlington in comparison with the previous year. The percentage of children in need eligible for free school meals was 59.4% at the end of March 2018 compared to 50.4% in England. The percentage of CiN missing school sessions was 10.2 % which is lower than the England rate of 10.4%. No CiN have been permanently excluded from school during 2017-2018.

Child Protection Plans (CPP)

At the end of March 2018, 115 children were subject to a child Protection Plan (CPP) in Darlington (a rate of 51 per 10,000). The latest comparator figure available (31 March 2017) are 43 per 10,000 for England and 61 per 10,000 for the North East. In total, 138 children have become subject to a Child Protection Plan during 2017/18 after an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC). This is a 62% increase from the position at the end of March 2017, when the figure stood at 71 (a rate of 31 per 10,000), which was an extremely low rate when compared to national, regional and statistical neighbours.

Children aged under 10 years continue to form the largest group subject to Child Protection Plans. The risk factors associated with Child Protection show 68% were due to Neglect; 23% Emotional Abuse; 8% Physical Abuse and 4% as a result of Sexual Abuse.

Residential Care

The Council has three residential homes in Darlington which have all been judged to be 'good' by Ofsted. In addition to this the single establishment that provides specialised respite care for disabled children is judged to be 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

Young People not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Since September 2016 the requirement for monitoring those not in education, employment or training (NEET) has applied to 16 and 17 year olds and those 'not known' to the local authority.

The latest comparator data for January 2018 shows that in Darlington the proportion of NEET (including not known) stood at 4.0%, below the Tees Valley average of 5.4%.

The national data for 2017/18 is due to be published in October 2018.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO)

The Annual IRO report is produced by the Children's Safeguarding Unit (CSU). The service is responsible for Child Protection Conferences; Children Looked After Reviews; Annual Foster Carer Reviews; Adoption Reviews; Disruption Meetings and Reviews of children placed in Secure Accommodation.

Progress has continued to be made in response to the recommendations from the Ofsted Inspection in 2015 as follows:

- Ofsted Inspectors commented during monitoring visits that when poor practice was identified by Independent Reviewing Officers there was evidence of appropriate challenge taking place.
- Modifications to the case management system (Liquid Logic) now allows tracking of the permanence decision at the 3 month Child Looked After Reviews and this is reported on in monthly Quality Assurance and Performance Clinics.

There were three areas identified last year that were reported to be under represented in relation to Child Protection Plans which were: Children with Disabilities; Physical Abuse and Sexual Abuse. The rate for Physical Abuse remains low however, there has been an increase in the other two areas.

For the year to 31st March 2018, 95% of children were subject to an Initial Child Protection Conference held within the prescribed 15 working days from strategy, with 100% of these conferences being held within timescales. Within this period, 100% of Child Protection Review Conferences were held within timescales.

The rate for children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plans (CPP) for a second or subsequent time (at any time) was 19%, which is in line with the England average of 19%, but higher than the regional average of 14% from the previous year (the most recent published data).

No children were subject of a CPP continuously for a period of two years or longer.

Parental involvement at Initial Child Protection Conferences, was 95%, and for Child Protection Review Conferences; 91%.

Areas for development in 2018/19 include:

- Develop business case for:
 - IRO Manager post and
 - Annual Foster Carer Reviewing Officer post

- Review and revise procedures for:
 - Dispute Resolution Process / mechanisms to evidence the impact of challenge made by IROs
 - Disruption meetings
 - Develop forms within Liquid Logic case management system to support both processes (as above).
 - Maintain the permanent appointments within the team and reduce previous reliance on agency staff cover
 - Increase participation and attendance of young people and their families in child protection conferences
 - Promote the take up of Advocacy services for children and young people.

The IRO Annual Report 2017-18 is available via the DSCB website.

Managing Allegations and concerns against staff, carers and volunteers - Designated Officer

All LSCBs have responsibility for ensuring there are effective procedures in place for managing allegations against people who work with children. The Designated Officer in Darlington should be informed of all such allegations and will provide advice and guidance to ensure all cases are investigated and resolved as quickly as possible.

Allegation management processes remain embedded in Darlington with a good level of awareness by professionals and the service appropriately used by partner agencies. The Designated Officer triggers a process of information sharing, review and investigation that triangulates any child protection/criminal offence concerns with HR and organisational responsibilities to ensure that the child is safe and the appropriate action is taken.

Allegations are resolved in a timely manner with 69.2% of total cases being resolved in one month and 85.1% of cases resolved in 3 months. In addition 11.4% of allegations received were substantiated, leading to subjects being either been convicted, de-registered or dismissed through disciplinary processes. 24.3% were unsubstantiated. 11.4% of cases were recorded as unfounded and 41.1% of cases recoded for information purposes only. The remaining were ongoing and not finalised or had occurred 'out of area'.

In the Local Authority re-inspection in March 2018, Ofsted confirmed that: 'The local authority's designated officers ensure that prompt and effective action is taken when allegations are made against professionals or persons in positions of trust. This ensures that children are safeguarded. However, case progress is not always monitored in a timely way, although this has not left children at risk, and decisions about outcomes are made jointly with appropriate partner agencies. Work to engage faith communities other than Christian groups has not been effective'.

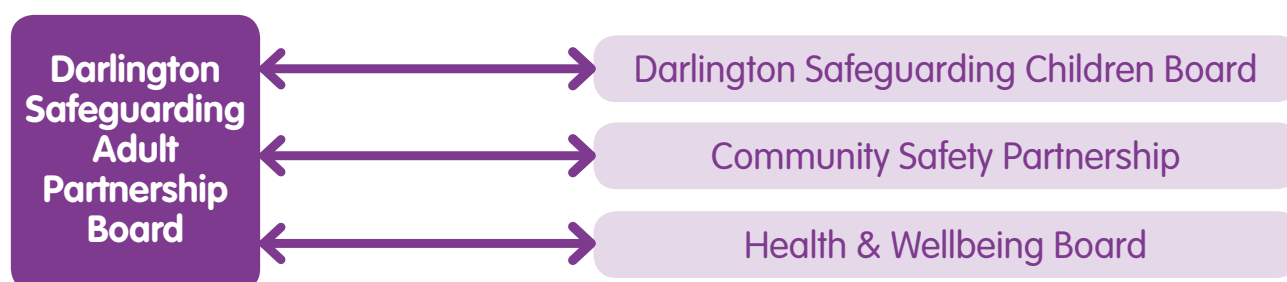
Consequently measures are being implemented to ensure case progress is monitored in a more timely way and further exploration on how to engage with faith communities will be undertaken in the next reporting period.

A full analysis of how allegations against staff have been managed in the Darlington can be read in the **LADO Annual Report 2017-18** which is available on the DSCB website.

Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Governance arrangements and Strategic Partnership Links

The Local Strategic Partnership

The DSCB continues to work in partnership with three key Strategic Partnership Boards to 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 and young people are threaded throughout.



The Darlington Protocol was launched in November 2017 and outlines the relationship between the DSCB and other strategic partnerships. It is recognised that each Partnership Board has its own governance and priorities, the protocol promotes effective ways of working to deliver the strategic outcomes, reflecting that **“safeguarding is everyone’s business”**.

Safeguarding is a concern that runs through all Boards but it is the responsibility of the two Safeguarding Boards to call the other partnerships to account. There are a number of areas of common interest where the named Strategic Boards need to ensure that leadership and accountability is clear and that information is effectively shared. The respective chairs meet at least twice a year to plan and coordinate activity and have agreed to host a multi-agency event involving all agencies concerned with Domestic Abuse expected to take place 6th June 2018.

Membership of the Board crosses over that of the Darlington Partnership and Local Family Justice Board which greatly assists awareness and coordination.

During 2017/18 DSCB has been involved in joint work with the Community Safety Partnership including safeguarding and seeking assurance that services are coordinated and accessible to Gypsy, Roma, and Travelling families in Darlington (GRT). A network of service providers, commissioners and key wider partners met in January 2018 to share information and establish clear contact routes for partners working with GRT families. The meeting recognised that safeguarding practice and risk assurance applies across all minority groups with partners having key roles in articulating the routes of risk assessment.

