



CABINET SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

Tuesday, 13 September 2016 at 10.00 am at the Blaydon Room - Civic Centre

Item	Business
13.	Care, Wellbeing and Learning: Annual Reports and Plans for 2015/16 – Appendices 2 to (Pages 3 - 180) Report of the Interim Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing and Learning

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GATESHEAD
local safeguarding
children board

Gateshead LSCB Annual Report

2015-2016



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1. INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME



Gary Hetherington LSCB Independent Chair 2015-2016 and Councillor Angela Douglas, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Introduction – Councillor Angela Douglas, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

I am pleased to introduce the Gateshead Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Annual Report for 2015-2016.

As the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People for Gateshead Council I hold the statutory responsibility, along with Alison Elliott, Director of Children's Services, to ensure that children at risk of harm receive quality services to protect and support them and their families.

The previous twelve months have seen unprecedented challenges for agencies in Gateshead in terms of resources and there is no doubt that these challenges will continue into 2016-2017 and beyond. However, we continue to see excellent practice and commitment from professionals in Gateshead to keep our children safe. As this report will set out, the Local Authority and the LSCB were inspected by Ofsted in the autumn and this inspection found that children are at the heart of good practice in Gateshead and multi-agency practice was judged to be highly effective overall.

The LSCB holds a key and central role in leading and coordinating the work of agencies in Gateshead who work to keep children and young people safe and Ofsted acknowledged the clear strong commitment from key statutory agencies. As part of ongoing development work and a challenge of its own arrangements, the Board had already identified the areas for improvement noted by Ofsted and work has already taken place to address a number of these areas. The LSCB continues to **lead, challenge and learn** and asks its partners to do the same.

I am confident that the LSCB and its partners will continue to develop in 2016-2017 and continue to strive to improve outcomes for every child in Gateshead, but particularly our most vulnerable. I look forward to being a part of this improvement journey and continuing to support arrangements to safeguard and protect our children over the next 12 months.

Introduction – Alison Elliott, Interim Strategic Director, Care Wellbeing and Learning



This year has seen significant work undertaken by the LSCB within an increasingly challenging environment, not least an Ofsted inspection and the continued austerity across the public sector. The Ofsted judgement of the LSCB, that it requires improvement to be good, reflects the positive contribution of the LSCB to safeguarding children in Gateshead and confirms the areas of improvement that the LSCB had already identified. Partners continue to commit to and participate in the LSCB and it is this partnership that ensures children in Gateshead are safe and supported to thrive.

Next year the LSCB will focus on a number of key strategic areas that reflect the recommendations from Ofsted, but will also focus on specific areas of practice to ensure that the Board has a real positive impact on children's lives.

The Board is grateful for the commitment of three new lay members and as always, is grateful to the Board Business Manager and the Chair for driving forward the agenda and keeping the focus on making a difference to children.

2. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015), every Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is required to produce and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. This report sets out the arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Gateshead and provides an assessment of those arrangements. This report also sets out how we discharge our functions as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015).

2015-2016 has been a busy year for us. As well as “business as usual” we were inspected by Ofsted alongside services to safeguard children in Gateshead Council. Whilst Ofsted were happy that we were fulfilling our statutory responsibilities and had a clear, strong commitment from our partners, they judged that we require improvement to be “good”. They found that a lot of the work that we are doing is done well, and we are moving in the right direction, however there were seven recommendations made to strengthen our performance to make us more effective. We’ve already started work to address these recommendations and have achieved some of them, for example we now have three active lay members on the Board to strengthen our links with the local community (we share those lay members with the Safeguarding Adults Board to help strengthen our links with them too) and we’ve strengthened links with the Jewish community and the Health and Wellbeing Board. We’re also strengthening our oversight of frontline practice by receiving regular updates on single-agency audits undertaken by our partners.

Throughout 2015-2016 we continued to work towards our priorities of **Leadership**, **Challenge** and **Learning**, which are part of our three year business plan and help us to ensure that our work impacts on the children of Gateshead by improving outcomes. We arranged a sub-regional event in Gateshead for 500 practitioners and managers to raise awareness and understanding of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and we undertook a detailed inquiry into CSE to ensure that practice is fit for purpose. We also trained 700 taxi drivers so that they could be more aware of vulnerable passengers and CSE in particular. Ultimately, the more people who are aware of how to spot CSE and how to respond, the better the outcomes are for those children at risk. We reviewed our own arrangements to ensure that we were working as effectively as possible and drew on national best practice to support this. We also continued to develop our Learning and Improvement Framework to make sure that the lessons from frontline practice are used to strengthen practice in the future. We also started our programme of “mini-peer reviews” so that we could learn as a Board and single agencies from each other and encourage challenge. This will help us to work together even more effectively to improve outcomes for children in the borough and really make a difference.

Our sub groups also worked hard in 2015-2016. We led on areas like updating procedures, updating the CSE strategy, learning from specific cases, learning from child deaths in the borough and delivering high quality training to frontline professionals.

We received a number of reports in 2015-2016 which allowed us to understand frontline practice and challenge this practice where necessary. This included reports on Novel Psychoactive Substances (also known as “Legal Highs”), the “Dark Web”, extremism, high risk adolescents and children convicted of sex offences. By challenging practice we are confident that we have made a positive impact on outcomes for children.

We carried out a “section 11 audit” which told us that on the whole, our LSCB partner agencies and schools are meeting their statutory requirements to keep children and young people safe and have really effective arrangements in place that really make a difference to children’s lives. A number of our partners were also inspected in 2015-2016 and the outcomes were, on the whole, really positive. Keeping children safe is at the centre of what many of the agencies in Gateshead do, and generally we do it really well. Inspectors found that our partners are having a positive impact on the lives of children in Gateshead and we’re working together to keep them safe.

Our data tells us that we have had:

- A 5.8% increase in the number of children who are subject to child protection plans at year end compared with the previous year
- A slight decrease in the numbers of children subject to child protection plans under the category of neglect
- Continuing high numbers of unborn babies subject to child protection plans and this ensures timely decision making and support for these children
- A sustained decrease in the number of re-referrals to Children’s Social Care and our figures are lower than the regional and national averages. This suggests that families are more likely to receive the services they need to keep children safe when they first come to the attention of Children’s Social Care
- A 38% increase in the numbers of child protection enquiries (section 47s) completed compared to last year (669 in 2015-2016 compared to 487 last year)
- A 9% increase in Child In Need (CIN) assessments completed (a total figure of 2191 assessments)
- Continuing high numbers of children who are looked after by the local authority and higher than the national average for this indicator
- Higher numbers than expected (for our population size) of children being admitted to hospital for episodes of self-harm and we’re going to continue work around this into the future

Our young people tell us that, on the whole, Gateshead is a safe place to live and go to school. The majority of young people that we’ve spoken to are confident that they would know what to do if they didn’t feel safe at home, at school or in the community and they shared that our schools are good at telling them how to keep themselves safe. Some young people reported that they’re aware of some areas being less safe than others, e.g. there are certain parks that young people avoid due to older teenagers and adults congregating there and using alcohol and drugs, and they don’t always feel safe on buses and metros late at night. We’ll be sharing the detail of this with relevant partners to try and make these areas of Gateshead safer or improve the perception of young people.

We will continue to work hard, both as a partnership and single agencies, in 2016-2017 and build on the work we’ve done over the last 12 months to make sure that we improve outcomes for children in Gateshead. Our vision is that every child should grow up in a loving and secure environment, which is free from abuse, neglect and crime, enabling them to enjoy good health and fulfil their social and educational potential and we are confident that our robust partnership arrangements can support that.

Gateshead LSCB in numbers in 2015-2016

There are 40,100 children living in Gateshead (20% of the total population)	20.5% of our children live in poverty (slightly less than last year but higher than the national average)	8.62% of school age children are from an ethnic minority 6.2% of our children speak a language other than English as their first language	23,848 children attend schools in Gateshead (not including Emmanuel College or the Jewish schools)
4846 children in Gateshead receive free school meals (22% of all children, which is an increase)	68.1 children per 10,000 are currently subject to child protection plans	We've seen a 5.8% increase in the number of CP plans this year – we're still higher than the national and regional averages	61.9% of our child protection plans were due to neglect (169 cases)
During the course of the year, 66 unborn babies were made subject to child protection plans due to concerns about their pregnant mother or family	Children's Social Care received 8943 "contacts" contacts from people worried about a child in Gateshead	We carried out 669 s47s – an increase of 187 from last year 99.7% were completed within timescale	85.8 children per 10,000 are currently looked after by Gateshead Council
99.4% of our LAC reviews and 100% of our Review Child Protection Conferences were held within timescales	87.8% of our schools are judged to be good or outstanding	100% of schools are now signed up to Operation Encompass – a new project to support children who witness domestic abuse at home	Police shared information with schools via Operation Encompass regarding 1,101 children to ensure that appropriate support was in place
90% of our GPs practices were represented at "level 3" child protection training (28 out of 31 practices)	Over 700 taxi drivers attended training delivered by the LSCB and Police on CSE to help them understand how to keep vulnerable passengers safe	There were 928 episodes where a young person from Gateshead was reported missing from home or care to the police. 71% of them were "in care"	The cases of 43 young people were discussed at the LSCB's Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Sub Group (MSET) due to concerns about them
We didn't publish any Serious Case Reviews or initiate any new ones this year. We have looked at a few cases in more detail to try and improve practice though	1151 practitioners attended a LSCB training event – this is an increase on last year	Gateshead's under 18 conceptions have decreased by 40% since 1998	Gateshead College delivered a Counter Extremism and Radicalisation tutorial to 1,795 young people and a British Values tutorial to 1,746 young people

3. GATESHEAD AND GATESHEAD LSCB

3.1 The Borough of Gateshead

Geographically, we are the largest of the five Tyne and Wear metropolitan authorities. We cover an area of 55 square miles including a mix of urban, rural and busy commercial areas. Many of our population live in urban areas where there are areas of industrial decline and high levels of deprivation,



Our population is largely of white British origin. However we do have a large orthodox Jewish community of approximately 4,500 people, including just over 1,000 school age children and 1,500 young people in further education (the Jewish further education colleges in Gateshead play host to students from all over the world). 8.62% of our school age children are recorded as being from an ethnic minority group (up from 7.87% last year) and 6.2% of our school age children speak a language other than English as their first language (also an increase from 5.2% last year).

According to the latest data there are more than 40,100 children under 18 living in Gateshead which accounts for approximately 20% of our overall population of 200,500. The latest child poverty data (2013) shows that 20.5% of our children are classed as living in poverty. This is a decrease from the previous figure and may not fully reflect the current economic climate, but is based on average levels of income. Nationally 18% of children are classed as living in poverty, so Gateshead is higher than the national average, however in the North East overall this is 22.2%. This varies from 16.8% in Northumberland to 31.8% in Middlesbrough. 4846 of our children are in receipt of free school meals (22.3% of the population), which is a slight increase from last year.

Our statutory mainstream school age population in 2015 was 23,848 (not including Emmanuel College and Jewish schools). This is an increase from 23,592 last year and includes 14,674 primary school children, 8,616 attending secondary schools, 469 at special schools and 89 at the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) – a slight decrease in secondary school numbers but an increase in primary school numbers and a significant increase in numbers at the PRU. Of the 74 schools in Gateshead inspected by Ofsted since January 2012, 87.8% of them have been judged as good or outstanding (a slight increase from 86.5% reported last year).

3.2 Gateshead LSCB

LSCBs are multi-agency statutory partnerships established under Section 13 of the Children Act 2004. More information on the role and function of LSCBs can be found on our website www.gateshead.gov.uk/LSCB

We were established in 2005 (having replaced the Gateshead Area Child Protection Committee) to take responsibility for core inter-agency child protection work in the Borough, whilst also embracing the wider safeguarding duties established in the Children Act 2004.

Our vision is that every child should grow up in a loving and secure environment, which is free from abuse, neglect and crime, enabling them to enjoy good health and fulfil their social and educational potential

Our aim is to build upon and strengthen existing partnerships and to engage with the community. In furthering this vision, the LSCB's core objectives and functions are focused on safeguarding children and young people as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015). Safeguarding is a multi-dimensional and fluid interactive process and, as such, the LSCB formulates its strategies to afford as wide an audience as possible a voice in promoting a safer environment for the children and young people of Gateshead.

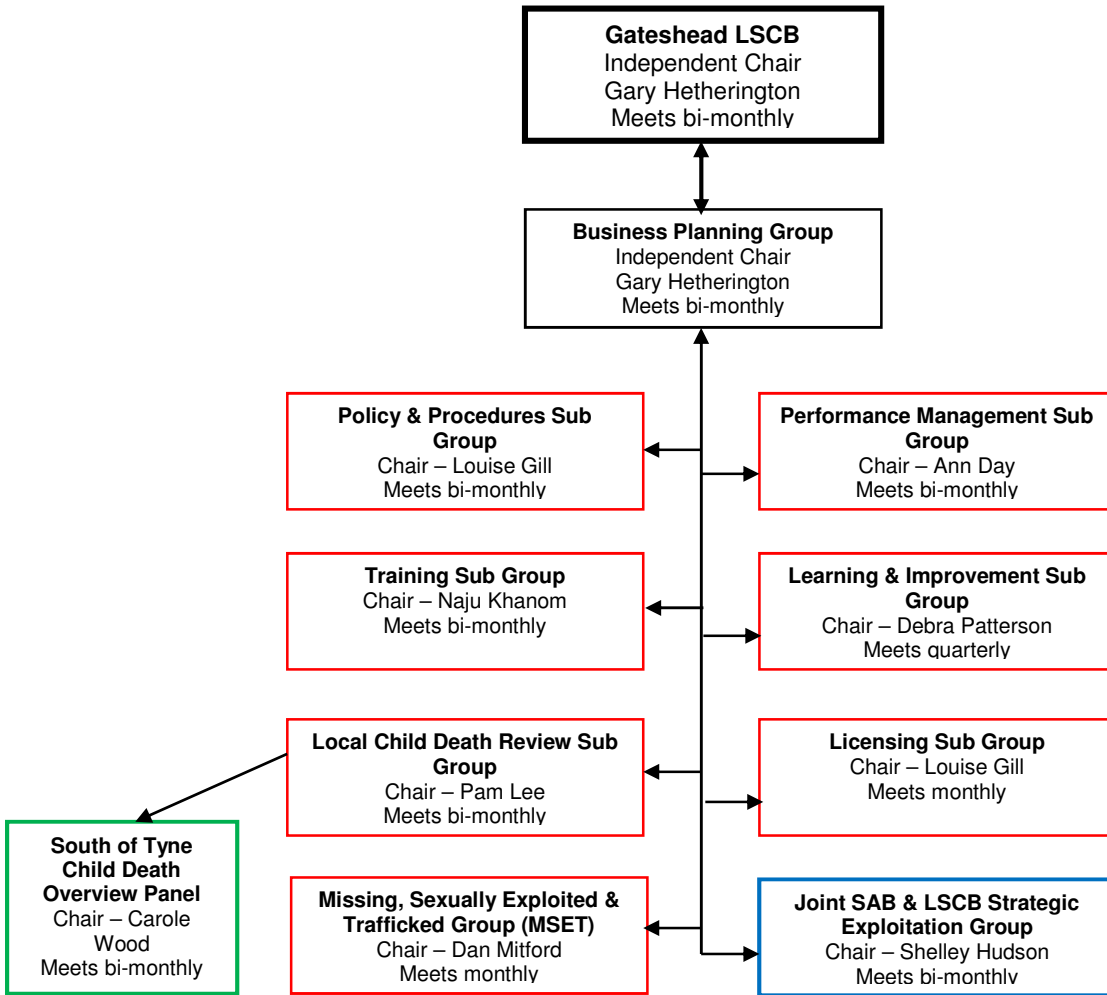
The role of the LSCB is to **lead, challenge** and support **learning** and this is reinforced by our own Business Plan. Gateshead LSCB has a three-year approach to facilitate longer term planning and focus business on the specific role and remit of the Board to ensure that the welfare of children is safeguarded and protected, as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015) and the Children Act 2004.