The local partnership has proposed a focus on Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence in the coming with the aim of reducing the prevalence of domestic abuse and identify the co-ordinated community response on prevention, support and protection services, as well as establishing how perpetrators are dealt with.

Another illustration of the link between the strategic partnerships, was following a report to Board from the Chair of the Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) which had conducted a thematic review of certain child deaths in Darlington and Durham and where modifiable factors were present. In particular DSCB expressed significant interest in two aspects of the report which it saw as significant commissioning issues concerned with obstetric and acute paediatric service capacity. The Board was enthusiastic to ensure that the benefit of the thematic report was accessed by all relevant health services within the region, and sought the support of the Health and Wellbeing Board in its strategic commissioning capacity to take matters forward and to make representation to Commissioners and NHS (England). As a result NHS (E) Director of Commissioning agreed to meet with the Chair of the Darlington Health and Wellbeing Board, DSCB Independent Chair and Chair of CDOP.

The Independent Chairs of both Safeguarding Boards will present their annual reports to the Health and Wellbeing Board and will ensure there are relationships with the Community Safety Partnership. The Safeguarding Boards will share their annual plans for the next twelve months to ensure co-ordination and mutual understanding.

Governance

The Board continues to enjoy strong participation from partners at an appropriate level, and attendance at Board meetings is generally good. However, the Board's own improvement plan governance arrangements are reviewed annually to avoid duplication and create clarity in the respective responsibilities of both Board members and advisers.

The consistency of the Independent Chair has allowed the Board to concentrate on current achievements and progress on priority areas.

The Board continues to operate through its sub-committees but through pressures of capacity they have been subject to some refinement, to ensure that they remain focused and can deliver on the Boards current priorities. Sub-committee chairing arrangements have stabilised and provide a balanced multi-agency leadership team.

The Business Management Group, which comprises the Independent Chair, all sub-committee chairs, Lay Member and the Board Business Manager, continue to focus on the strategic work of the Board and has a key role in terms of the quality assurance and quality control and will discuss routine business such as budgets and risk registers.

Revenue

Member organisations of DSCB provide the Board with reliable resources (including financial) that enables the Board to be well organised and effective. Resources include staff time and additional support such as attending and contributing to the work of the Board. However, the revenue operating costs now exceed annual income and the Board has had to rely on its small reserve to maintain current levels of function. This is now an unsustainable position. Due to the transition to a Safeguarding Partnership as determined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017 contributions from constituent agencies will require reviewing. Strategic leads from the three statutory agencies: Durham Constabulary; Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group and Darlington Borough Council in for 2018/2019 will need to consider future arrangements, which will include consideration around the revenue and expenditure. For details of the revenue see **Appendix 3**

....so what have we achieved?

Effective safeguarding relies on the collective contribution of all of the multi-agency partners and the way that they are able to work in a complimentary way.

People who live in Darlington have access to a broad range of services, some of which cross boundaries with Durham, Teesside and North Yorkshire. Most services perform well with Tees, Esk and Wear Valley (TEWV) and Harrogate and District Foundation Trusts (HDFT) having 'good' inspection outcomes and in 2017 County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust was judged by the CQC as requiring improvement. Durham Constabulary achieving 'outstanding' in its Police efficiency including leadership (PEEL) inspection in September 2017.

Importantly, in March 2018 Ofsted completed a re-inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in Darlington. The overall grading improved from 'Inadequate' at the last inspection in 2015 to 'Requires Improvement to be Good' which was deemed by Ofsted to be a considerable achievement. The report noted that leadership and governance in Darlington has markedly improved

The Ofsted report highlighted a number of positives about service provision including well developed and effective partnership working.

Ofsted has also made a number of recommendations to support continued improvement which has been incorporated into an improvement plan. As a consequence the service is no longer in intervention and progress is being closely monitored.

For further information on the outcome of the inspection and recommendations see Ofsted Darlington Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, looked after and care leavers May 2018.

In addition schools in Darlington generally perform well and of 5 inspections carried out in 2017/18; 2 schools received good or outstanding judgements and none were considered 'inadequate'. As at 31st March 2018, 5 schools have not yet been inspected, 9 were judged as outstanding, 19 as good, 8 as requires improvement and one school judged inadequate.

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) identified Darlington as a safe place to live, with falling rates of crime and alcohol related anti-social behaviour.

The following sections of the report give a flavour of the Board's achievements and challenges over the year and identify the areas the DSCB will focus on in 2018-19.



The Board's Priorities

Achievements and Challenges

During 2016-2017, DSCB made the following achievements against the three priority areas as follows:

Priority 1 - Ensure effective arrangements are in place that enable children, young people and their families to access appropriate Early Help support when first identified and this support is well coordinated.

Early Help Offer

Throughout the year, the Board has heard how the universal offer for Early Help is impacting on multi-agency working arrangements in Darlington. An Early Help Strategic Group, comprising of agency partners which include, police, health, academies, voluntary sector and local authority, reviewed the continuum of needs document and referral form in April 2017. In 2017 an Early Help Strategy was developed which was ratified by Board in February 2018. The aim of the strategy is to:

- Support children and young people aged 0-19 and their families to become resilient and live as a family unit, building resilience and skills to manage the challenges of everyday life.
- Ensure that all partner agencies Think Family and quickly identify those who might need extra help.
- Ensure the coordination of services for those who require them, through the use of the Early Help Assessment and an agreed One Family Plan.

The multi-agency performance in achieving the outcomes of this Strategy will be reported as a partnership report to DSCB for periodic updates. The Strategy will be updated on an annual basis to ensure it reflects current needs of children, young people and their families and supports collaborative working.

The local authority has offered training to all organisations on the Early Help Process, paperwork and services available. A monthly audit has also been introduced to review the quality of Early Help assessments received from multi-agency partner agencies.

Board agreed on the importance of having sight of the impact of Early Help on children and young people using the scaling questions. It was also important to understand how Early Help Intervention has diverted children from Child in Need (CiN) and Child Protection (CP) intervention.

The Department of Communities and Local Government has produced a Transformation Model to support areas in developing Early Help Services as part of the Troubled Families Service Transformation by using a number of strands to explore the maturing of Early Help, it is proposed that this model will be used to develop a future position statement on the Early Help Offer.

Early help data

A total of 5044 contacts were received by the Children's Access Point (CAP) in the year 2017/18. A total of 1126 referrals were made to Children's Social Care during 2017/18; this is a reduction of 346 (23%) when compared with 2016/17 year end. The rate of referrals was 497.6 per 10,000, this is lower than the most recent national data (548.2 per 10,000), regional (599.6 per 10,000) and statistical (518.7 per 10,000) benchmarks. A total of 877 Early Help Assessments were completed during 2017/18 throughout the partnership.

Early Help Training

It was identified that over 150 practitioners accessed the Multi-agency early help training throughout 2017-18. The sessions were facilitated by Darlington Borough Council early help coordinator. The current offer of training is to be reviewed to determine if there is any further demand.

Domestic Abuse

The DSCB recognises that people have a right to live their lives free from violence and abuse. The Multi-Agency Darlington Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Plan 2017-20 ensures that agencies work together to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse and to provide a coordinated community response which includes preventative, support and protection services and deals with perpetrators. The plan outlines the links with other local strategies including the Children and Young People Plan 2017-22, Health and Wellbeing Plan 2017-22 and the Neglect Strategy 2017-20. Safeguarding children is a shared responsibility and high priority for all agencies. Services must ensure adherence to safeguarding procedures which includes monitoring, reviewing and assessing their safeguarding processes. Throughout 2017/18 work continued to develop a Darlington data set of multi-agency indicators related to Domestic Abuse. A County Durham and Darlington report is a standing item at the County Durham and Darlington Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Executive Group (DASVEG). Further work will be carried out in 2018/19 to develop the data set which will be shared with the Performance Management sub-group.

The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is a statutory partnership which ensures the links between key networks to address Domestic Abuse. A protocol was developed in 2017/18 to act as a link and mechanism for areas of common interest to be shared between the Safeguarding Boards, the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and the Health and Wellbeing Board. Domestic Abuse is clearly recognised as an area of common interest and further work is planned for 2018/19.

In 2017/18 the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) developed and approved a leaflet entitled Domestic Abuse and the Workplace which provides advice to employers about what should be done if an employee is experiencing domestic abuse and the resources which are available. The leaflet can be accessed on the Safeguarding Board's website.

How Will This Benefit The Organisation?

- More effective staff
- Staff will feel fully supported and confident in supporting their employer's goals
- This can only improve the work environment for all employees through increasing crime and awareness
- Increase employee commitment to their organisation

Other benefits

- Getting the best people for the job
- An employer with leading healthy policies will be attractive to a much wider pool of potential applicants
- Improved social opportunities, and an improved public image
- Employees are demonstrating a powerful commitment to the principles of social opportunities and community investment, and to achieving equal opportunities in the workplace particularly for women.

Next Steps...

- Develop and implement a policy/ procedure
- Assess risk and help
- Be clear in the possibility
- An integrated approach
- Training
- Publicity and Promotion

Useful contacts

- [Darlington Domestic Violence - A Guide for the Workplace](#)
- [Women's Aid](#)
- [Darlington Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Consulting Centre](#)
- [www.darlingtondva.org.uk](#)
- [www.darlingtondva.org.uk](#)
- [www.equalityhumanrights.com](#)

Helplines

- [The Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre](#) (supportive 01323 309922)
- [National Domestic Violence Helpline](#) (0800 30 30 24 24)

Domestic Violence & your workplace

Be aware. Take Action

Multi-Agency Audit Programme

The multi-agency audit calendar continues to be revised in line with priorities agreed by DSCB. The Board continues to ensure that multi-agency audits are carried out and identify lessons to be learned as well as making recommendations for future improvements to improve multi-agency training as well as developing policy and procedure. The audit reports provided to DSCB inform them of the quality of work being undertaken and its impact on outcomes for individual children and young people.

DSCB will align the audit programme to ensure it will be inspection ready to focus on the introduction of the planned themed Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI). The JTAI examines how well agencies are working together in the local area to help and protect children. This will allow DSCB to continue to monitor and review practice but also support and enable the partnership to be inspection ready.

The outcome of the audits undertaken in this period are outlined below:

Child Protection Conference Observation

Members of the Quality Assurance and Performance Management sub group continue to observe Child Protection Conferences to review progress against previous audits to identify if practice has improved as a result and to identify areas of good practice or corrective action that may be required. The learning identified issues relating mainly to policy and practice, however since undertaking the observations the DSCB Child Protection procedures have been revised and include more detailed guidance to support practitioners. The group agreed to continue to monitor provision of reports for conference and the observation tool has been revised to capture feedback from children and families involved in conference.

Pre-birth Audit

A pre-birth audit was undertaken during the period to seek assurances that the pre-birth assessments were understood, multi-agency procedures were clear and to identify any areas of learning and development for multi-agency partners.

The findings from the audit highlighted a number of strengths and areas for development across the partnership. A number of recommendations were identified to improve practice, in particular an imminent review of the unborn baby procedure and practice guidance. A multi-agency task and finish group was established to undertake this piece of work. The procedure and guidance will be published in the next reporting period. An action plan has been developed to monitor the recommendations from this audit.

Threshold Audit

A thresholds audit was undertaken into the number of referrals into the Darlington front door to ascertain whether the DSCB Continuum of Need Level Indicators was being routinely applied by all referrers.

The findings acknowledged that although there were some limitations to this audit in respect of the number of cases audited and a new database being launched, the data obtained did provide some insight into the key lines of enquiry and a number of key recommendations for service improvement across the partnership were identified. Agreement for a new multi-agency referral form to be adopted to capture demographic information, family members, including significant others, consent and presenting issue with evidence of use of the Continuum of Need document. The new multi-agency referral form was adopted in June

2017 and the Continuum of Need was refreshed to include additional circumstances such as; child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation; missing from home, care or education to support practitioners in making appropriate referrals.

Neglect and Sexual Abuse Audit

Relevant audits with regard to both Sexual abuse and neglect are scheduled to be carried out in the 2018-19 audit programme, this will also provide an opportunity to align the audits against the JTAI Evaluation Schedule Number (ESN's).

Multi-agency Safeguarding Audits (self-assessment)

During 2017/18, DSCB worked in collaboration with Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (DSAPB) to conduct a robust self-assessment audit in accordance with the requirements of section 11 of the Children Act 2004, section 175 of the Education Act and Working Together 2015 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The audit framework was adapted from previous years to ensure the process was more robust. The Board was then able to seek assurance through scrutinising local arrangements and assessing whether partners were fulfilling their statutory obligations with due regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of adults with care and support needs.

A more rigorous process was implemented with the inclusion of a moderation process. The audit extended beyond the statutory partners and for the first time included charitable and voluntary organisations, faith settings and GPs to allow the Board to assess the effectiveness of safeguarding children within Darlington and support agencies to develop action plans where necessary.

The purpose of the audit was to seek assurance that safeguarding arrangements are robust across all sectors in Darlington and that agencies have comprehensive arrangements in place to deliver their safeguarding responsibilities and that they are able to provide evidence that these arrangements are effective.

The audit was conducted between May and July 2017 and the responses to the audit were overwhelmingly positive. Analysis of the audit returns and the moderation process provided evidence that the principles of safeguarding are embedded in practice and are effective in promoting the safety and welfare of children and adults at risk in Darlington and the majority of organisations can demonstrate they have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place which are effective and are compliant with statutory requirements. The findings of the safeguarding audit were reported to Board in March 2018 and to the Health and Wellbeing Board in May 2018.

It was highlighted that a number of sport and voluntary organisations did not respond to the audit request and this is being followed up. The Quality Assurance and Performance Management sub-group will review the emerging issues to build on the assurances and provide updates to Board.

In conclusion Board can be assured that safeguarding arrangements are robust and that the investment of time is worth the outcome.



Child Protection Procedures

The multi-agency Child Protection Procedures were revised and refreshed in June 2017 and provided in a new online version which replaced all previous procedure manuals.

The procedures will be updated on a rolling programme or reviewed earlier when changes to practice or statutory guidance are identified. This provides Practitioners in Darlington an up to date web based solution that is accessible 24 hours a day from a range of devices.



Continuum of Need Indicators and multi-agency referral form

The multi-agency Continuum of Need Indicators (Threshold Tool) were also revised to incorporate additional circumstances to support practitioners when considering making a referral. The multi-agency child protection referral form has also been updated to map against the new social care system (Liquid Logic, implemented in October 2016 and early help documents).

Policy, Procedure and Practice Guidance

In 2017-18, DSCB revised and reviewed the following policies, procedures and practice guidance to support practitioners working with children:

- A new online version of multi-agency child protection procedures
- Continuum of Need Indicator (Threshold Tool)
- Multi-Agency Referral Form
- Operation Encompass Protocol
- Self-Harm Pathway
- Fabricated or Induced Illness Practice Guidance
- Organised and Multiple Abuse Procedure and Practice Guidance
- Child Death Overview Panel Procedure
- Sudden Unexpected Death in Childhood (SUDIC) Procedure
- Children Missing from Home, Care and Education (procedure and guidance)
- Child Sexual Exploitation Procedure and Practice Guidance
- Safeguarding Children from Dangerous Dogs Practice Guidance
- Female Genital Mutilation Practice Guidance
- Procedure and Practice Guidance for Managing Allegations against staff and volunteers working with children
- Child Protection Processes – Glossary of Terms
- Private Fostering Guidance

Priority 2 – Ensure effective arrangements are in place to protect children from neglect, abuse and child sexual abuse

Neglect

As part of the Joint Targeted Area Inspections and ongoing assessment and understanding of the multi-agency response to keep children safe in Darlington in 2017/18 strategic managers from the partner organisations undertook an assessment of the strengths and areas for development in relation to children at risk of or subject to neglect.