4. STRUCTURE AND MEMBERSHIP

4.1 Structure

Our full Board meets six times a year and is supported by a Business Planning Group and eight sub groups, one of which is shared with the Safeguarding Adults Board. Each sub group has its own Terms of Reference and work plan and is expected to report to the LSCB three times a year and make a contribution to the annual report.

The following diagram outlines our Board and sub group structure as of 31 March 2016:



4.2 Our membership

We review our membership every year to make sure that the right people are at the right meetings. Our Independent Chair also monitors member attendance, contributions and associated issues.

The following table sets out our membership on 31 March 2016:

Membership of the Board	
Independent Chair	Gary Hetherington
LSCB Business Manager	Louise Gill
Lay Member	Rebecca Dixon
	Mike Jones
	Richard Marshall
Organisation	Representative
Cafcass	Service Manager
Gateshead College	Director of Student Experience
Gateshead Council	Business Manager – Safer Communities
	Cabinet Member for Children & Young People
	Housing Services Manager
	Interim Strategic Director, Care, Wellbeing & Learning
	MASH Business Manager
	Public Health Programme Lead
	Service Director – Children & Families Support
	Service Director – Children's Commissioning - <i>vacant post</i>
	Service Director – Corporate Services and Governance
	Service Director – Learning and Schools
	Service Director – Social Work, Children & Families
	Service Manager – Children's Commissioning
	Service Manager – Early Years & Childcare
Workforce Development Advisor	
Gateshead Health NHS FT (GHNFT)	Designated Doctor – <i>vacant post in 2015-2016</i>
	Director of Nursing
Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board	SAB Business Manager
Jewish Schools representative	Administrator (designated professional)
National Probation Service	Head of National Probation Service South of Tyne
NHS Newcastle Gateshead CCG	Designated Nurse, Safeguarding Children
	Director of Nursing
Northumbria CRC	Director of Offender Management
Northumbria Police	Detective Superintendent – Safeguarding Department
NTW NHS Foundation Trust	Group Medical Director for Specialist Care
Primary School representative	Head Teacher
	Head Teacher
Secondary Schools representative	Head Teacher
Special Schools representative	Head of School,
South Tyneside NHS FT	Director of Nursing and Patient Safety
	Strategic Lead Safer Care
UK Visas and Immigration	Senior Asylum Caseworker

Links are also maintained with NHS England and North East Ambulance Service via the CCG and with Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service

4.3 Our meetings

There are a number of standing agenda items on every LSCB meeting agenda, and these are:

- Members' updates – an opportunity for Board members to provide verbal updates on items impacting on their agencies and partnerships and safeguarding children including organisational change, campaign update, media items and response and inspection updates
- Sub group updates (including regular performance reports and the LSCB data-set)
- Update on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Business Manager and Business Planning Group report

From 2016-2017 onwards we will also review single agency audits at every meeting to strengthen our oversight of partner agency frontline practice.

Some of the issues we discussed at our meetings in 2015-2016 included Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, Children Missing Education, the role of GPs in safeguarding, preventing extremism and NPS ("legal highs"). Appendix 1 of this report contains more detail about our agenda items this year.

We've set our work plan for 2016-2017 and this is monitored at each meeting of the Business Planning Group to make sure we're discussing the most important and relevant issues in terms of keeping children and young people safe in Gateshead.

5. REVIEW OF FINANCES AND RESOURCES

Section 15 of the Children Act 2004 sets out that statutory Board partners may:

- Make payments towards expenditure incurred by, or for the purposes connected with, a LSCB directly, or by contributing to a fund out of which payments may be made
- Provide staff, goods, services, accommodation or other resources for purposes connected with a LSCB.

Cafcass, Gateshead Council, National Probation Service, NHS Newcastle Gateshead CCG, Northumbria CRC and Northumbria Police all made contributions to the LSCB in 2015-2016.

Income (£)	
Cafcass	550
Gateshead Council	66,710*
National Probation Service	250
NHS Newcastle Gateshead CCG	44,023
Northumbria Police	5,000
Northumbria CRC	250
TOTAL	116,783

*The contribution from Gateshead Council includes a £11,430 budget held by Organisational Development to manage the LSCB Multi-Agency Training Programme. This was reported separately previously.

There was a decrease from the 2014-2015 budget (£137,404 in total) and this is due to a reduction in the contribution of Gateshead Council.

In total, £110,120 was spent from the LSCB budget in 2015-2016, with an underspend of £6,663. As previously agreed, this underspend will not be carried forward to 2016-2017 and in real terms represents a slightly smaller contribution from Gateshead Council.

In 2015-2016:

- **£81,992** was spent by the LSCB on salaries and on-costs for the LSCB Business Manager and Admin. Officer
- **£16,243** was spent by the LSCB on fees which included £4,000 on the maintenance of the LSCB Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures, £1,500 to the National Association of Independent Chairs, £500 to the National Working Group (for CSE) and the remainder was payment to the LSCB Independent Chair
- **£11,430** was spent on the LSCB multi-agency child protection training programme for frontline practitioners and **£4,987** was spent on other training

We didn't spend any money on Serious Case Reviews in 2015-2016 and the budget for Child Death Reviews is shared between Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside Councils and not reported on here.

Expenditure (£)	
Salaries and on costs (Business Manager & Admin Assistant)	81,922
Multi-agency training programme	11,430
Chair's fees	10,243
Other LSCB training e.g. CSE conference	4,987
Inter-agency Child Protection Procedures	4,000
Contribution to National Association of Independent Chairs	1,500
Miscellaneous (pool cars, public transport, phone costs etc.)	1,255
Hospitality	801
Printing, stationery, advertising	645
SCR fees	0
TOTAL	110,120

Partners have been asked to confirm contributions for 2016-2017.

6. EFFECTIVENESS OF SAFEGUARDING ARRANGMENTS FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN GATESHEAD - REVIEW OF ACTIVITY IN 2015-2016

6.1 Overview and single agency activity

This section of our annual report sets out how effective services are in Gateshead at keeping children and young people safe and what the impact of our work has been in terms of improving outcomes for children and young people. As set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015), our objectives are to coordinate and ensure the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in the local area. We agreed a new approach for 2014-2017 in a three year Business Plan which was more focused on our specific role and remit in ensuring the welfare of children is safeguarded and protected. Our Business Plan sets out three strategic business priorities: **Leadership**, **Challenge** and **Learning**. Members of the LSCB committed to an approach where the LSCB leads the safeguarding agenda, challenges the work of partner agencies and itself, learns lessons and embeds good practice and is continually influenced by the views of children and young people. We've made progress in

all of these areas to improve safeguarding arrangements and section 6.6 of this report sets out our progress.

Our sub groups have continued to work to their Terms of Reference and work plans and provide regular reports to the Board on their progress. Appendix 5 of this report sets out activity from our sub groups in 2015-2016.

The three priorities of **Leadership, Challenge** and **Learning** extend to both the Board's own work and also that of our partner agencies. Our partners have provided examples and evidence of work where **Leadership, Challenge** and **Learning** has taken place and led to changes in practice and will ultimately improve outcomes. By supporting our partners in this areas we can work together to really make a difference for the children and young people of Gateshead. Appendix 2 of this report provides some examples of progress made by our partners in 2015-2016.

There have been a number of operational developments across our partner agencies in the past 12 months to make services more effective at keeping children safe and improving outcomes. For example, a process is now in place between NTW and Children's Social Care to share information in "real time" so that clinicians have access to the most up to date records and the CCG have carried out a pilot to significantly improve GPs' contribution to CP conferences. These two examples show the impact that improved multi-agency working can have as professionals working with these families are more aware of risks and issues and able to put more effective plans in place. Additional examples can also be found in Appendix 2 of this report.

A number of our partner agencies were inspected in the last twelve months including Gateshead Council, Northumbria Police and some health agencies. On the whole, these inspections were very positive and found effective practice in the borough to keep children safe. Inspectors found effective work to keep children and young people safe from CSE, FGM and Honour Based Violence and joined up working between partners was noted. More detail on these inspections is included in Appendix 2 of this report.

The LSCB was inspected at the same time as the local authority and this is covered in section 6.7 of this report. The full report can be found at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/local-authorities/gateshead>

The following case studies show how our Board partners work within their agencies and together to prioritise safeguarding and improve outcomes for children and young people in the borough and the impact that this can have.

Case study 1:

Family G arrived in Gateshead from the Lebanon as part of the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Person's Resettlement Programme in November 2015. A Refugee Resettlement Officer worked with the family, settling them into their new accommodation, ensuring they had access to health and dentistry as well as information about benefits entitled to them. They also helped them access English courses.

Education Support Workers visited the family and, via an interpreter, explained the education process; gathering information about individual children's education and potential needs, any health issues and generally how they were at school as well as discussing any issues or concerns they might have.

The Education Support Worker then arranged an initial visit to their school(s), facilitating a

meeting with the Head Teacher and staff. Transport was provided. Education Support Service also supported children for the first few weeks into their new school, taking them into school, ensuring they understood bus routes, supporting them in lessons, using iPads to address any language issues. A review meeting was held 6 weeks after they began school to review the process of integration with parents and school. The children have settled well into school and are rapidly improving their English. The family have been welcomed into the school community

Case study 2:

Mr M attended A&E claiming his drink had been spiked and had a 7 year old boy with him who was still wearing his pyjamas at 11am. Mr M was unsteady on his feet and slurring his speech and went to sleep in the waiting room. Meanwhile the child was seen to be wandering unaccompanied round the A&E department by reception staff. Mr M walked out of the department after 10 minutes (without receiving any treatment) and took the child with him and the reception staff reported the incident to the Named Nurse for Safeguarding Children.

Enquiries were made with Children’s Social Care and it transpired that Mr M had recently been released from prison for drug related offences and a social worker was already allocated to the case. The family denied that it was their child in A&E so the social worker attended the hospital to view the CCTV footage and positively identified that it was him wandering round the department whilst his father slept.

The child was spoken to alone by the social worker and he indicated that he wanted to live with his grandmother as both his parents were using drugs. Therefore, as a result of the report made by hospital staff the parents signed consent for the child to live with his grandmother and he moved into a significantly safer environment.

6.2 What do young people say about life in Gateshead in 2015-2016?

Understanding the “voice of the child” is a key mechanism for LSCBs to determine how effective services are at keeping children and young people safe and where resources should be directed to improve impact and outcomes. We’ve done a lot of work this year, both collectively and as single agencies, to find out how safe our young people feel and understand what is important to them.

We had hoped to hold a large engagement event with children and young people, but we didn’t manage to set this up before the end of the financial year and this will be completed early in 2016-2017. However, following the Ofsted inspection (see section 6.4.5) we commissioned some smaller pieces of work with specific groups of young people to help us understand their views.

Group of young people	Views
School councils and student leadership teams	<p>We met with school councils, student leadership teams or equivalent groups from a number of schools in Gateshead in late 2015-2016 and further sessions were held after the Easter break in early 2016-2017. A detailed report is being prepared for Board members of the findings of the work.</p> <p>On the whole, young people told us that Gateshead is a fairly safe place to live and go to school. Some of them told us that some areas were “rough” and they didn’t like going to certain parks because of older young people and adults drinking alcohol there. Some young people were also aware of areas where people use drugs, either because they’d heard that it happened there or they could smell it on them. There were some schools where young people felt safe on buses but not the Metro and other schools where it was the other way round. Some young people told us that they thought that Gateshead must be a safe place to live as they don’t hear much on the news whereas there’s a lot on the news about bad things happening in other places.</p> <p>Young people told us that it’s important to them for parks to feel safer,</p>

	<p>for buses to feel safer, to hear more about road safety (particularly for cyclists) and fire safety but targeted to older children, to know how to be safer after dark, to know more about what terrorism means for Gateshead and for cyberbullies to be stopped.</p> <p>Almost all of the young people told us that they would know what to do and who to speak to if they didn't feel safe or a friend had a problem. Children from every school apart from one told us that they would speak to someone about a friend, even if the friend told them to keep it a secret, and even if they felt guilty about it, as it would keep them safe. The young people from the other school told us they wouldn't be "a grass" and would sort it out themselves</p>
Young Carers	<p>The bulk of this work was carried out in early 2016-2017, however young people from the group shared that they didn't really feel safe in Gateshead (some because of their neighbours) but they mainly knew what to do if they didn't feel safe at home. They shared worries about the lack of street lighting, stranger danger and road safety</p>
Police Cadets	<p>Overall, these young people said that Gateshead was a safe place to live and they knew what to do if they or a friend didn't feel safe. They shared that the police and local authority should carry out more visits to young people to speak about bullying, cyber bullying and internet safety.</p>

We asked all of our partners as part of the Section 11 audit (see section 6.4.1) whether the voice of the child was used to plan the way that services are delivered and on the whole there was a positive response to this. We also had a discussion at our annual development session on learning from the voice of the child to be more effective. Services for young people's mental and emotional health are currently being redesigned and extensive consultation with young people has taken place through the Expanding Minds Improving Lives (EMIL) project. This included working as "young commissioners" and developing a film of their experiences of mental health services so that professionals can understand their views.

As detailed in section 6.3.1, we held a large conference in Gateshead in October 2015 to raise awareness of CSE. Two groups of young people spoke at the event and received some of the best feedback in the whole programme. The Gateshead Police Cadets told us what they think people need to know about CSE and how they think we should be getting messages to young people. The SCARPA Squad (a group of young people who have previously been involved in CSE or at risk of CSE) also showed us a new film that they've produced using real life stories and told us about how professionals can sometimes get things wrong and how they can make things better, which was really powerful. These presentations highlighted to professionals the terrible impact that CSE can have on a young person's life and gave everyone something to think about in terms of their own practice so that we can improve outcomes in Gateshead in the future.

We've recently started using the MOMO App (Mind Of My Own) in Gateshead and our partners are working hard to promote its use to improve the participation of children and young people in services and make sure their voice is heard. This is an award winning app that helps young people express their views more clearly, get more involved in meetings and make better decisions with their social care team. Ultimately this will help us to keep young people safer. It's too soon for the Board to say in detail about what young people are telling us via MOMO about how safe they feel in Gateshead, but we'll be able to look at that in more depth in the next few months. The early feedback is it's a really easy way to capture

the voice of young people in the child protection system and in care and it was also well received by Ofsted in their recent inspection.

6.3 Thematic activity

6.3.1 Sexual exploitation and missing children

We are required to report on numbers of children have been missing from care each year and how we are addressing the issue. However, we also think it is important to include children who go missing from home in this too. Children who go missing from home/care are at an increased risk of being sexually exploited and regular missing episodes are a risk indicator that a child is at risk of sexual exploitation or being exploited. The MSET is a well-established sub group of the LSCB which reviews individual young people where there are concerns about going missing and/or CSE and/or trafficking to try to reduce the risks and improve outcomes in a multi-agency way

- There were a total of 928 occasions in 2015-2016 where a young person from Gateshead was reported missing to the police (this includes episodes where a child was in the care of Gateshead Council but placed outside of the borough). The 928 episodes included 657 episodes (71%) where a child was reported missing from care, the remaining 271 episodes related to a child being reported missing from their family home or school.
- The total figure of 928 represents an increase from 2014-2015 where there were 864 episodes. There was also an increase in the number of missing from care episodes from 571 to 657 and an increase in the proportion of episodes from 66% to 71%.
- The missing from care episodes have increased significantly year on year for the past few years. The total number of episodes fluctuates each month, as does the proportion of episodes relating to missing from care. For example, in May 2015 there were 116 episodes in total and in January 2016 there were 54 and in May 2015 there were 80 episodes of missing from care and in March 2016 there were 35.
- The actual number of episodes relate to a smaller number of individual young people as there were a number of young people who were reported missing more than once. In fact, there was a small cohort of young people who were reported missing from care on a very regular basis, often together, some months, and this in part explains the large increase in episodes. It should also be noted that there was an increase in the number of episodes lasting over 24 hours, and a number of episodes which lasted significantly longer. Processes are in place to ensure that there is regular oversight of these cases.

Northumbria Police introduced a new “absent” category on 25 January 2016 and all “missing” reports will now be classed as either missing or absent. For the purposes of MSET, cases will be considered regardless of whether they are missing or absent and return interviews will also be offered regardless of the police category.

MSET discussed 43 cases in 2015-2016, which is a decrease from 53 in 2013-2014. The decrease is due in part to the revised MSET referral form which means that cases are referred more appropriately with tangible risks set out for the pre-meeting. Of the 43 cases discussed in 2015-2016, 23 were discussed on more than one occasion and some on almost a monthly basis due to the level of risk and frequency of missing episodes not decreasing. In

summer 2015 a MSET Escalation Procedure was introduced to ensure senior oversight of those cases where MSET members had significant concerns and there was no observed decrease in the level of risk. We used the procedure on two occasions in 2015-2016 to ensure that the risks around the young people in question were fully understood and assessed and all relevant and appropriate actions had been considered.

Ofsted judged that multi-agency arrangements to safeguard vulnerable children who go missing from home, care or education or are at risk of CSE are robust and, as Board, we are satisfied that they contribute towards improving outcomes for young people. The MSET was found to have an impact by providing additional scrutiny of individual cases and has also led to more effective support for children and young people. Intelligence sharing was viewed as effective in relation to potential hotspots and the work of MSET in terms of disruption activity and use of harbouring/abduction notices was found to lead to a reduced risk for those children.

When children return from being missing they are offered "independent return interviews" to assess any risks and determine whether they were harmed. In 2015-2016 there were 379 return interviews requested and of those there were 228 occasions where the young person agreed to be spoken to (an increase from 192 requests and 106 interviews last year). Ofsted found this process to be holistic and robust and resulting in preventative actions and targeted support. It was noted that not all actions arising from assessments or MSET translate into children's individual plans and Gateshead Council are taking action to strengthen this.

Cases are now "flagged" within Children's Social Care where there are CSE concerns to allow for additional management oversight and. At the end of 2015-2016 there were 16 cases flagged as being at risk of CSE and there were a total of 14 children who had their cases flagged throughout the year. The impact of this is that practitioners are more aware of who is at risk and what to look out for in order to keep them safer.

We are very clear in Gateshead that safeguarding is everybody's business and CSE and missing children is one such area where we have reinforced this. The LSCB works collaboratively with others around this, for example in summer 2015 the LSCB Business Manager and police colleagues delivered mandatory CSE and vulnerability training to 700 taxi drivers licenced by Gateshead Council as part of the conditions on retaining their licence. Anecdotally this has led to increased awareness and reporting of vulnerable young people to Northumbria Police by taxi drivers which is evidence that this work had an almost instant impact in terms of keeping children safer. Through the work of the Licensing Sub Group, the LSCB Business Manager has also supported reviews of premises licences where there were risks to children, for example stores selling alcohol and so-called "legal highs" to children and this was seen as a significant strength by Ofsted in their recent inspection.

Strategic work on CSE and missing children was led by the Strategic CSE and Trafficking Sub Group and the group implemented a new CSE Strategy in May 2015 and had in place a delivery plan which was carefully monitored. Ofsted judged that the strategy was consistent with revised guidance and the delivery plan was robust. In March 2016 the sub group merged with a working group of the Safeguarding Adults Board to form the joint LSCB & SAB Strategic Exploitation Group (SAB) and this group will lead strategically on sexual exploitation in both children and adults, missing children, human trafficking and modern

slavery. It will allow for closer strategic and operational links between the Board and more effective transition for vulnerable young people into adult services.

As detailed earlier in the report, in October 2015 we hosted a very successful sub-regional conference in Gateshead for 500 frontline practitioners and managers. The event was opened by Vera Baird (PCC for Northumbria), chaired by Sir Paul Ennals (chair of a number of LSCBs) and closed by Chief Constable Steve Ashman. We had a number of speakers who were nationally and internationally recognised, such as Zoe Loderick (a highly regarded psychotherapist specialising in sexual trauma and CSE), and also presentations from local young people and Northumbria police on an ongoing local CSE operation. Feedback from the event was incredibly positive due to the quality of the speakers and the information presented. The event was a key way of the Board raising awareness of CSE and providing practitioners with ways to safeguard and support young people at risk of CSE or being exploited. It also provided us with a key opportunity to **lead, challenge** and support **learning**.



6.3.2 Child deaths

There is a requirement for LSCBs to monitor and oversee the deaths of children resident in their area. Gateshead shares a Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) with Sunderland and South Tyneside. An annual report is produced by the South of Tyne and Wearside CDOP to report on trends and issues and is published on our website. We aim to learn from all deaths with “modifiable features” to help improve outcomes for children in the future where possible.

The LSCB was notified of the deaths of nine children from Gateshead in 2015-2016. Of these deaths five were of children with known life limiting conditions. There were four unexpected deaths; however some of those children also had medical issues. To date, no identifiable patterns or safeguarding concerns have been noted within these deaths.

The local picture reflects the national findings that the majority of children who die do so due to life limiting medical conditions or as a result issues linked to prematurity. The number of unexpected deaths as a result of external factors remains small.

6.3.3 Private fostering

Children and young people who live with adults who are not members of their immediate family are “privately fostered”. This is one of a number of areas that we request an annual update on from the relevant partner agency.

In 2015 the Gateshead Council officer with lead responsibility told us that in 2014-2015 Gateshead Council made three new private fostering notifications to the Department for Education with two new arrangements starting. During the reporting year no arrangements ended. As of October 2015 Gateshead had two children subject to private fostering arrangements (both girls aged 15) and since 2012 the local authority has maintained 100% performance in relation to social work visits every six weeks.

Whilst we challenged whether the actual number of cases was in fact higher than reported, we were assured that Gateshead Council and partners are taking appropriate steps to improve reporting and are appropriately protecting those cases where private fostering arrangements are identified. Private fostering literature was refreshed and re-circulated, however this had little impact on referral numbers. Private fostering was also featured and promoted in Council News and the TV screens in council buildings and social media. A specific question on private fostering is also included in the school transfer forms to help identify arrangements. Board members endorsed the report and agreed that best practice regionally and nationally should be considered in relation to promotional activity.

6.4 Strategic activity

6.4.1 Section 11 audit

Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key organisations to make arrangements to ensure that they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when discharging their functions. We aim to ask our partner agencies to demonstrate their compliance with this on an annual basis via a Section 11 audit.

In 2016 we asked all Board partner agencies, not just statutory partners, and schools (for the first time) to complete the audit and in total there were over 90 responses, which is the highest number we have ever received. Overall, the results were largely very positive and the majority of agencies reported that standards were met and there were no concerns and evidence was provided to support this. More detail on our Section 11 audit is included in Appendix 3 of this report.

6.4.2 Learning and improvement activity

Whilst we haven't published or initiated any Serious Case Reviews (SCRs) in 2015-2016, we have undertaken a number of pieces of work as part of our Learning and Improvement Framework including submitting a Serious Incident Notification (SIN) regarding a teenage girl who was possibly sexually assaulted whilst missing from care. The criteria for a SCR were not met however we were still able to learn some lessons from the case.

A summary of our learning and improvement activity is provided in Appendix 4 of this report.

It is important for us to be able to evidence and understand the impact of our learning and improvement activity. The Baby T SCR (published October 2014) resulted in a number of

changes in practice that were put in place in 2014-2015 and have continued into 2015-2016. These changes will ultimately lead to improved outcomes for children and young people in Gateshead. For example, processes around checks for section 47 enquires were strengthened and ultimately this means that social workers will have access to more detailed information about a family when assessing the level of risk. Awareness raising sessions delivered following the publication of the SCR have also meant that there is a greater level of understanding around bruising in non-mobile babies across agencies.

It is too soon to analyse the impact of the learning and improvement activity of a number of cases listed in Appendix 4 as much of this is ongoing, and other cases have more specific learning rather than that will impact on multi-agency practice. However we are mindful of the need to evidence the impact of our Learning and Improvement Framework and how it leads to improvement in practice and ultimately improves outcomes for children in the borough.

6.4.3 Progress against Business Plan priorities

The Gateshead LSCB Business Plan for 2014-2017 sets the strategic direction for the Board and reinforces the specific role of the LSCB to **lead, challenge** and support **learning**. The year 2 (2015-2016) action plan identifies specific actions to deliver the strategic outcomes.

The following tables provide a summary of progress:

LEADERSHIP	
Jointly arrange a sub-regional CSE event	This was arranged and took place in October 2016 – the outcome of this event was a better awareness and understanding of CSE across our agencies
Arrange engagements event with young people	The planned carousel event has not taken place however smaller pieces of engagement work have been carried out. The outcome of this is a better understanding for Board members around how safe young people feel and what is important to them
Consider a Youth LSCB structure	This was not achieved however it is linked to the wider work around engagement and will be carried forward to 2016-2017
Review the BPG arrangements	Achieved and also reviewed by Ofsted
Review the operation of the Board	Achieved and also reviewed by Ofsted
Develop a LSCB Communications strategy	Work undertaken with communications leads around this and more effective proposal developed

CHALLENGE	
Conduct the next LSCB inquiry to explore CSE and the effectiveness of the response in Gateshead	This was conducted, although the final report was delayed and carried forward to 2016-2017
Implement a programme of mini-peer reviews to demonstrate effective multi-agency working	The programme was developed and the first review took place. The outcome of this will be a better understanding of multi-agency working in Gateshead and improved practice where challenges are raised
Contribute to the OSC Review of child protection	Some Board members contributed to the Board. Due to delays outside of the LSCB the final report was not received by the end of 2015-2016 and carried forward in the work plan

“Receive reports and monitoring on a number of additional challenges identified e.g. CP conference chairs’ reports, GP involvement, police involvement, CAMHS, Novel Psychoactive Substances (“legal highs”)	Reports received and challenged by the Board. The outcome of this is a better understanding by Board members of the relevant issue and also improved areas of practice where we made challenges (e.g. GP participation).
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LEARNING	
Receive an annual report on the voice of the child and build on the messages. Where necessary use new technology and the outcome of engagement events	Information submitted to the LSCB Development Day including information on the new MOMO app being used by Gateshead Council to gather the voice of young people
Continue to develop the Learning & Improvement Framework	Reviewed by the sub group and also as part of the Ofsted inspection
Explore ways to bring the voice of frontline staff into the LSCB	Included in the mini-peer reviews and also to be taken forward further in 2016-2017. Will also be considered as part of the effectiveness framework
Implement and embed the findings and recommendations from CQC/Ofsted/HMIC inspections as they arise and cascade the learning	Ongoing throughout the year – a number of partners were inspected and mostly with very positive results

PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN	
Build on the findings of the Neglect Inquiry by developing and implementing new guidance	New guidance developed, however work is still required to implement it (will carry forward to 2016-2017)
Undertake task & finish work on key areas e.g. high-risk adolescents, care leavers, young people convicted of sex offences" -	Reports received and challenged by the Board. The outcome of this is a better understanding by Board members of the relevant issue and also hopefully improvements in practice where we made challenges
Lead on the local implementation of the national Child Protection -Information Sharing project" -	CP-IS has been subject to national delays but local arrangements are in progress. This will carry forward to 2016-2017. The outcome of this work will be improved information sharing between agencies and this will ultimately impact on children by making them safer as health practitioners will be able to make more informed decisions about risk

PREVENTING HARM	
Review and update the "Thresholds" document	This was delayed within Children’s Social Care, however the existing document was well received by Ofsted
Continue to strengthen links between the LSCB and schools and review the support provided to them	There are now a number of schools represented on the LSBC and links to a number of school-facing partnerships. Work has also been undertaken with school councils and additional training offered to designated teachers. The impact of this is that schools are more aware of the role of the Board and more aware of relevant issues such as CSE which will ultimately help them to keep children safer

Review approaches to extremism, cyber-crime and other forms of exploitation	Reports received and challenged by the Board. The outcome of this is a better understanding by Board members of the relevant issue and also hopefully improvements in practice where we made challenges
Review approaches to other areas of wellbeing in childhood e.g. healthy weight	Work undertaken by Public Health presented to the Board

The action plan for 2016-2017 has been developed and should be read alongside this annual report. Progress against the actions will be reviewed at every meeting of the Board and Business Planning Group.