Each organisation provided a robust self-assessment of their strengths and areas for development in relation to Neglect to inform the holistic self-assessment which informs action planning for improvements going forward.

A Neglect Strategy is currently being developed which will set out the strategic aims and objects of the multi-agency approach of tackling neglect to support partners to work together to reduce the impact of neglect on children in Darlington. A delivery plan and revised practice guidance will also be developed with assigned leads to further support practitioners. These will be presented to board for endorsement in the next reporting period. A multi-agency audit on Neglect is scheduled for completion in quarter 3.

Case reviews

Reviewing and learning from serious incidents is a crucial aspect of good safeguarding practice and requires leadership from senior managers across all organisations involved. In February 2018 a joint Children's and Adults workshop was held to allow senior managers across the partnership with responsibility for safeguarding in Darlington to examine how reviews can be used to identify and embed learning. The review also considered whether both the decision to conduct a review and the review process itself is cost effective and leads to change that would make a positive difference to adults and their families. The Learning and Improvement Framework will be reviewed and updated in 2018/19 and will incorporate any good practice identified through the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The protocol will consider the interface between other reviews and parallel processes which may run concurrently with a SCR (such as a Coroner's enquiry or Domestic Homicide Review) and how the processes can work more efficiently.

The purpose of any review is to identify learning that will bring about improvements in safeguarding practice so that the likelihood of future harm to children is minimised. Examples of good practice can also be considered to identify learning that can be applied to future cases.

In 2016/17 DSCB undertook two Learning Lessons Reviews (LLR) which were carried out under the Significant Incident learning Process (SILP). Action Plans were developed and monitored by the Case Review and Learning from Practice sub-group (CRLP).

The key learning points were communicated across the multi-agency partnership workforce which highlighted that professionals need to 'think family' and consider the impact of issues beyond members of the immediate family. All professionals to consider the nature and seriousness of an individual's mental ill-health and impact on the family. A need to identify and address barriers to the use of the bruising in non-mobile baby protocol. Improvements to partnership working and information sharing. To ensure consistency of professionals working with families.

In June 2017 a Serious Case Review was commissioned by DSCB, the learning from this review will be reported in 2018-19.

In June 2017 an extraordinary meeting of the Case Review and Learning from Practice group was held to consider learning and challenge in respect of concerns raised about the professional response to a minor highlighted from an Adult Lessons Learned Review. A series of recommendations were identified which were compiled into an Action Plan, the action plan is being monitored by the CRLP.

Also during this period the CRLP group was informed of a case that was being discussed through the Child Death Overview Panel. As a result a learning lessons review was commissioned by DSCB, the learning from this review will be reported to DSCB in 2018-19. In addition, a separate review of the current notifiable Incident process is to be undertaken which is to take account of the way in which this particular case was handled, the learning will be shared with board in the next reporting period.

Communication and Engagement

Work was undertaken throughout 2017/18 on developing a forward plan of how the partnership will raise awareness of safeguarding. A communication workshop was held in October 2017 which identified that there appears to be strong partnership working amongst the communication and media representatives within each partner organisation. Key links have now been embedded between the business unit and the communication and media teams within each organisation to ensure key messages are shared when appropriate, using various means of communication including social media.

The Board is currently reviewing the joint Communication and Engagement Strategy which sets out the strategic approach of both Safeguarding Boards to ensure that the work of the Boards is effectively communicated to children and young people, adults at risk, families and the wider community. The Board publishes a bi-monthly messages bulletin which highlights key messages and communicates the work carried out by the Board. This has improved communication with practitioners throughout the partnership and highlights the purpose of Safeguarding Boards' website where it is accessible to the wider public as well as practitioners and partner agencies. The newsletter is also circulated electronically throughout the partnership via the communications teams.

The board continues to produce a Learning Digest, which shares the thematic learning from local, regional and national case reviews, this is accessible to all agencies across the multi-agency partnership and is used to help inform practice development.



The board supported a number of national campaigns throughout the period which included:

- Safer Internet Day
- Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day
- DFE National Campaign – ‘TOGETHER WE CAN TACKLE CHILD ABUSE: ‘IF YOU THINK IT REPORT IT ‘
- Independent Enquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – Truth Project
- National Safeguarding Week

Throughout 2017/18 The Independent Chair has continued to host multi-agency Practitioner Forums which strengthen the understanding and dialogue between practitioners and the Board and ensures that Board members have up to date perspectives of the experience of practitioners working in Darlington. The Forums have been well attended by a broad section of partner agencies and the general consensus suggests that the forum serves a useful purpose, practitioners appreciate the opportunity to raise issues in a non-threatening or contentious way and through the Board feedback, managers appear to appreciate the early alerts that may arise and the opportunity to intervene or take steps to seek assurance. A thematic report will be presented to Board in 2018-19 of the key recurring themes.

A challenge for 2018/19 for the DSCB will be to further develop the communication and engagement strategy, to strengthen links with the other sub-groups to ensure that policy changes, learning and national good practice are shared throughout the partnership and to establish links with media teams throughout the partnership to raise awareness of safeguarding in Darlington.

Young People’s Conference 2017

Following the success of the 2016/17 Young People’s Conference, in July 2017 the DSCB and multi- agency partners including the Durham Constabulary ERASE (Educate and Raise Awareness of Sexual Exploitation) team hosted the second Young People’s Conference which was attended by 79 young people aged 13-15 from eight secondary schools in Darlington. The format of the conference was designed by young people and concentrated on the following topics:

- What is Child Sexual Exploitation? - an introductory workshop exploring the effects of CSE by the Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Centre
- You and your Digital footprint- a workshop facilitated by the Darlington Borough Council Targeted Media Youth Worker
- Emotional wellbeing and resilience- a workshop facilitated by a consultant clinical psychologist

The young people engaged well in the workshops and were asked to display the important messages they had learned from them. They were encouraged to think about how they could promote the messages within schools. The pupils were also asked to complete a short survey to establish what makes them feel unsafe. The main theme was community safety with examples of drug and alcohol misuse in public areas. Feedback from the young people and teachers was overwhelmingly positive and will inform the agenda for the 2018 conference.

Workforce stability

In July 2017, Board members were provided with an overview of the multi-agency position in relation to workforce stability across the CCG, Durham Constabulary and Darlington Borough Council as it was recognised that any fragility in the multi-agency workforce may impact on safeguarding. The Board commissioned the report to understand which areas of the workforce are stable and to establish whether there are issues which may impact in the future. Board members were provided with assurance that all organisations have robust workforce strategies and arrangements in place to monitor staffing levels and workforce pressures. Proactive plans are in place across the partnership in relation to recruitment and retention of staff, including the promotion of the North as a place to live and work.

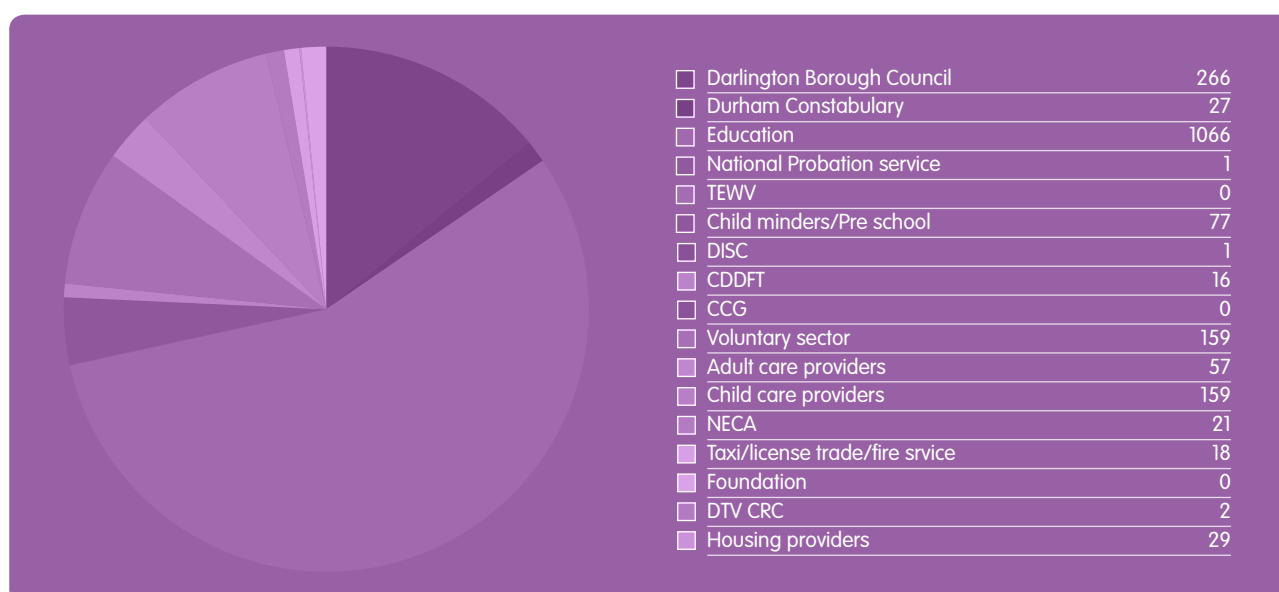
Training

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at risk of abuse is one of the key priorities of the Board and remains the focus of any DSCB learning and development activity across the partnership whether statutory, voluntary or independent sector.

The Board is committed to promoting a 'learning culture' and this is outlined in the Safeguarding Boards' Joint Training Strategy and is informed through the training needs analysis and feedback from training delivered. The Boards multi-agency Trainer has full access to performance data, information from lessons learnt reviews and audits to ensure the boards' training programmes are regularly updated to meet the needs of practitioners and managers. The training strategy underpins the Boards' priority to further strengthen practitioner's knowledge, skills and expertise in safeguarding children and promoting their welfare. The Board receives an Annual Training Report which for 2017/18 confirmed:

- All delegates who completed the post course evaluation, three months after the course stated that their confidence and skills had increased.
- The Boards' have seen a significant increase in the training income from £5,620 to £13,540 which is a result of additional bespoke training sessions
- An increase in specialist training for conferences and core groups

The chart below outlines the attendance for face to face children training accessed by partner agencies during the period April 2017 to March 2018.



In addition to face to face training, a number of e-learning packages were completed during the year. A number of free e-learning courses are available on the Safeguarding Boards website which include: Forced Marriage; Female Genital Mutilation; Understanding Young Minds, Mental Capacity Act (MCA) for 16 and 17 year olds; Local approach to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and PACE (Parents against Child Sexual Exploitation) 'keep them safe' resource.

However the Board has not made sufficient progress in the evaluation of all agency training aimed at safeguarding and needs to achieve a stronger overview of both the multi-agency training programme along with the impact of training delivered within single agencies.

Further information can be found in the Training Annual Report 2017/18 which is available on the Safeguarding Boards' website.



Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children

The Missing Exploited and Sexual Abuse sub-group (MESA) has continued to be proactive in its work to identify and tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Training has been delivered in schools with a number of CSE champions being appointed to raise awareness of CSE for young people and parents. There has been wider delivery of CSE training to a number of settings including Public Health, school nurses and Durham Constabulary. It has been identified that there is low reporting of male victims of CSE in Darlington and work is to be carried out with Manchester Barnardo's to establish how male victims can be identified.

Durham Constabulary's initiative Operation Makesafe was implemented to co-ordinate prevent activities and awareness raising of CSE. So far bespoke training has been delivered to the hotel and hospitality industry and fast food outlets in respect of identifying potential victims of CSE and how to report concerns. An example of the impact of the bespoke training is evidenced by the case of a registered manager of a Children's Residential Home in Darlington who was challenged by a hotel receptionist when she made a reservation for a young person and two support workers. The receptionist undertook appropriate checks and refused to accept cash payment for the reservation. This case has been highlighted as an example of good practice. Update reports on progress of Operation Makesafe will be provided to the Missing Exploited and Sexual Abuse Group.

The Missing from Home, Care or Education Procedure Guidance regards return home interviews has been amended and the process for return home interviews of children who are missing has improved. All return home interview outcomes are now shared with the ERASE team for assessment and analysis. The process of sharing information is now more efficient with the Vulnerable Child (VC) forms being shared with the Children's Access Point (CAP) immediately to ensure that the return home interviews are completed within 72 hours. This has resulted in earlier intervention for children at risk.

CSE Training and related training

CSE awareness training continues to be incorporated into the multi-agency training programme and individuals can access free CSE e-learning via the Boards' website and/ or attend class room based training. In 2017/2018 a total of 203 individuals received either classroom based training or accessed e-learning course for CSE, training has been delivered to set the standards for the local approach to CSE and the training highlights male victims using an activity around misconceptions and the real picture.

Training specifically aimed at local taxi drivers as part of their license conditions is also delivered with further training delivered to door staff and publicans and CCTV operators in Darlington. In the coming year further training will be offered to the night-time economy in Darlington.

Elective Home Education/Children Missing in Education

The DSCB is required to ensure that effective safeguarding mechanisms are in place for children who are home educated who may as a result be 'invisible' to services.

In January 2017 a multi-agency EHE monitoring group was established to consider all children on the EHE database and to share information to enable safeguarding decisions to be made and individual cases to be escalated when appropriate. Initially the database was shared with police and health to verify and complete checks on all names and addresses,

In April 2017 it was identified that 122 children in Darlington were being home educated with 15 of these children not being seen by services during the previous eighteen months.

The monitoring group has good multi-agency attendance which includes; local authority, police, health, traveller education, housing and social care. The Education Safeguarding Officer/CME Officer (Darlington Borough Council) provides regular updates to the police. The local authority has also commissioned a dedicated nurse to work specifically with EHE children.

The Home Secretary has been briefed in respect of the work undertaken in Darlington for EHE and it has been highlighted as good practice. There is more work to be undertaken to identify which schools have increased numbers of EHE and which children have never attended education; steps will be taken to ensure that all home educated children are seen.

Performance Management and Quality Assurance

DSCB continues to monitor and develop the quality, timeliness and effectiveness of multi-agency practice through the Performance Management Framework. The multi-agency dataset was revised during 2017-18 to capture the journey of the child.

A particular focus during the reporting period was undertaken for children on a child protection plan following variations in the numbers, identified within the performance data report. A report was presented to Board in October 2017 on the current position of children subject to a child protection plan, the reason for the variations and overall number which had been particularly low (31 March 2017) and out of sync with statistical neighbours and the national position.



Members were advised of three significant periods of variation, which correspond with Baby P (2009), introduction of the MASH (2013) and Ofsted inspection (2015). The number of children on a child protection plan in Darlington is cyclical and is currently on an upwards trend towards a healthier position.

Board were assured that the report clarified the reason for the recent significant decrease in children on a child protection plan in Darlington and agreed for the QAPM to continue to monitor and scrutinise the data. In the year the numbers increased and have now stabilised.

The timely delivery of Initial Health Assessments (IHA) had been a long standing concern for the board and work has continued throughout the year. Health partners and the local authority have made progress and improved the overall position in children attending for appointments within 20 days of coming into looked after care. There has been an improvement in the compliance of the 20 day statutory timescale and a greater understanding of the multi-factorial aspects that contribute to non-compliance which has led to an improvement in the processes of the current pathway. Both partners are now working much closer together to ensure 100% compliance and continue to recognise IHA as important safeguarding triggers.

CSE and Missing from Home data continues to be monitored through the Missing, Exploited and Sexual Abuse sub group. The data highlighted the number of missing episodes had reduced by 50% since the beginning of the year. The high numbers seen at the beginning of the year were as a result of the high number of missing episodes which involved children placed in Darlington from other authorities. This number was reduced as a result of ERASE team, Barnardo's and local PCSO's working closely with Children's Homes Managers and Senior Managers in the placing authorities to ensure strategies were in place as well as ensuring placements were appropriate to meet their needs of the young people. Missing from home interviews were completed in over 90% of cases.