1.4.5 Ofsted inspection of the LSCB

As previously stated in this report, Gateshead LSCB was subject to a four week inspection in late 2015 alongside the inspection of Gateshead Council under section 15A of the Children Act 2004. The outcome of the inspection was published in March 2016 and Ofsted found that we require improvement to be good.

Inspectors were satisfied that the LSCB fulfils its statutory responsibilities as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2015)* and there is a clear strong commitment from key statutory agencies. However gaps were noted in membership, activities and monitoring of frontline practice. The report comments that much of the work that the LSCB undertakes it does well and some, very well. During the inspection the lead inspector for the LSCB shared that that the Board was moving towards being good and expressed confidence that steps were being taken to move in this direction. The lead inspector felt that the Board's own self-assessment suggested that improvement was required, but acknowledged that the Board was ambitious and keen to continue to improve and build on previous feedback. It was acknowledged that, although the LSCB requires improvement, the Board is a long way from being inadequate.

Ofsted made seven recommendations to the LSCB, most of which related to areas that we had already identified as part of our ongoing self-assessment:

RECOMMENDATION	
1	Ensure that the LSCB engages more effectively with the community it serves, including learning from the participation and testimony of children and young people, increased engagement with faith and ethnic minority groups, and timely recruitment of lay members
2	Develop appropriate pathways to increase LSCB contribution to and influence on the work of the Health and Wellbeing Board to ensure the experiences of children and young people are given appropriate consideration in all activity
3	Ensure that training is sufficient to meet demand and is informed by a training needs analysis that includes analysis of impact on practice over time and the difference it has made to outcomes for children
4	Ensure that agencies report the outcomes of single-agency auditing activity to the LSCB to increase its oversight of practice
5	Review the multi-agency data set used by the Board to ensure that it meets LSCB priorities and includes all relevant activity that impacts on frontline practice, including workforce information
6	Develop robust mechanisms for measuring the LSCB's effectiveness as part of a performance management framework
7	Ensure that the LSCB annual report provides a clear account of the activity of the LSCB and its strengths and areas for improvement that is easily understood by a lay member

The inspection also noted that attendance at Board meetings is variable, including key decision makers in statutory partner agencies

A number of positive areas were identified by Ofsted:

<p>The LSCB exerts its challenge function appropriately, with some examples of challenge to partners resulting in improved engagement with safeguarding</p>	<p>The LSCB has taken authoritative action to strengthen arrangements for section 11 audits and has introduced a peer review process to further assure the effectiveness of policies and procedures on the ground</p>	<p>Good collaborative working relationships between sub groups have resulted in a whole systems approach to safeguarding, including Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and extremism.</p>
<p>The LSCB has a comprehensive and robust business plan and plans are well aligned to other strategic plans such as the Children's Trust and Health and Wellbeing Board</p>	<p>The Board's auditing activity is used to improve practice</p>	<p>The sub groups are appropriately aligned to the LSCB's statutory responsibilities and priorities</p>
<p>The LSCB has a comprehensive local learning and improvement framework and proactive work was demonstrated following the most recent Serious Case Review</p>	<p>Work around CSE is strong and robust. There is collaborative working and a holistic, whole systems approach to CSE including a robust delivery plan and training sessions with 2,500 young people and 700 taxi drivers.</p>	<p>The LSCB ensures that policies and procedures are updated regularly with clear links to detailed guidance</p>
<p>A proactive approach was taken to raising awareness on Female Genital Mutilation</p>	<p>The LSCB can evidence clear improvements in practice as a result of some training, for example work with GPs</p>	<p>LSCB members express confidence in the Independent Chair, who is highly skilled and knowledgeable. The chair is supported by an experienced LSCB Business Manager who is pivotal to the smooth functioning of the LSCB</p>

Two key pieces of work undertaken by the LSCB Business Manager (the sub regional CSE conference and work around licensing) were also identified as good practice by Ofsted in their overarching report.

Following receipt of the draft report, an Ofsted improvement plan was put in place and this is regularly monitored by the Business Planning Group, the full Board and other groups such as Gateshead Council Care Wellbeing and Learning Group Management Team. Progress is being made in all areas and a number of the recommendations were achieved by the end of 2015-2016. The remaining actions will be completed in early 2016-2017.

Three lay members have now been recruited (jointly with the SAB)

Work is being progressed with the Diversity Forum to identify further community representation

A representative from the Jewish community has been identified to strengthen links between the Board and Jewish schools

A formal pathway has been developed between the LSCB and HWB to increase contribution and influence

Single agency auditing has now been built into our workplan to strengthen oversight of frontline practice

National best practice has been explored to develop a performance and effectiveness framework for the LSCB

National best practice has been explored and used to review and strengthen the LSCB dataset

6.5 Data and performance information

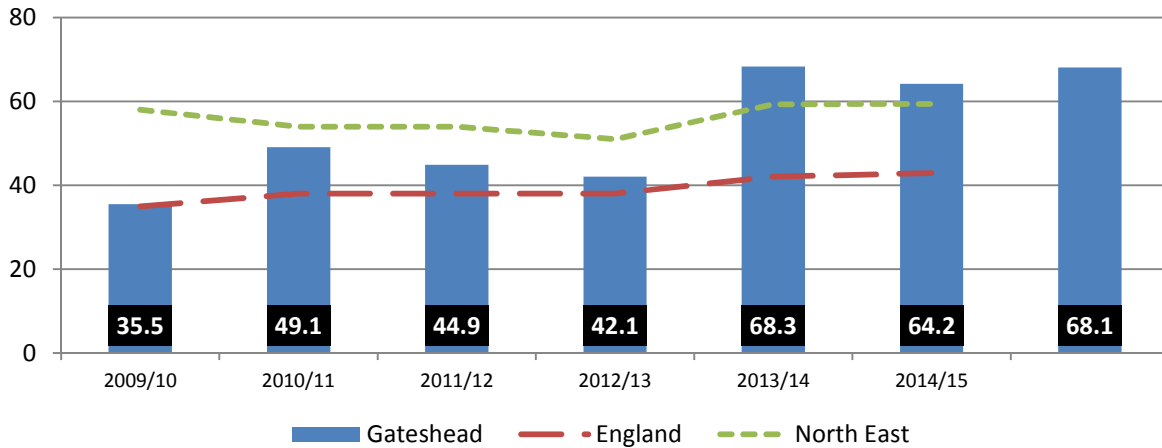
Key performance indicators relating to safeguarding, child protection and early help are monitored by the LSCB Performance Management Sub Group and reported to the Board on a quarterly basis. This enables us to challenge appropriately and satisfy ourselves in relation to the effectiveness of services being delivered in the borough to support children and young people and ensure their safety and wellbeing. In addition, our partner agencies individually monitor their performance indicators and information relating to the welfare of children in Gateshead.

There were 394 Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) held in 2015-2016 of which 338 (85.7%) resulted in the child being made subject to a CP plan. This indicates that the right cases are going to ICPC and that there is multi-agency agreement on the best way to progress these cases.

The numbers of children becoming the subject of CP plans increased during the year and at the year-end there were 273 children subject to a plan. This represents 68.1 children per 10,000 of the population and therefore we remain higher than the national average (42.9 per 10k), the regional average (59.5 per 10k) and our statistical neighbour average rate (57 per 10k) based on the 2014-2015 CIN Census figures.

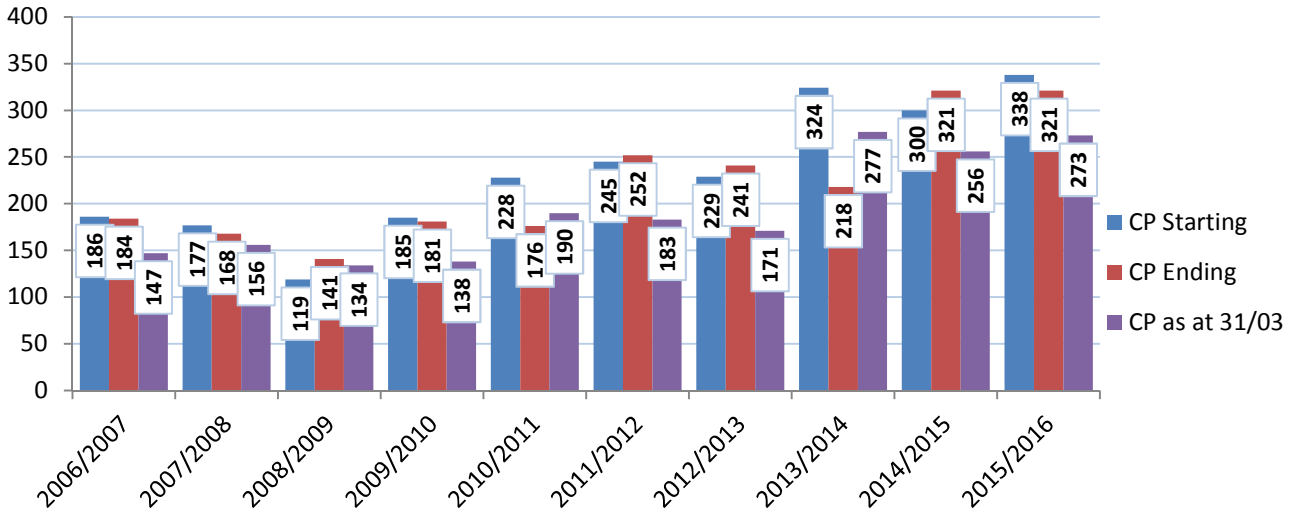
The following graph tracks the changes in our CP plan figures over the past few years and compares them to national and regional averages.

Child Protection Plan numbers per 10,000 at year end



The graph below provides additional trend information in relation to CP plans started, ended and opened as at 31 March 2016. There have been significant rises in child protection numbers over the last 3 years, with this year seeing the largest number of children requiring statutory protection arrangements in 10 years. This increase corresponds with improved practices within Children’s Social Care. As a Board we keep a watching brief on the figures and we are reassured that the children who are subject to CP plans have been made so appropriately.

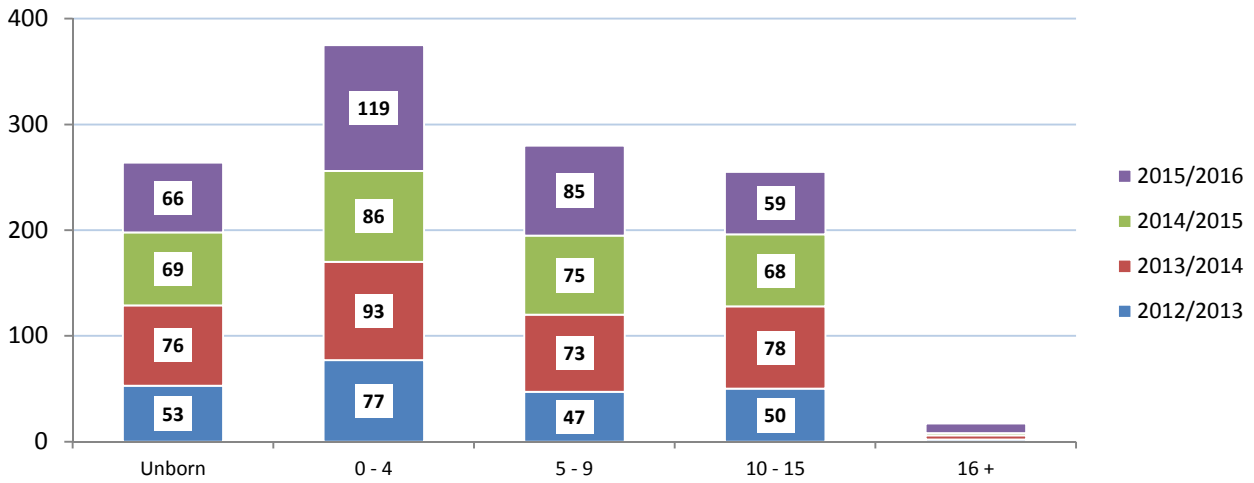
Child Protection Numbers



The following graph shows the significant increase in the proportion of children under the age of 5 who have become subject to a CP plan this year compared with previous years. This is in line with Gateshead’s priority of intervening as early as possible in a child’s life in order to affect positive change. We continue to have high numbers of unborn children subject to CP plans in Gateshead, with 66 in 2015-2016 (20% of the total). This approach was endorsed by Ofsted who initially queried why these figures were amongst the highest in the country but concluded “*this proactive approach ensures that focused multi-agency work*

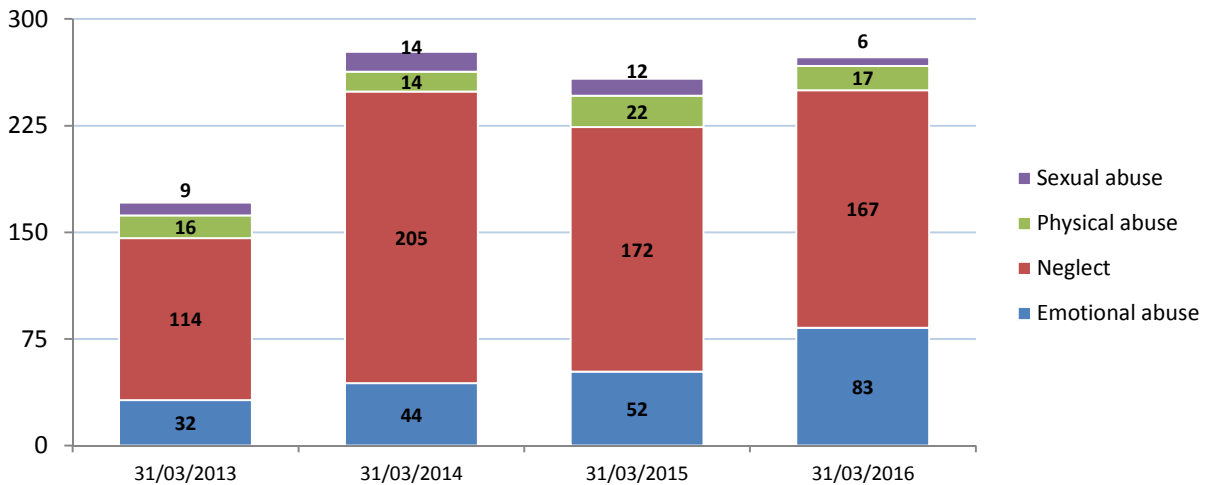
starts as soon as professionals identify concerns. Protective action commences and continues before and immediately after birth”.