All young people at medium or high risk of CSE are supported by Barnardo's and offered a programme to raise their awareness. The number of cases remain low, however 50% of the cases are Looked After Children, with the other 50% being supported through a Child In Need Plan. Partnership working has developed with the monthly Missing Exploited Group working closely with partner agencies to make decisions from a multi- agency prospective.

The percentage of males referred to the service has been noticeably low, which is contrary to the national average which is 33%. Boys and young men are often perceived to be at less of a risk and often go down the criminal route. This will continue to be monitored to establish if any areas need additional awareness raising to in relation to recognising signs and symptoms of CSE. The source of referrals has been collected and there is a significantly low referral rate from health professionals. A programme of briefings to be explored to specifically target health professionals to explore their awareness of cases where there may be a risk of CSE.



Priority 3 – Ensure partners work together to protect children from harm and ensure the voice of the child is evident in all multi-agency work

The Board continues to develop a coordinated programme of important messages aimed at children, young people and their families. During the year the board supported a number of campaigns including: Child Sexual Exploitation, Water safety and Bullying.

Children and Young People's view of their lifestyle

For primary school aged pupils the relevant findings in respect of safeguarding shows a growing influence of social media even in the lives of younger primary aged children, and evidence of young children having largely unrestricted access to the internet and social media. The responses from young people indicate that they are using social media as part of developing and maintaining their friendships and relationships. However their responses also show the potential for harm, with many reporting bullying via the internet and others reporting they are making friends on social media with people that they have never met. This presents significant new challenges in keeping young people safe.

For those attending secondary schools, the majority reported they had experienced bullying with a significant minority reporting on-going bullying. The majority of bullying is reported to occur in or around school however cyber bullying is the next most common area.

Young people report high levels of awareness of the risks of using social media and the majority report some protective behaviours online, however, nearly all of those who responded reported having been upset by something they had seen online.

The majority of this age group reported negative attitudes towards smoking, alcohol consumption and taking illegal drugs. Most young people had never or rarely smoked, consumed alcohol, taken drugs or had sex and their responses showed high levels of knowledge and awareness of the information and health messages related to these behaviours.

A minority of this age group reported that they are sexually active, there was evidence that they had low levels of understanding about safe sex and avoiding risk.

The survey also shows that on the whole these young people feel happy in their lives and relationships and feel supported by their family and other significant adults. Nevertheless they report an increasing impact of stress on their lives, largely from activities and pressures relating to school, their studies and their emotions.

The full findings of the results can be accessed via Darlington Borough Council's website.



Operation Encompass

Operation Encompass was launched in Darlington in January 2017 to address 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. Notifications are now being forwarded to all schools in Darlington in relation to any high risk domestic abuse incidents attended by the Police. During the period April 2017 to March 2018 there were 158 incidents which involved 233 children that were notified to schools.

Training has been delivered to schools with 46 staff attending as well as training sessions delivered to 11 schools aimed at full staff teams.

Analysis of the impact of Operation Encompass within Darlington will be conducted in the autumn of 2018 and will be included in next year's annual report.

The Board can be assured that any high risk incident involving domestic abuse reported to Durham Constabulary will involve specialist staff who will identify the school the child attends to make contact to communicate relevant and necessary information to enable the school to support the child/young person appropriately.

Teesside University is co-producing a process evaluation of the project alongside Durham County Council Public Health. Ethics approval for the study has recently been obtained and work is about to commence on focus groups for those involved including partners, stakeholders and the schools. The evaluation will help to identify areas of good practice or areas requiring some improvement, which will be shared with Board in due course.



Operation Artemis

Operation Artemis has been introduced and focuses on tackling and disrupting offenders and dangerous perpetrators. This complements the work of **Operation Makesafe** targeting hotspot locations and awareness raising work protecting young people.

Operation VISTA

Operation Vista was launched by Durham Constabulary in July 2017 in response to non-recent allegations concerning Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) for a number of potential victims in Darlington. Following the emergence of the police intelligence the case was escalated by Children's Services to an Executive Strategy Meeting and a multi-agency investigation commenced. A number of male suspects were arrested and interviewed but there were no prosecutions in respect of the investigation as it did not reach the evidential threshold. All families involved in the enquiry were offered additional support by Barnardo's. The learning from the operation will be reported to DSCB in 2018/19.

Modern Slavery-Operation PISA



Operation PISA was launched by Durham Constabulary to assess and disrupt Organised Crime and investigate potential Modern Slavery Offences. This originated from Operation Vista, as identified above and the operation allowed Durham Constabulary and the partnership to demonstrate commitment to the investigation of Modern Slavery offences and tackling and disrupting Organised Crime Groups who seek to use vulnerable people in their businesses. A successful media campaign allowed Modern Slavery to be publicised in the local area and to appeal for the public to report persons and premises of concern, this has resulted in an increase in reporting via the Modern Slavery Helpline.

It also demonstrated strong partnership working to address this category of crime which cannot be tackled purely by the police. The operation was inspected by HMICFRS and found to be national best practice, mainly due to the early partnership approach.

The Practice Development and Procedures Sub group is developing a Modern Slavery and human trafficking protocol and practice guidance document (jointly with DSAPB) to support future operations. The lessons from Operation Pisa will be incorporated in the practice guidance.



The Child Death Review Process for
County Durham and Darlington
Annual Report
2017/18



Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)

CDOP is a joint Panel with County Durham Safeguarding Children Board and Darlington Safeguarding Children Board and is a sub-committee of both Boards. CDOP is responsible for reviewing the available information on all child deaths and is accountable to the Independent Chair. During 2017/2018 there were a total of seven child deaths, the number remained the same as previous year's data. Due to the low numbers reported, it is not possible to go into specific details to avoid any of the data being identifiable.

Professional Challenge and Impact of the Boards' work

Since September 2016 the Board have used a high level strategic challenge log to manage challenge posed to agencies through the independent chair and the Board network. In the year 2017/18, challenges have included:

- Board needing to be sighted on the effectiveness of CAMHS provision in Darlington and the assurance of impact and outcomes for children accessing the service
- seeking assurance in respect of safeguarding arrangements and the Gypsy Roma Traveller (GRT) community resulting in work being undertaken and in January 2018 a network of service providers, commissioners and wider partners met to share information and create clear contact routes for partners and act as a reference point for the Safeguarding Boards, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Community Safety Partnership
- concerns about the number of allegations reported to the Designated Officer and a peer on peer incident in respect of a service provider (not commissioned by Darlington)
- identifying external resources to develop the joint safeguarding Boards' website which resulted in discussions with Darlington College and the potential for a student to provide support as part of work experience
- improved multi-agency attendance at the Missing and Exploited sub-group (MEG) which resulted in training being provided on the updated CSE practice guidance including roles and responsibilities
- Timeliness of responses of notifiable incidents resulting in a review of the learning and Improvement Frameworks and Notification processes including the CDOP process
- a review of the current arrangements for the joint Training, Communications and Engagement sub-group resulting in a series of workshops to examine each aspect of the remit of the sub-group



.....and what do we plan to do next?



As the Board makes progress with its own improvement and effectiveness, it will be necessary to ensure the transition arising from the Children and Social Work Act to Safeguarding Partnership and revised Child Death Review arrangements.

In this regard important principles have been agreed by the statutory partners which have been shared and accepted by the Board. However, the statutory partners have taken the view that movement toward implementation at this stage may be without sight of the proposed regulations and statutory guidance.

However plans are in place to enable discussions with Durham Safeguarding Children Board concerning arrangements for the shared CDOP function and its future operation.

The Board has introduced a forward plan which enables a sensible approach to the way in which it deploys its limited resources and time. However there remains much to do and the Board is also determined in its intention to concentrate less on building governance and much more on understanding and challenging impact.

This placed the Board in a strong position to maintain a focus on all statutory functions, until the point at which the new safeguarding partner arrangements are in operation.

In addition to the transition to the new arrangements, work will continue on the Board's three year forward plan:

Priority 1 - DSCB ensures effective arrangements are in place that enable children, young people and their families to access appropriate Early Help support when first identified and this support is well coordinated.