Age of Children when placed on a Child Protection Plan



We continue to see that neglect remains the most common reason for a child in Gateshead being made subject to a CP plan. At year end 61.9% of all CP plans were under the category of neglect, which is a slight decrease from the end of the previous year when 66.7% of plans were due to neglect. We have also seen some movement in the category of emotional abuse, with an increase from 20.2% of plans at March 2015 to 29.7% of plans at March 2016.

Child Protection Category at Year End

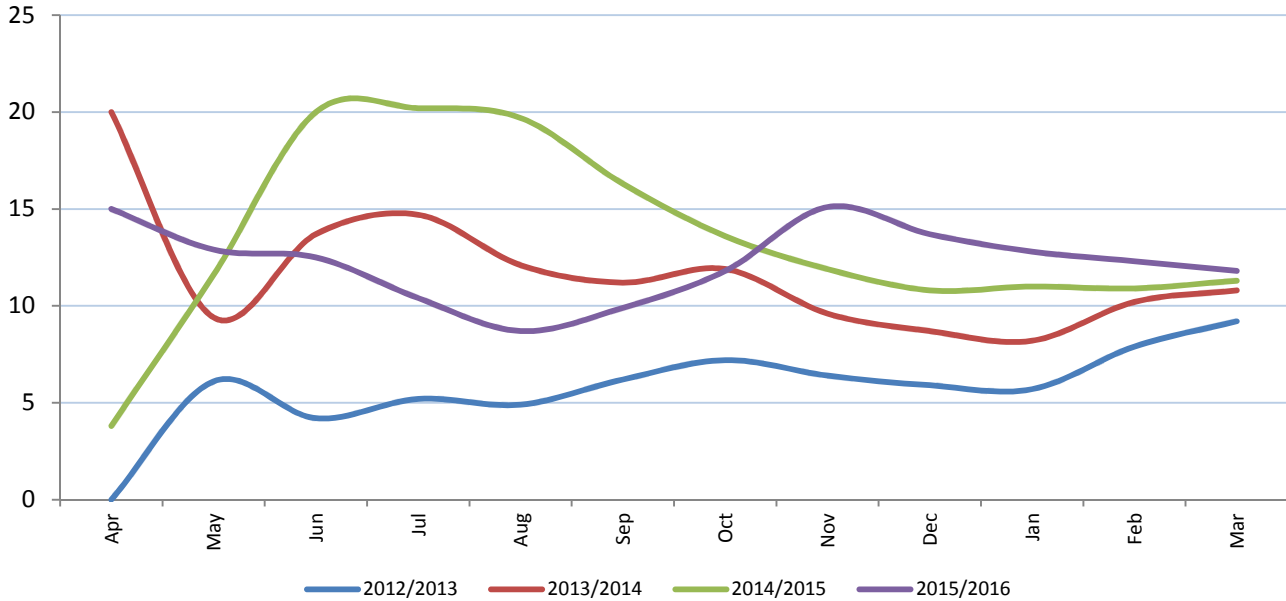


Our social workers visit children who are subject to a CP plan regularly and the service aims to ensure that children are seen at least every 3 weeks, the impact of this is that decisions about a case are made based on current risks and issues. At the end of 2015-2016 there were 273 children subject to a CP plan and of this cohort (excluding unborn babies) 222 had their latest child protection visit held within 3 weeks (87%).

During 2015-2016, 338 children were made subject to CP plans and 40 of them (11.8%) were subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time. Six of these children were

subject to a second or subsequent plan within 2 years of their previous plan ending. This is a very slight increase from last year when 34 of 300 (11.4%) children became subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time, but compares favourably with national (16.6%), regional (14%) and statistical neighbours (15.7%), based on data from the 2014-2015 CIN Census. Again, these low numbers suggest that there are robust practices in Gateshead and appropriate levels of support.

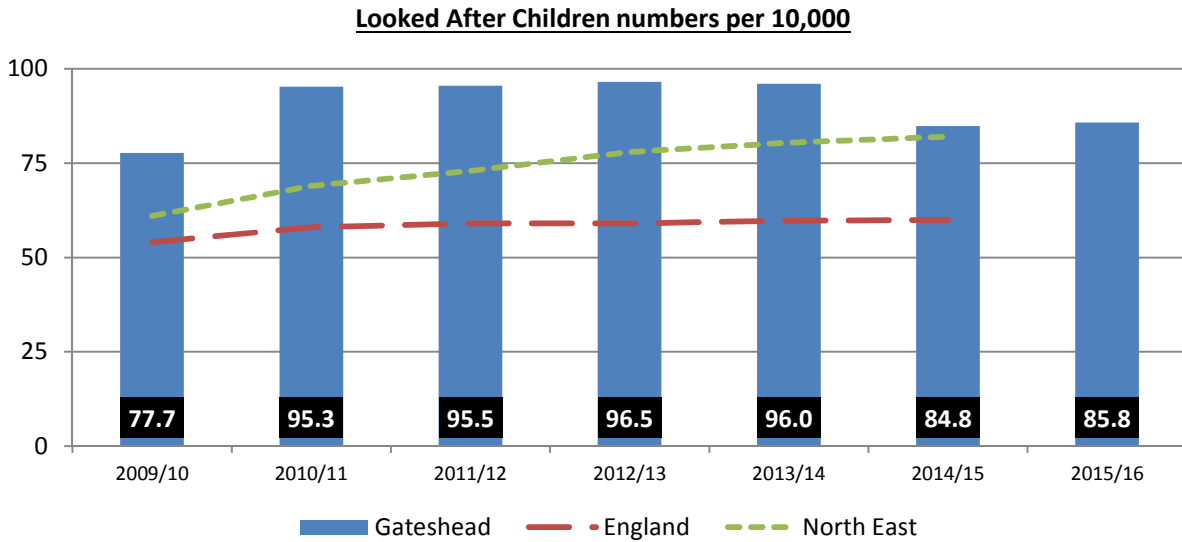
Performance Indicator: % children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time



Gateshead Council's Referral & Assessment Team received 8,943 "contacts" in 2015-2016, which includes contacts made by statutory partner agencies such as the police, health and education, as well as from members of the public. Of these 8,943 contacts, 2,080 progressed to referrals and 1,937 resulted in comprehensive Child In Need (CIN) assessments. This shows an 18.7% in referrals, although re-referrals remain low at 12.7%. This is lower than our re-referral rate in the previous year (16.2%) and also the England (24%) and North East (22.3%) averages. This suggests that a greater proportion of children and young people who require support are receiving this in a timely way once they come to the attention of Children's Social Care and ultimately this leads to improved outcomes for families.

There were a total of 2,191 CIN assessments completed in 2015-2016 and this includes a number which were not carried out as the result of a referral but were part of ongoing work with a family. 92.9% of CIN assessments (2,031) were completed within required timescales and this continues to represent strong performance in this area. This represents a 9.9% increase on the previous year when there were 1,993 CIN assessments completed and 1,946 (97.6%) within 45 working days. Regionally, 84.9% of CIN assessments are completed within 45 days and nationally this figure stands at 81.5%. Our statistical neighbours average at 80.9% (based on the 2014-2015 CIN Census) and therefore our performance is significantly higher indicates that our families in need are receiving timely support and intervention.

On 31 March 2016 there were 344 children who were looked after by Gateshead Council and this represents 85.8 per 10,000 of our population and is similar to the previous year (340 children, 84.8 per 10k). We continue to have higher numbers of Looked After Children compared with the regional rate of 82 per 10k and our statistical neighbours' rate of 83.3 per 10k. Our figures are also significantly higher than the national rate of 60 per 10k (based on SSSA903 reports for 2014-2015).



In terms of earlier intervention work, in the last 12 months we have seen a significant rise in the number of new Common Assessments being undertaken, rising from 494 in the previous year to 988 in 2015-2016. There are currently 1165 active Teams around the Family (TAFs), which provides a more accurate representation of the multi-agency work being carried out in Gateshead. These figures represent an increase in the number of families being supported through our multi-agency approach to early intervention. The CAF/TAF approach has been increasingly impacted on by our approach through the FamiliesGateshead programme (our local version of the Troubled Families programme). A total of 1054 families have been allocated and have started their intervention under phase 2 of the programme.

During 2015-2016 Northumbria Police recorded 4,476 incidents of domestic abuse in Gateshead and 1,948 of these incidents involved children, which is an increase of 91 incidents from the previous year. 1,122 of the incidents involved repeat victims and 1,156 of the victims were classed as high or medium risk at the point of the initial assessment. 76.7% of victims of recorded domestic abuse in Gateshead in 2015-2016 were female.

Operation Encompass is a police-led initiative established to share information with schools in order to support children following a domestic abuse incident. There were 529 separate domestic abuse incidents report from April 2015 to 4 January 2016 of which a total of 1185 children of school age were involved. The average age of the child involved was 9 years and 172 incidents were open or opened to Children's Social Care, of which 132 repeat incidents were recorded. There were 58 incidents which were both repeat incidents and open to Children's Social Care and 73% of incidents involved households where two children reside.

Further follow-up support is also in place for the young people affected and information is fed into TAF meetings. Issues are discussed with the child, where appropriate and more covert actions such as monitoring behaviour, attendance and wellbeing are carried out. 100% of schools in Gateshead are now signed up to Operation Encompass and the success of the initiative has been recognised. Northumbria Police are now looking to roll the model out to other local authority areas in the region. This initiative is an excellent example of the impact that multi-agency work can have on young people as it has led to improved information sharing and improved support for young people where domestic abuse is an issue at home. Previously schools may not have been aware of the incidents and therefore not have been as alert to changes in behaviour or presentation or able to proactively support these young people.

Data in relation to Youth Justice services in Gateshead continues to be positive. The most recent data (October 2014-September 2015) for first time entrants (FTEs) into the system shows a total of 47 FTEs, which is a rate of 276 per 100,000 of 10-17 year olds and is within target. This also shows a reduction in FTEs and this continued reduction is being achieved through the development and expansion of the current YOT Prevention Programme, work with schools, the new Child to Adult Violence programme and also work on pre-pubescent sexualised behaviour that had been identified as a trend in current caseloads. The YOT continues to identify children and young people on the cusp of offending or involved in anti-social behaviour.

The latest hospital data available for "alcohol specific admissions" for under 18s covers the period of 2012-2013 to 2014-2015 and at 54.7 per 100,000 this is a 6.97% reduction from the previous reporting period of 58.8 per 100k. The admission rate has continued on a downward trend over the past four periods of data collection; despite this we still have significantly higher rates than the England rate of 36.6 per 100k. However, in the North East region we have the 4th lowest admission rate and slightly less than the regional average of 60.4 per 100k. The highest admission rate in the North East is Sunderland at 92.9 per 100k, which is also the highest rate in England.

The most recent teenage pregnancy data is available up until the end of 2014 and shows 37.7 under 18 conceptions per 1,000. This data shows a 18.4% increase from the rate in 2013 of 29.3 per 1,000. In real terms this means that from 2013-2014 there was increase 16 under 18 conceptions from 103 in 2013 to 119 in 2014. Our teenage pregnancy rate is now the second highest of the five Tyne and Wear authorities with the lowest being North Tyneside at 22.9 and the highest being Sunderland at 35.3 per 1,000. We are also higher than the overall England rate of 22.8 conceptions per 1,000. The current rate of under 18 conceptions is at the highest level over the last four periods of data collection and this follows a time in 2013 when it was at its lowest since the availability of the data. The data continues to be monitored by our partners who are working together to develop a Sexual Health Strategy to reflect the joint vision for Gateshead in improving sexual health outcomes.