Priority 2 - DSCB ensures effective arrangements are in place to protect children from neglect, abuse and child sexual abuse.

Priority 3 - DSCB ensures partners work together to protect children from harm and ensure the voice of the child is evident in all multi-agency work.

Appendix 1

Membership and Structure

The DSCB Constitution sets out the governance arrangements and standards for Board members. The Board is a two tier structure (diagram 1 below) and is supported by the joint Safeguarding Board's Business Unit.



The Board is made up of key strategic leads from across the key partner agencies that work with children, young people and their families in Darlington and have a role in Safeguarding. Board members are of sufficient authority to hold their organisations to account.

There are two Lay Members appointed to the Board. The role of the Lay Member is to help to forge the links between the Board and the local community, support stronger public engagement in children safeguarding issues and improve public understanding of Safeguarding Children. They also play an active part in the oversight and scrutiny of decisions and policies made by the Board to help shape safeguarding policy and practice.

The Board met on five occasions during 2017-18, details are provided in the table below.

| Current Membership | Representative |
|---|---|
| Safeguarding Boards' | Independent Chair (4) |
| | Lay Member (4) |
| Darlington Borough Council | Director of Children and Adults Services (4) |
| | Assistant Director for Children's Services (4) |
| | Assistant Director Commissioning, Performance and Transformation (3) |
| | Head of First Contact and Locality Services (4) |
| | Lead Member Children and Young People (4) |
| | Chief Executive (1) |
| | Principal Lawyer (4) |
| | Public Health Director (5) |
| CAFCASS | Service Manager (2) |
| Education (Further Education) - Darlington College | Deputy Principal (4) |
| Education (Further Education)- Darlington College | Student Liaison Manager (4) |
| Education (Independent) - Priory Education | Head Teacher (0) |
| Education - (Academy) Longfield | Senior Assistant Head teacher (2)* |
| Education - (Academy) BR and H Academy | Head teacher (2)* |
| Education - (Academy) Hummersknott | Vice Principal (0)** |
| Education (non-maintained special School)- Education Village | Principal Beaumont Hill Academy (1) |
| Lingfield Education Trust | Chief Executive (1)** |
| Durham Constabulary | Detective Superintendent (5) |
| Durham and Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) | Director of Nursing and Quality (5) |
| | Designated Nurse (3) |
| | Designated Doctor (2) |
| County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust (CDDFT) | Associate Director of Nursing for Patient Experience and Safeguarding (5) |
| Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (HDFT) | Head of Safeguarding Children (5) |
| Community Rehabilitation Company | Director of Operations (3) |
| National Probation Service | Head of Durham NPS (3) |
| Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Foundation Trust (TEWV) | Associate Director of Nursing (4) |
| NHS England | Memorandum of Understanding |
| North East Ambulance Service | Memorandum of Understanding |
| British Transport Police | Memorandum of Understanding |

(The attendance of each Board member is indicated in brackets within the table)

* Change in membership- invited to 2

** Change in membership- invited to 3

Six sub-groups and a business group report to the Board. Their purpose is to deliver on the key responsibilities and priority areas agreed by the Board. Each subgroup has developed detailed work plans that are SMART and provide highlight reports to Board on the progress against their work plans, including any risks and issues identified. In addition the sub-groups may initiate time-limited task and finish groups on specific pieces of work to enable the Board to successfully meet its strategic objectives.

The focus of each of the sub groups are as follows:

Quality Assurance and Performance Management Sub Group:

developing a clear understanding of the Safeguarding 'profile' of Darlington and how the respective agencies are performing to meet those needs. This group is responsible for reviewing data, trends, key performance indicators and the results of audits that have been carried out. The group will quality assure practice through analysis of single agency and joint agency audit of case files and will identify good practice as well as areas where improvement is required.

Case Review and Learning from Practice Sub Group: consider cases identified for a statutory or a discretionary Serious Case Review (SCR), manage and oversee process, consider the learning from audits, multi-agency reviews, single agency reviews and national reviews to influence and inform multi-agency practice in Darlington.

Practice Development and Procedure Sub Group: responsibility for the continued review of national legislation and government guidelines/recommendations and ensure that these are embedded in Darlington's policies, procedures and practice guidance to support practitioners working with children.

Missing, Exploited and Sexual Abuse Sub Group and Missing and Exploited Operational Group; oversight of missing children, child sexual exploitation (CSE) and sexual abuse in Darlington to meet the needs of children and young people who go missing from home, care and education and those at risk of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The operational group discusses cases where identified children and young people may be at risk of CSE or missing episodes and recommends action where necessary.

Training, Communication and Voice of the User sub-group (joint group with Darlington Safeguarding Adult Partnership Board): develop training and development opportunities for the local workforce with the aim of developing practitioner skills and knowledge in order to achieve better outcomes for children. The communications and engagement strategy also enables the promotion of important safeguarding messages and to ensure training is updated in a timely manner with local and national learning.

Child Death Overview Panel (Joint with Durham LSCB): undertaking a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary review of child deaths in order to better understand how and why children in County Durham and Darlington die and use the findings to take action to prevent other deaths.

Business group: with a focus of being the interface between the DSCB and the subgroups and supports the strategic work of the Board and has a key role in terms of quality assurance and quality control and will discuss routine business such as budgets and risk registers.

The achievements of the sub groups in 2017-18 are set out in - **Appendix 2**

Appendix 2

DSCB sub-group achievements 2018-19 Case Review and Learning from Practice sub-group

- Learning Lessons Review Child A and Learning Lessons Review Family B presented at the DSCB Extraordinary meeting on 2 May 2017. Cases concluded and Action Plans monitored by the group.
 - MAPPA Training from MAPPA SCR arranged for October 2017.
 - An extra-ordinary meeting was held on 15th June to consider a case for an SCR, the recommendations were made and agreement sought from the Independent Chair, the case met the criteria for an SCR. The first practitioner event was held on 22nd November and learning event held on 20 February, 2018.
 - Extra-ordinary meeting held within timescales on 22 June 2017 to consider learning and challenge in respect of child safeguarding practice from Adult 2 LLR which was referred to DSCB Independent Chair from the DSAPB Independent Chair; group have developed recommendations which are to be ratified by the subgroup.
 - Case considered for an SCR on 29th March, decision received from Independent Chair that the case did not meet the criteria for a SCR but will be included in other quality assurance activity such as a thematic neglect audit.
 - Joint workshop on 7 February, 2018 with Adult Learning and Improvement Group to strengthen partner understanding of SCRs/SARs. The workshop was facilitated by Jane Wonnacott
 - 5 minute reference guide has been drafted regarding Terms used within Child Protection processes for practitioner reference.
 - Template agreed to communicate learning from LLR/SCRs.
 - Attendance and meetings dates reviewed to ensure key members can attend such as Assistant Director for DBC and Head of Safeguarding, HDFT
-

Missing, Exploited and Sexual Abuse sub-group

- Review of Return Home Interview process and qualitative review/monitoring. All return home interviews are automatically shared with ERASE for assessment and analysis. More efficient information sharing process in place as VC forms for missing young people are shared with CAP immediately to ensure the return home interviews are completed within 72 hours. This has improved earlier intervention for children.
- Amendments made to the Missing from Home, Care or Education Procedure Guidance regards return home interviews (further detail added).
- Missing process review has been completed which included research around missing young people. This identified the push/pull factors for young people who go missing.
- Report from RESH (Relationships, Education and Sexual Health Coordinator) Coordinator in Darlington – overview of prevention work being undertaken in Darlington with children and parents.
- CSE training delivered to a number of settings including Public Health, all school nurses in Darlington, special constables, neighbourhood police teams. Bus and train drivers are to receive train the trainer for CSE. There have also been a number of multi-agency CSE training sessions held. Local approach to CSE bespoke practitioner training completed.
- Development of a CSE E-learning package for dissemination to agencies across Darlington to update on the local approach to tackling CSE. The presentation consolidates the approved procedures, practice guidance, risk matrix and new definition.
- CSE champions- Training has been delivered in schools. There is a CSE champion's network meeting to ensure champions are kept up to date.
- CSE posters circulated to GP surgeries.
- EHE. Problem solving work has been undertaken following discussions around the EHE data within the MESA performance data. There is now a HE monitoring group in place. The Home Secretary has been briefed in respect of the work undertaken in Darlington for EHE and it has been highlighted that every local authority and police force should be doing this. It was felt that there is still more work to be undertaken to identify which schools have increased numbers of EHE and which children have never attended education. This work will be managed by the EHE and updates to be fed into the MESA group.
- ERASE posters updated and re-circulated.
- Young Persons conference was held on 5th July 2017 and is to be an annual event.
- Operation Makesafe
- The origin of CSE referrals has been incorporated within the MESA performance dataset.
- Care home occupancy and notification work has been undertaken and arrangements with Ofsted arrangements improved to manage missing young people from care homes
- Appointment of 2 missing from home co-ordinators