APPENDIX 1 – Our meetings

Meeting	Key agenda items					
May 2015	LSCB Budget	Prevent Duty	Police MFH Co-ordinators	LSCB Business Plan 2015-2016		
July 2015	LADO report	IRO annual report	SCU annual safeguarding report	Children's Trust Board annual report		
	Families Gateshead Annual Report	SAB Annual Report & Annual Plan	Community Safety Plan	British Transport Police & safeguarding		
	CP-IS	OSC review of child protection	MSET escalation process	"The Dark Web"		
September 2015	Foetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder and safeguarding implications	Update on the role of GPs in safeguarding	Cedars Pre-Departure Facility and an overview of the Home Office Returns Process	Savile Inquiry action plan		
	Outcome of OSC review of domestic abuse	Revised Neglect Guidance	GP attendance at CP conferences	Update on CSE Inquiry		
November 2015	Operation Encompass	CQC inspection update	Report on performance issues with CP conference chairs' reports	Private Fostering annual report		
	STFT – revision of safeguarding structures	Mini peer reviews – process and first review	Gateshead Council Budget Consultation	Introduction of the "absent" category		
January 2016	CDOP annual report 2014-2015	MAPPA annual report	Elective Home Education Strategy	Business Plan Focus Area – Counter Terrorism and Preventing Extremism		
	Business Plan Focus Area – Care leavers	Findings of CQC inspection of STFT	Evidence of positive outcomes and learning between GPs and children and families	Initial findings of the Ofsted inspection of Gateshead Council and LSCB		
March 2016	Children Missing Education annual report	Gateshead GP report project	Gateshead College – Journey to outstanding	Business Plan Focus Area – homelessness		
	Business Plan Focus Area – cyber crime	Business Plan Focus Area – Wellbeing in childhood, healthy weight and healthy schools	Business Plan Focus Area – High risk adolescents (permanent exclusions)	Business Plan Focus Area – NPS ("legal highs")		

APPENDIX 2 – Partner agency progress in 2015-2016

Key operational developments
NTW now has process in place with Children's Social Care to has enabled health care records to be updated in "real time" with details of CP plans ensuring any clinicians working with the family are aware of these concerns
Housing Services/The Gateshead Housing Company provide proactive support via the Care Leavers' Accommodation Support Panel. The aim of this work is increase opportunities to succeed. Further work is being done to support young offenders to safeguard and meet their needs
NTW Safeguarding and Public Protection policies have been externally audited and have been given assurance that they are fit for purpose. Senior Managers have received training on learning lessons from Savile and ensured and actions required from recommendations for NHS trusts are completed.
NHS Newcastle Gateshead CCG Safeguarding Team secured funding for a pilot in 2015-2016 to improve GP involvement in the child protection process, particularly CP conferences. The pilot involved seven practices and was a great success and the response rate for GP reports to CP conferences increased from 24% to 71%. There are now plans to roll this work out to more practices
GHNFT has now a Designated Doctor who will start in April 2016. The Named Midwife has also been allocated specific time to undertake safeguarding work. The Trust also appointed another safeguarding administrator to support safeguarding work in Maternity Services generated by the high numbers of unborn babies subject to CP plans. This is evidence of the Trust's commitment to ensuring there are sufficient resources available to the Safeguarding Team to provide a robust service.
Gateshead received 53 Syrian refugees in 2015, 17 of which were children/young people of school age and a further 60 individuals (21 children) will be received in May 2016. Prior to the refugees arriving significant joint work was undertaken to ensure that appropriate arrangements were made and support was in place. The first cohort of children are now attending education and are settling in well, one child (age 13) had never been to school until he moved to Gateshead so the impact of this collaborative work on his life will be huge
The Complex Pupils Meeting is a multi-agency meeting to ensure that managers across agencies are aware of some of our most vulnerable young people who are not accessing full time education and ensure that services are joined up to support them moving towards full time provision. The meetings provide a coordinated approach and recognise that a holistic approach is needed to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children and young people

Progress in relation to the LSCB's priorities:

LEADERSHIP		
Two College staff members requested and received permission from the Home Office to deliver Wrap3 training to other staff	Within the local authority a Service Director and Service Manager commissioned a management review to examine issues of underachieving performance and develop solutions	The LA Performance Clinic is a forum for managers to understand data, performance and QA systems. The information shared is used by managers to ensure that they lead teams effectively and ensure that children are safeguarded
One health partner made the decision to provide CSE training to all staff in the service over a 12 month period	The Practice Advisory Group play a role in supporting practice improvement and professional development	The service has ensured that training available to the childcare sector is updated to reflect the role of LADO and Prevent
CCG safeguarding staff led the comprehensive action plan and recommendations following the recent CQC inspection – 95% of the actions have been completed	Review of the Safeguarding Service undertaken by one health partner and led to a change of roles and responsibilities to enable a more focused approach	Health partners were involved in an investigation relating to Jimmy Savile which required strong leadership and close working with DoH, police and witnesses

LA managers at all levels were recognised by Ofsted to be good leaders and worked well with partner agencies, especially with police re CSE	Within social care and education a Complex Pupils multi-agency meeting was developed to improve engagement of complex pupils in education	Development of a multi-agency forum in relation to electively home educated children has led to improved discussion around their needs
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CHALLENGE		
A practice development tool has been introduced to improve risk assessment and management. Cases are assessed using the tool and any issues are challenged with practitioners and their managers. This is a means of reflective discussion around judgement and risk	The Performance and QA Framework has been used to improve outcomes for children as performance information was used more effectively to highlight evidence of issues internally and within partner agencies and challenge them	Internal challenge of practice takes place on a daily basis, however a specific example is the review of a case within the service which was presented to the LSCB Learning & Improvement Sub Group and a subsequent review and challenge of practice
The Safeguarding and Public Protection Team routinely challenge operational services within the organisation in respect of attending ICPCs and providing reports	Delivered Counter Extremism tutorials to students aged 16-19 years and challenged their conceptions of radicalisation and extremism	The Safeguarding Policy has been revised and inspectors support schools by reviewing safeguarding arrangements, There has been a change in remit to increase the focus onto the most vulnerable groups of children and young people
Designated staff have challenged the contractual arrangements for safeguarding children to ensure that they are robust	Managers and practitioners regularly challenge other agencies at the MSET	Challenge to staff is evident in a supervision audit and an action plan is in place to improve safeguarding supervision
Named professionals have challenged professionals within adult-facing departments to consider the needs of children in the family when an adult attends with a high risk presentation	Managers within the service have challenged the management of a case by Children's Social Care and escalated issues that were not dealt with initially	Concerns of Trust staff were escalated to managers within another local authority (also covered by the Trust) and a different course of action was then taken

LEARNING		
A recent management review enabled the unit to ensure effectiveness and learn from performance information to ensure statutory requirements are met	Issues raised from a complaint about removing children from their parents in an emergency has led to a change in practice and information provided to parents	The CSE training provided has increased the number of safeguarding concerns raised about children who may be being exploited
Audits of casework demonstrated that the voice of the child was not reflected in recording of support plans etc. This has been addressed in staff team training and via individual supervision	The staff attended the LSCB CSE conference and applied the knowledge to their work. They have also attended other training events e.g. Prevent, DV, SCRs etc. and applied the learning to practice	The learning from SCRs locally and nationally has been implemented and led to improved systems and processes. Best practice has also been shared following CQC inspection of other agencies
There have been several training sessions delivered internally regarding FGM and, as a result, the number of	Learning is demonstrated through supervision and training. The incident reporting system is monitored to	All staff have been trained on "Promoting British Values and Equality & Diversity" to meet the requirements of the Prevent

reported cases has increased considerably	understand safeguarding issues and challenges to frontline staff and this is used to inform training and policy work	Duty
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Inspections

Gateshead Council Children's Social Care was inspected by Ofsted in 2015-2016 and services were judged to be "good". This is a key indicator of the effectiveness of safeguarding services in the borough. Ofsted found that "children are at the heart of good practice" in Gateshead. Leaders, managers and workers were judged to be highly effective and very good practice was seen across a number of areas. Children, young people and their families were found to be receiving the right support at the right time and children in need of protection are identified early. Ofsted judged that there is a highly effective multi-agency approach to safeguarding and managing risk across the council and wider partnership and found the response to CSE and missing children particularly strong. Social workers were found to be effectively supervised and therefore able to complete good quality assessments. It was noted, however that plans are not consistently outcome focussed and progress is not always monitored/measured, therefore work is underway to improve this area

In May 2015, STFT received an unannounced CQC inspection of hospital and community services and safeguarding children was identified by inspectors as having good partnership working arrangements, policies and supervision in place to support staff. Inspectors specifically commented upon the joined up working between health visitors and GPs and staff access to the Safeguarding Team. A paper was taken to the LSCB in January 2016

Nine GP practices in Gateshead were inspected by the CCG and eight were rated as "good" for the care of families, children and young people. One practice was rated as "outstanding". Appropriate systems were in place all practices to identify children at risk and immunisation rates were in line with local average. Good examples of joint working with midwives and health visitors. The practice rated as outstanding was seen to have particularly strong relationships with other professionals and also had robust arrangements such as regular safeguarding meetings and a vulnerable child protocol. All of the practices were rated as "good" for the care of vulnerable patients. Practice staff demonstrated that they could recognise signs of abuse in vulnerable adults and children and were aware of their responsibilities and how to raise concerns.

GHNFT was inspected by the CQC in September 2015. The overall rating of the hospital was "good" with services for children and young people also being rated as "good" and maternity and gynaecology services being rated as "outstanding". In terms of providing a safe service the Trust was rated as "good" and rated as "outstanding" for providing a caring service. Inspectors noted that staff within the Emergency and Children's Departments knew how to escalate safeguarding concerns, were able to access appropriate guidance and understood their roles and responsibilities. As a result of robust safeguarding training staff were found to be able to recognise risk factors of FGM and CSE and processes were in place to support inter-agency work and information sharing.

There were two inspections of Northumbria Police by HMIC in 2015-2016. One inspection focussed on vulnerability and the force was judged to be "good". Positive partnership working was identified, particularly around domestic abuse and missing children. The inspection found that the force provides a good response to children who go missing and is well prepared to tackle CSE. The other inspection focused on honour based violence (HBV), FGM and forced marriage and Northumbria was one of only three forces nationally to receive a positive inspection in this area. Northumbria Police is prepared across all areas to protect people from harm from HBV. The force annual assessment for effectiveness found that Northumbria Police is good at keeping people safe. The force was judged to be good in terms of being effective and efficient at keeping people safe and to require improvement in terms of how legitimate the force is at keeping people safe and reducing crime

There have been relatively few Ofsted inspections of schools in the past academic year in Gateshead. Four primary schools were inspected and three were judged to be good or outstanding. Two secondary academies were inspected and received "requires improvement" grades for their overall effectiveness.

It should be noted that all three schools judged by Ofsted to require improvement overall received "good" judgements for the personal development, welfare and behaviour aspect of their work. In addition, all schools were judged by inspectors to have effective safeguarding practices.

APPENDIX 3 – Section 11 audit

Section 11 audit

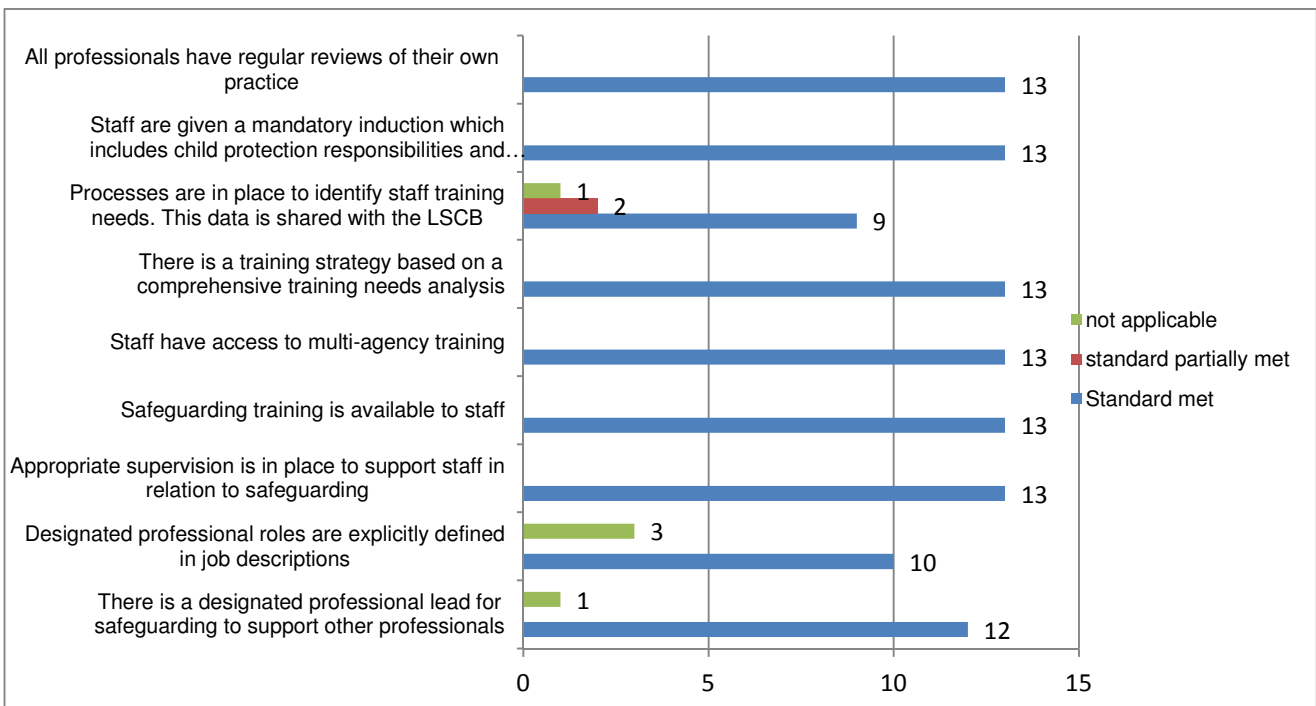
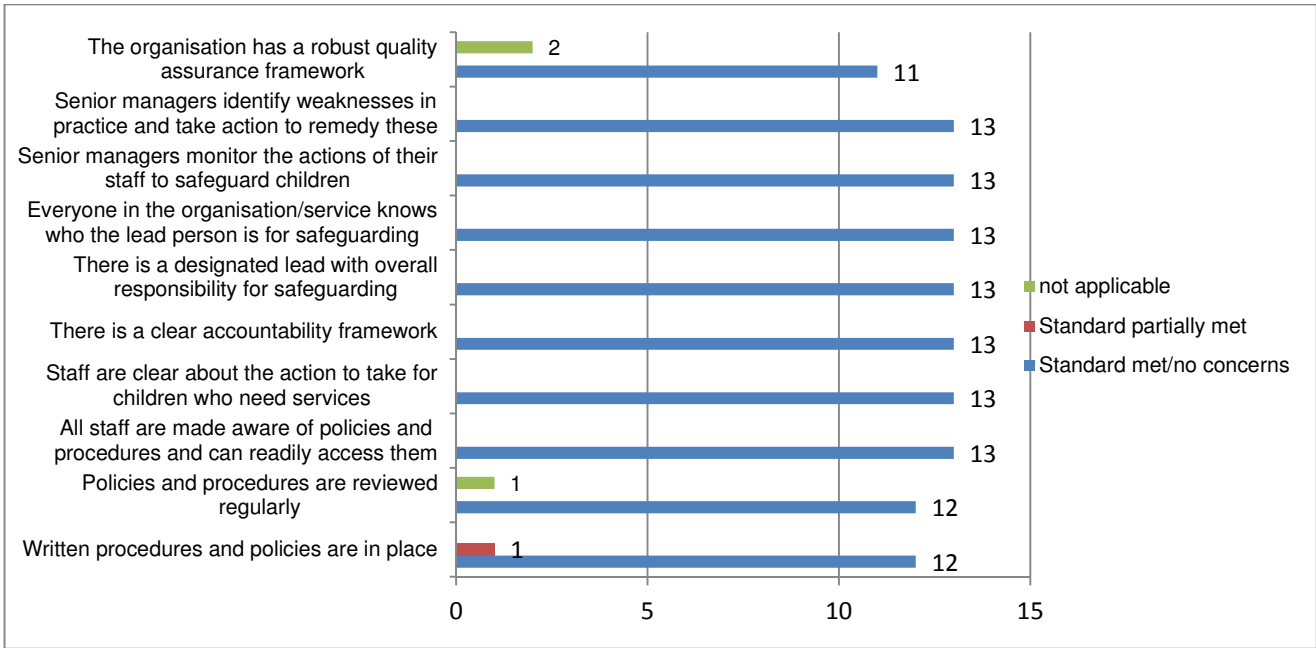
Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a statutory duty on key organisations to make arrangements to ensure that they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children when discharging their functions. We aim to ask our partner agencies to demonstrate their compliance with this on an annual basis via a Section 11 audit. In 2016 we asked all Board partner agencies, not just statutory partners, and schools (for the first time) to complete a proforma to demonstrate that they have appropriate arrangements in place including:

- lines of accountability
- management commitment
- consultation with children and young people
- whistleblowing
- supporting professionals working with children
- safe recruitment
- allegations management

Respondents were asked to state whether each standard was met, partially met, not met or not applicable and provide evidence of their compliance or steps that will be taken to improve this.

In total, there were over 90 responses for the 2016 Section 11 audit, which is the highest number we have ever received (as stated above, this is the first year that schools have contributed and this explains the significant increase in responses). All statutory partners submitted a response to the audit, as did a number of partners not considered statutory under section 11. No response was received from UK Visas and Immigration and Cafcass submitted a generic national response which could not be compared with the responses of other agencies. Board members were satisfied that further action was not necessary in relation to either agency as they are not statutory for the purposes of the Section 11 audit, although it would have been good practice to have responses from all partners.

The findings of the audit were shared with Board members as part of the Board development session and the responses from Board partner agencies were analysed in more depth. Overall, the results were largely very positive and the majority of agencies reported that standards were met and there were no concerns. A number of respondents also provided evidence to support this and the remainder were challenged and have since submitted evidence. There were some questions where there were a higher proportion of positive responses than others, for example 92% of Board partners have whistleblowing arrangements in place but only 70% reported that children and young people are listened to and their wishes and feelings are taken into account when developing services. The full results have been presented to Board members via a report and a summary of some areas is provided below:



A detailed analysis of all responses, including schools, was not carried out to the same level of detail as those responses solely from partner agencies due to the sheer numbers involved. As with some partner agencies, some schools submitted responses to indicate that standards were met but did not provide evidence of this and were therefore challenged to provide this and a number of them have done so. There were only six schools in Gateshead who did not respond (five primary schools and one special school). The vast majority of respondents reported that standards were met or partially met which told us that overall LSCB partner agencies and schools in Gateshead have effective arrangements in place to keep children and young people safe and are doing what they are supposed to do. Some schools reported issues which have since been followed up, for example one school reported that they needed additional support from the LADO and therefore the LADO was challenged and asked to contact the school in question.

APPENDIX 4 – Learning & Improvement activity

Case	Details of activity in 2015-2016
Baby T SCR	The Baby T SCR was published in October 2014 and work continued in early 2015-2016 to ensure that all actions were signed off.
Case A	<p>The Learning & Improvement Sub Group received a request from the Designated Doctor for Child Death Reviews to discuss this case as one of the children, an 11 week old baby, died from a suspected “cot death” in late 2014-2015. There were no suspicious circumstances; however there had been previous concerns about the baby’s siblings and it was felt that a scoping exercise and more detailed discussion would be beneficial prior to the case being discussed at the Child Death Review Sub Group.</p> <p>Sub group members were satisfied that the baby’s death was not linked to any issues in the home or the family circumstances, however it was noted that further discussions were required to ensure that the mother had appropriate support in relation to bereavement and her older children. It was also noted that school had made a referral to Children’s Social Care regarding the older children, however the details and intention of the referral were not clear and therefore actions were set to strengthen this.</p>
Case B	<p>We submitted a Serious Incident Notification (SIN) to Ofsted, DfE and the National Panel of Experts in June 2015 when this particular young person made a possible allegation of sexual assault whilst she was missing from care. We reviewed the case and found that it did not meet the criteria for a Serious Case Review, and the National Panel agreed with this.</p> <p>This was a complex case with a number of issues including learning disabilities, sexual abuse and underage sexual activity in the young person’s life and also throughout the wider family. The sub group concluded that the young person had not suffered “serious harm” on this occasion and agencies had done their best to safeguard her, however actions were set in relation to working with parents with learning disabilities and Section 20 arrangements. These actions continue to be monitored by the sub group.</p>
Case C	<p>The Learning & Improvement Sub Group received a request to review this case from the Named Doctor at GHNFT to determine if there was any additional learning from this case. The family were non-British nationals and all three children have developmental difficulties and have had periods being subject to child protection plans and being looked after under Section 20. The youngest child sustained possible non-accidental injuries (bruising) whilst in the care of his parents. Following this incident all three children were removed from the family home and care proceedings were issued. Whilst sub group members were happy that the criteria for a SIN notification or a SCR were not met, it was felt that there was some learning in the case.</p> <p>The sub group noted that there were a number of different social workers and health visitors involved in this case and this could have led to inconsistencies. It was also noted that there should have been a tighter framework around legal meetings and tighter decision making processes. It was also noted that there were occasions where a child was noted to have injuries at school but these were not reported until later and work has been undertaken around this. The sub group found that there were no clear processes in place for professionals to escalate multi-agency challenge and therefore this is being progressed further</p>
Case D	<p>The Learning & Improvement Sub Group received a request to review this case from the Named Doctor at GHNFT when one of the children in the family died from medical issues (she had multiple health problems linked to disabilities). Members of the sub group were asked to complete a scoping exercise about the case; however the detailed discussion has been delayed due to an ongoing police investigation. The case will now be reviewed in July 2016 and there is no current evidence that the death was linked to abuse or neglect, however there may still be some learning for agencies</p>

Case E

This case relates to an episode of self-harm by a young person who was subject to a child protection plan. Whilst sub group members were satisfied that this was not a “notifiable incident” we felt that further exploration of the case was required to determine whether there was any additional learning. We decided to use a new methodology known as Critical Incident Collaborative Inquiry (CICI) to learn from those practitioners working directly with the young person to understand what happened. A learning event was held late in March 2016 and a report is currently being prepared for the LSCB.

The learning event told us that this was a complex case with issues around domestic abuse, sexualised behaviour, mental health issues and substance misuse. It was agreed that a high level meeting was required to ensure that appropriate services were in place to keep the young person safe and also wider pieces of work were required to strengthen the response to those young people who are vulnerable but also very difficult to manage due to their own behaviour

APPENDIX 5 – Sub group updates

Child Death Review Sub Group (CDRG). Chair – Public Health Consultant (Pam Lee in 2015-2016)

Purpose of the sub group

The purpose of the CDRG is to undertake multi-disciplinary reviews of the deaths of all children who were resident in Gateshead at the time of their death to better understand how and why children die. These findings are used to take action to prevent other deaths, where relevant/appropriate and improve the health and safety of Gateshead's children.

The sub group's remit is determined by the statutory functions of Gateshead LSCB as set out in Regulation 6 of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards Regulations 2006, made under section 14(2) of the Children Act 2004 and Chapter 5 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2015).

The work of the CDRG feeds into the South of Tyne and Wearside Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) via the chair and Child Death Review Co-ordinator.

The group collects and collates an agreed minimum data set of information on all child deaths in Gateshead. This data set reflects the national requirements from the DfE and is consistent with the data sets for the two other LSCBs represented on CDOP.

Progress in 2015-2016

During 2015-2016 the group held a development session to assess compliance with guidance and identify areas for improvement. As a result, administration of the group was improved and issues around working with families were raised with CDOP.

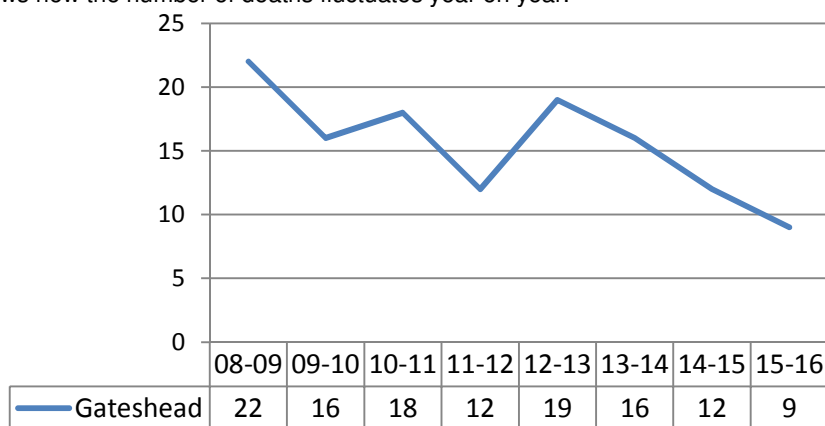
Following the development session, NHS Newcastle Gateshead CCG facilitated a meeting between South of Tyne CDOP and North of Tyne CDOP to learn from each other's processes. A follow-up meeting is planned pending the outcome of the national review of LSCBs and the child death review process.

Training has also been delivered to clinicians involved in child deaths.

Data or management information relevant to the sub group in 2015-2016

The CDRG collects and collates an agreed minimum data set of information on all child deaths in Gateshead. This data set reflects the national requirements from the DfE and is consistent with the data sets for the two other LSCBs represented on CDOP.

The LSCB has been notified of the deaths of nine children who were resident in the borough in 2015-2016. The following chart shows how the number of deaths fluctuates year on year.



Of these deaths five were of children with known life limiting conditions. There were four unexpected deaths, however some of those children also had medical issues. To date, no identifiable patterns or concerns have been noted within these deaths.

The South of Tyne CDOP met five times in 2015-2016 and completed the reviews of 17 deaths of children who had resided within Gateshead, of these modifiable factors were only identified in one case.

Recent deaths in Gateshead have usually been as a result of:

- Neonatal/perinatal events – prematurity

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expected deaths with known life limiting conditions <p>The number of unexpected deaths as a result of external factors remains small. There have been 331 deaths in the SOTW CDOP region since the process began in 2008.</p>
<p>Planned actions for 2016-2017</p> <p>The workload of the group is determined by local and national events and the group will continue to respond as appropriate.</p> <p>As stated above, the outcome of the national review of LSCBs may impact on the work of the sub group. This report was due to be published in March 2016 but is now expected in summer or autumn.</p> <p>Chairing arrangements will also be reviewed in 2016-2017, as will the role of the Designated Doctor for Child Deaths due to the retirement of the existing post holder. Any issues or delays in this area will be escalated to the Board.</p>

Learning & Improvement Sub Group. Chair – Service Director Social Work, Children & Families (Debra Patterson in 2015-2016)

<p>Purpose of the sub group</p> <p>The sub group has responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the action plans arising from SCRs undertaken by Gateshead LSCB. The group also undertakes Learning Reviews where the criteria for a SCR are not met and makes recommendations for improvement. The group also undertakes Appreciative Enquiries to reflect those cases where multi-agency work has had good outcomes for children and their family. The sub group also leads on disseminating messages from SCRs, Learning Reviews and Appreciative Enquiries across agencies,</p>
<p>Progress in 2015-2016</p> <p>As set out in section 6.4.2 of this report, no SCRs were published or initiated in Gateshead in 2015-2016. However, the sub group reviewed a number of cases where it was felt that there were lessons about single-agency and multi-agency practice.</p> <p>The Learning & Improvement Framework was also reviewed by the group and judged by Ofsted to be “comprehensive” to represent a “proactive response”</p>
<p>Planned actions for 2016-2017</p> <p>The work of the sub group will be directed by local and national SCRs, Learning Reviews and Appreciative Enquiries.</p>

Licensing Sub Group. Chair – LSCB Business Manager (Louise Gill in 2015-2016)

<p>Purpose of the sub group</p> <p>The purpose of the Licensing Sub Group is to ensure that the LSCB fulfils its responsibilities as the “Responsible Authority” with regard to the ‘protection of children from harm’ being one of the objectives of the Licensing Act 2003.</p> <p>The sub group meets on a monthly basis and considers all applications submitted to Gateshead Council under the Licensing Act 2003 for premises licenses, club premises certificates and Temporary Event Notices (TENS). The group considers each application individually and determines whether there are any implications from a child protection or safeguarding point of view. Other aspects of the licensing process, such as anti-social behaviour, are considered by other responsible authorities.</p> <p>Gateshead Council is responsible for licensing activities under the Licensing Act 2003. The act requires that local authorities carry out their various licensing functions in order to promote the following four licensing objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The prevention of crime and disorder Public safety The prevention of public nuisance The protection of children from harm <p>If any interested party of responsible body, such as the LSCB, is not satisfied that an objective is met then they can raise a representation against an application or request the review of an existing licence. The LSCB Licensing Sub Group focuses specifically on the 4th licensing objective. The applicant (or licensee if the issue relates to an existing licence) will be asked to provide further information and attend a hearing. In the case of new applications, this could lead to an application being refused, or granted with conditions, and in the case of an existing licence this could lead to a licence being revoked or new conditions added.</p>
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Progress in 2015-2016

The sub group reviewed 47 applications for new premises licences, variations of existing licences or applications for the review of an existing licence in 2014-2015, this is an increase from 37 applications in 2014-2015. There were no safeguarding concerns with the majority of these applications and reassuringly most new applicants set out robust arrangements to protect children from harm on their premises, however there were some applications to note:

- A premises who had previously had their licence revoked for underage sales applied for a new licence with a different person named however this was withdrawn following objections made by the LSCB and other Responsible Authorities
- The LSCB supported a review application made by another Responsible Authority when a premises was found to be selling alcohol to a 15 year old child volunteer
- The LSCB supported a review application made by another Responsible Authority when a premises was found to be selling tobacco to children
- The LSCB supported a review application made by another Responsible Authority when a premises was found to be selling alcohol to a 14 year old child volunteer and the premises had also been found to have been selling Novel Psychoactive Substances (AKA Legal Highs), drug paraphernalia and "sex articles" (namely unlawful pornography) without an appropriate licence. The premises licence was ultimately revoked by the Licensing Committee due to the concerns raised and an application to transfer the licence to another individual was also refused.

The group also reviewed 195 TENs (an increase from 163 last year) and 71 Street Trading Applications (an increase from 47 last year)

In addition to the standard business of the sub group, the chair wrote and co-delivered training to approximately 700 taxi drivers licensed by Gateshead Council to raise awareness of CSE and their duties as licenced drivers to safeguard young people.