Practice Development and Procedures sub-group

- Revised Child Protection Procedures launched on 1st June.
- Additional procedures launched including Organised and Multiple Abuse procedure and practice guidance, Fabricated and Induced illness practice guidance and CDOP Procedures.
- Ratification of the following procedures and guidance:
 - FGM
 - Dangerous Dogs
 - SUDIC Procedures
 - Private Fostering Guidance
 - Female Genital Mutilation
- Review of the Neglect Strategy including an action plan.
- Safeguarding the Unborn procedures updated to reflect the learning identified from the Pre-birth audit.
- Development Modern Slavery practice guidance (jointly with DSAPB) currently awaiting a Memorandum of Understanding developed jointly with County Durham Safeguarding Adults Inter-Agency Partnership and Durham Constabulary.



Quality Assurance and Performance Management sub-group

- Review of the multi-agency data set against the requirements of the Board identified from the strategic plan.
- Audit programme has been agreed and aligned to the multi-agency data set and board business plan with a focus on neglect as an area of concern.
- All agencies formally asked to relay 2017-18 audit programme to the Q&P sub group. Standard format template developed to assist this process.
- Threshold audit completed.
- Review of Self harm data for Darlington. No areas of concern specifically for Board.
- Multi-Agency safeguarding audit completed including moderation and analysis of the audit findings which were reported to Board in April 2018.
- Healthy Lifestyle Survey - Update from Catherine Shaw following a request from the group previously that they felt there were gaps within the survey (2016) on issues such as emotional wellbeing, sexting etc. Assurance was provided that emotional wellbeing, sexting etc. were incorporated within 2017 survey. Invitations were extended to members of the sub group to attend future stakeholder meetings to develop the 2018 survey.
- Presentation provided on Educational attainment for LAC from Calvin Kipling, Virtual Head Teacher for LAC. Concerns were highlighted in respect of the number of permanent exclusions for looked after children, (which is a national issue). Assurance was provided that this is being addressed by Virtual Head Teacher alongside the re-engagement officer. A self-evaluation good practice tool has been developed for use by schools to support the improvement of standards for LAC. Board endorsed the tool.





Training, Communication and Voice of the User sub-group (joint with DSAPB)

- Workforce stability report presented to Board
- Communications implementation plan agreed and developed
- Review and revision of the Communication and Engagement Strategy
- Review and revision of the Training Charging Policy
- Progression of the e learning package to incorporate PREVENT and CSE training
- Ongoing development of the Safeguarding Boards website and wider circulation of the safeguarding Boards' newsletter to share messages from the Board
- Ongoing review of the remit of the Training, Communication and Voice of the user sub-group

Child Death Overview Panel

- During 2017/2018 there were a total of seven child deaths
- A thematic CDOP review took place and a meeting was held to discuss wider system learning identified from themes in the review.
- An action plan has been developed to consider the future of CDOP NHSE are to lead on this work.

Appendix 3

| 2017/2018 Revenue | | 2017/2018 Expenditure | |
|---|-----------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Darlington Borough Council | £92,384 | Salaries Inc. on costs | £116,105 |
| Darlington Clinical Commissioning Group | £20,805 | Officer Mileage and Travel | £556 |
| Durham Constabulary | £15,473 | Employee Insurance | £1,038 |
| Schools Forum | £10,000 | Hospitality and Room Hire | £3,860 |
| Darlington College | £2,525 | Membership and Subscription | £35 |
| County Durham and Darlington NHS Foundation Trust | £2,525 | Professional Fees | £18,882 |
| Darlington Youth Offending Service | £2,500 | Stationery | £121 |
| Queen Elizabeth 6th Form College | £1,515 | Printing Charges | £1,169 |
| Community Rehabilitation Company | £1,000 | Consultancy Fees | £16,887 |
| National Probation Service | £770 | Mobile phone costs | £673 |
| CAFCASS | £550 | Employee Training | £150 |
| Harrogate and District Foundation Trust | £2000 | Misc. | £8 |
| Course and Training Fees | £7,730 | - | - |
| Refund | £1,500 | - | - |
| Total Revenue | £161,277 | Total Expenditure | £ 159,484 |

Appendix 4

Glossary of Terms

| | |
|----------------|---|
| DBC | Darlington Borough Council |
| DfE | Department for Education |
| DO | Designated Officer |
| CAC | Child Advocacy Centre |
| CAFCASS | Children and Family Court and Advisory and Support Service CAMHS Child Adolescent Mental Health Service |
| CAP | Children's Access Point |
| CCG | Clinical Commissioning Group |
| CDDFT | County Durham and Darlington Foundation Trust |
| CDOP | Child Death Overview Panel |
| ChiMat | Child and Maternal Health Intelligence Network |
| CLA | Children Looked After |
| CME | Children Missing from Education |
| CSP | Community Safety Partnership |
| CSE | Child Sexual Exploitation |
| CYPP | Children and Young People's Plan |
| CQC | Care Quality Commission |
| DfE | Department for Education |
| DSAPB | Safeguarding Adult's Partnership Board |
| DSCB | Darlington Safeguarding Children Board |
| EHE | Elective Home Education |
| ERASE | Educate and Raise Awareness of Sexual Exploitation |
| FGM | Female Genital Mutilation |
| HMIC | Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabularies |
| HR | Human Resources |
| HWB | Health and Wellbeing Board |
| IHA | Initial Health Assessment |
| IPC | Intervene to Protect a Child |
| IRO | Independent Reviewing Officer |
| JSNA | Joint Strategic Needs Assessment |
| JTAI | Joint Thematic Area Inspection |
| LA | Local Authority |
| LAC | Looked After Child |
| LADO | Local Authority Designated Officer |
| LGA | Local Government Association |
| LSCB | Local Safeguarding Children Board |
| MASH | Multi-agency safeguarding hub |
| MEG | Missing and Exploited Group |
| MESA | Missing, Exploited and Sexual Abuse |
| NECA | North East Council for Alcoholism |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| NHSE | National Health Service England |
| NICE | National Institute for Health and Care Excellence |
| NWG | National Working Group |
| NPS | National Probation Service |
| Ofsted | Office for Standards in Education |
| PCVC | Police Crime and Victim Commissioner |
| PMQA | Performance Management and Quality Assurance |
| QA | Quality Assurance |
| SCR | Serious Case Review |
| SMART | Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound |
| TEWV | Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust |

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We have incorporated hyperlinks where possible to take you to additional information and/or further details, if you are not able to access this then please contact us to arrange for the information to be made available.

We would welcome feedback and this can be made to either the DSCB Independent Chair or by contacting the Board's Business Unit on 01325 406450, address and e-mail as above. If you require this report in an alternative format, please contact the Board's Business unit on contacts above.

This report is formally sent to:

- The Chief Executive of the Local Authority
- The Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board
- The Police and Crime Commissioner Durham
- The Chief Executives of all organisations who sit on the Board
- Board member are required to promote and share the report within their own organisations

The report is published on the DSCB website.



The Safeguarding Boards' Business Unit staff
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