The LSCB Business Manager also utilised links between this group and the MSET to share concerns with the Licensing Authority, for example:

- Information was shared at MSET that young people under 18 were gambling large quantities of cash in the amusement arcade of a shopping centre, so the Licensing Authority arranged for a visit to be undertaken
- Information was shared at MSET that young people were shoplifting wine from a store as it was placed near the door, they were then congregating on wasteland and getting drunk and having sex. The Licensing Authority planned a visit to the store to speak to them about their layout
- Anecdotal information was shared at MSET about a premises in the borough where young people were able to purchase alcohol and were not challenged for ID and investigations were undertaken by the Licensing Authority

The LSCB Business Manager has also been involved in discussions with colleagues from Legal and Public Health about pilot scheme that Gateshead is going to be involved in. Gateshead will become one of eight pilot sites for a national alcohol licensing project in conjunction with Public Health England to assess the practicality of introducing health as a licensing objective (the four licensing objectives are currently prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and protection of children from harm). Any relevant learning or information from the pilot will be shared with Board members in due course

Planned actions for 2016-2017

- The chair of the sub group will continue to attend the Responsible Authorities Group on a quarterly basis and continue to liaise with other responsible authorities to ensure that due consideration is given to the 4th licensing objective
- The sub group will consider ways in which they can be more proactive in relation to assisting licence holders and applicants to protect children from harm on their premises
- The chair will continue to link the work of the sub group with other partnerships, such as the MSET and Strategic CSE and Trafficking Sub Group, to improve outcomes for vulnerable children and young people

Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Sub Group (MSET). Chair – Detective Inspector, Protecting Vulnerable People (Dan Mitford in 2015-2016)

Purpose of the sub group

The purpose and remit of the MSET is to safeguard those children and young people in Gateshead who repeatedly go missing and/or are at risk of sexual exploitation and/or exhibit risk taking behaviour and/or where there are concerns about human trafficking. The purpose of the group is to reduce the risks to the young people when missing and to introduce strategies to safeguard them

Progress in 2015-2016

The MSET is now a well-established meeting that has excellent attendance by partner agencies, with National Probation Service now attending following the recent deep dive inspection in South Tyneside (this has strengthened intelligence sharing and disruption). The meeting is chaired by the Detective Inspector from Central PVP CAVA who is supported by the Police Missing from Home Coordinator. The Missing From Home coordinators co-located with the coordinators who cover the whole Northumbria Police area, ensuring intelligence, trends and issues can be shared and fed back into the Operational MSET group. The meeting incorporates a referral form which includes a vulnerability check list (VCL) and scoring matrix for each young person to be discussed at the meeting.

The social worker or other lead professional for each young person is invited to attend the meeting and present the concerns relating to the young person. It is expected that a prevention/diversion plan is prepared in advance of the meeting and then relevant actions are allocated during the meeting to reduce risks associated with sexual exploitation and trafficking and/or reduce missing episodes. For cases of concern, subsequent dates are set for the case to be reviewed at a MSET meeting with the expectation that all actions are completed for the next meeting and an updated VCL submitted when the young person is next discussed. The scoring matrix is reviewed at each meeting with the intention that this risk score reduces over time showing a reduction in risks.

A pre-meet between the sub group chair and LSCB Business Manager takes place prior to the MSET meeting to discuss the top 10 most active children and referrals received from practitioners who are concerned about frequent missing episodes and/or risk of CSE. The agenda for the meeting is then prepared and circulated for agencies to research their involvement.

Members of the MSET continue to monitor the return interview process to ensure consistency in the interviews. Information gathered in the interviews is shared with the police for intelligence sharing via a secure email mailbox.

The joint protocol between Police and the local authority has been reviewed, updated and agreed by partner agencies.

The MSET continues to monitor and evaluate intelligence around sexual exploitation and has close links with Operation Sanctuary, which has recently expanded to include the South of Tyne area.

An escalation process has been developed for cases discussed at MSET where there are consistent high risk concerns for a young person or they are deemed at high risk of CSE. This will allow cases of concern to be forwarded to senior management for review to ensure that no additional actions are required and for guidance as to whether the case should continue to be discussed at MSET.

Data or management information relevant to the sub group in 2015-2016

Data on missing children is also set out in section 6.3.1 of this report.

The cases of 43 young people were discussed at MSET meetings in 2015-2016 and 23 of these young people were discussed on more than one occasion (a number had also been discussed in 2013-2014). This was a decrease in the total number of cases discussed in 2014-2015 where there were 53. This decrease is due in part to the revised MSET referral form which means that cases are referred more appropriately with tangible risks set out for the pre-meeting.

There were a total of 928 occasions in 2015-2016 where a young person from Gateshead was reported missing to the police (this includes episodes where a child was in the care of Gateshead Council but placed outside of the borough). The 928 episodes included 657 episodes (71%) where a child was reported missing from care, the remaining 271 episodes related to a child being reported missing from their family home or school. The total figure of 928 represents an increase from 2014-2015 where there were 864 episodes. There was also an increase in the number of missing from care episodes from 571 to 657 and an increase in the proportion of episodes from 66% to 71%. The missing from care episodes have increased significantly year on year for the past few years.

The number of episodes relate to a smaller number of individual young people as there were a number of young people who were reported missing more than once. In fact, there was a small cohort of young people who

reported missing care on a very regular basis, often together, some months, and this in part explains the large increase in episodes. It should also be noted that there was an increase in the number of episodes lasting over 24 hours, and a number of episodes which lasted significantly longer. Processes are in place to ensure that there is regular oversight of these cases.

Northumbria Police introduced a new “absent” category on 25 January 2016 and all “missing” reports will now be classed as either missing or absent. For the purposes of MSET, cases will be considered regardless of whether they are missing or absent and return interviews will also be offered regardless of the police category.

A breakdown of the episodes reported each month is set out below. More detailed data on where Looked After Children are reported missing from is reported to Gateshead Council Overview and Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis.

Month	Total missing episodes	Missing from care episodes
April	91	77 (85%)
May	116	80 (70%)
June	72	59 (82%)
July	81	63 (78%)
August	76	63 (83%)
September	82	55 (67%)
October	71	47 (66%)
November	76	46 (61%)
December	77	43 (56%)
January	54	40 (74%)
February	65	49 (75%)
March	67	35 (52%)
TOTAL	928	657 (71%)

Planned actions for 2016-2017

Within the next 12 months:

- The group will continue to review those cases referred into it to support multi-agency ownership of risk and safeguarding. Practitioners will also be encouraged to be more proactive with referrals into the group
- The sub group will continue to strengthen the risk assessment process and scoring matrix so that there is a clear exit and entry point for the MSET
- Regular meetings between Police and the Gateshead Council children’s homes managers are to continue to discuss cases of problematic or regular missing persons
- A revised procedure for recording missing and absent episodes for young people by the Police is now in place. Both absent and missing episodes are risk assessed and scrutinised to ensure the appropriate assessment and response is in place. Children’s home staff have been spoken to by the Missing from Home Coordinator around the new process and how to challenge any classification and subsequent Police action.

Performance Management Sub Group. Chair – Service Manager Children’s Commissioning and Performance (Ann Day in 2015-2016)

Purpose of the sub group

The purpose of the Performance Management Sub Group is to support the LSCB in fulfilling its statutory duty to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the local authority and Board partners, individually and collectively, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, and advise them on ways to improve.

Continuous performance management is at the core of ensuring the effectiveness and impact of inter-agency safeguarding activity. The sub group supports the LSCB in the monitoring, promotion and planning of high quality practice in line with the inter-agency Performance Management Framework. The framework is used to monitor and analyse a range of quantitative and qualitative information, both via ongoing and set pieces of work. The sub group reports regularly to the Board highlighting any areas of practice that need to be addressed, and identifying areas of good practice.

Progress in 2015-2016

The sub group continued to embed the integrated data set and provide detailed performance information to the full LSCB on a quarterly basis. This regular reporting to the Board includes an overview of performance in relation to safeguarding and early help across all partners.

The performance information provided to the Board has supported the Board's determination of priorities and specific areas for additional scrutiny.

Professional and public awareness of child sexual exploitation (CSE) has grown significantly in recent years the Board therefore wished to scrutinise and determine on a multi-agency basis levels of CSE in Gateshead, develop a clear understanding of CSE, agree a collective approach to data sharing and quality assure the effectiveness of the multi-agency approach.

The sub group led the inquiry reviewing 37 cases and undertaking deep dive audits on 10 of those cases.

The inquiry looked at how children and young people are being identified and protected and sought to understand where there may be lessons to be learned from an audit of practice.

The results were reported to the Board in May 2016.

Data or management information relevant to the sub group in 2015-2016

See section 6.5. of this report

Planned actions for 2016-2017

During 2016-2017 the sub group will continue to provide to develop and enhance performance reporting to the Board. There will be a specific review and remodel the integrated data set in line with Ofsted recommendations and Board priorities.

The sub group will continue to undertake multi-agency audits to quality assure partner agencies collective approaches to Safeguarding and Early Help

Policies and Procedures Sub Group. Chair – LSCB Business Manager (Louise Gill in 2015-2016)

Purpose of the sub group

Gateshead LSCB has a statutory requirement to provide policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children

Regulation 5 of the Local Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006 sets out that the functions of the LSCB, in relation to the above objectives under section 14 of the Children Act 2004, are as follows:

1. (a) developing policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of the authority, including policies and procedures in relation to:

The action to be taken where there are concerns about a child's safety or welfare, including thresholds for intervention

The aims and purpose of the sub group are to:

- Develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Gateshead
- Monitor the effectiveness of the procedures in place
- Consider the implications of new policy, legislation, research and guidance in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children
- To review and accordingly update the Gateshead LSCB Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures (currently in conjunction with TriX)

Progress during 2015-2016

In line with the current maintenance contract with TriX, two full updates of the LSCB Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures were made in 2014-2015 to reflect changes to statutory guidance. The sub group also reviewed the arrangement with TriX to determine whether it was the most effective option and we have now entered into a sub-regional agreement with TriX and Sunderland and South Tyneside. This has considerably reduced the cost paid by Gateshead LSCB for the online procedures

The following pieces of work were also completed or are currently ongoing:

- Female Genital Mutilation
- Osman Warnings
- SUDI guidelines
- Templates for child protection conference reports
- Bruising in babies
- Concealed pregnancies

Planned actions for 2015-2016

Work will continue in relation to the following areas:

- The new Care Act
- Modern Slavery Bill
- Parents recording child protection conferences
- Use of technology to support attendance at meetings
- Breast ironing

The sub group will also respond to new areas of business as they emerge and ensure that procedures are compliant with any new guidance.

The sub group will also review its own membership to ensure that it is fit for purpose as a number of members have recently changed roles or left organisations.

Strategic CSE and Trafficking Sub Group. Chair – Detective Chief Inspector (Shelley Hudson in 2015-2016)

Purpose of the sub group

This is a relatively new sub group of the LSCB that was established in 2014-2015, having previously been a time-limited working group of the Board. The group has since merged with a task and finish group of the Safeguarding Adults Board however to create a joint Strategic Exploitation Group, which will begin reporting to the Board in 2016-2017.

The remit of the group was to lead on the development of strategic work in relation to CSE and trafficking. On behalf of the LSCB, the group was tasked with developing, implementing and monitoring the Gateshead LSCB CSE strategy and delivery plan to ensure a coordinated and proactive multi-agency response to CSE and trafficking.

Progress in 2015-2016

The group established and strengthened its Terms of Reference and developed a Delivery Plan which set out key areas of work in relation to safeguarding children at risk of CSE and being exploited. The group finalised the CSE Strategy, which was scrutinised by Ofsted and found to be sound.

Planned actions for 2016-2017

As previously stated, this group has now been disbanded and a new joint LSCB and SAB Strategic Exploitation Group has been formed. The Terms of Reference for the group have been agreed and the work plan is being established

Training Sub Group. Chair – Workforce Development Adviser (Naju Khanom in 2015-2016)

Purpose of the sub group

The purpose of the group is to develop and promote, through training, a shared understanding amongst safeguarding partners around the tasks, processes, principles, roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children and promoting better outcomes.

The sub group contributes to identifying training needs and the delivery of the training programme across the workforce and drives forward the programme. The sub group is made up of a variety of professionals from different sectors and services.

Training is delivered with a focus on the children and young people’s workforce. Training may also be influenced by any new agendas or initiatives.

The group also supports, monitors and quality assures single agency training activity by LSCB partner agencies to ensure that minimum standards are reached.

Progress in 2015-2016

The 2015-2016 Children and Adults Safeguarding Training Directory was launched on 1 April 2015 and work took place throughout the year on the 2016-2017 directory in preparation for its launch. Over 70% of the courses in 2015-2016 were delivered “in house” by staff from LSCB partner agencies and the rest were commissioned.

The e-learning programme continued to be promoted and strengthened.

There was a delay in progressing some of the work of the sub group in 2015-2016 due to changes in personnel however the chair returned from maternity leave part way through the year and good progress was made from

that point.

Data or management information relevant to the sub group in 2015-2016

Multi-agency training is offered to all services and LSBC partner agencies. Records are kept in terms of the attendance a training by individual services and feedback is submitted to the LSCB on a regular basis in relation to attendance, cancellation and demand. This enables future planning.

There were 61 events held in 2015-2016 through the LSCB training directory (an increase from 52 events in the previous year). There were in fact 73 events arranged however 12 events were cancelled due to low numbers or trainer availability.

In total there were 1115 attendees, an increase from 1081 in the previous year. 763 people also accessed the online e-learning. There were 289 unsuccessful applicants who were not offered places at training events (up from 176 in the previous year) and unfortunately there were 151 applicants who were offered places who failed to attend (compared to 164 in the previous year).

Classroom training in 2015-2016:

Course	Attendees	Did not show	Unsuccessful	Cancelled prior to event	% applicants trained
Child Death Reviews	15	4	0	5	63%
CP awareness	250	37	88	64	57%
Child Trafficking	43	1	0	4	90%
Common Assessment Framework	107	17	6	26	64%
Cross cultural awareness	17	1	0	0	81%
Effective CP Conferences	10	3	0	6	50%
Effective Core Groups	0	0	0	0	0%
Fabricated and Induced Illness	56	6	16	4	73%
Female Genital Mutilation	57	4	8	10	70%
Foetal Alcohol Syndrome	24	5	0	3	75%
Information sharing in practice	9	1	0	2	32%
Multi-agency working to safeguard and protect children	48	3	25	19	45%
Neglect	42	9	17	6	50%
Protecting disabled children from Abuse	30	1	0	20	59%
Responding to allegations of abuse against professionals	12	4	5	4	38%
Safeguarding babies	20	2	0	2	83%
Safeguarding children and young people in the digital age	129	15	39	24	62%
Serious Case Reviews	18	5	0	24	32%
The impact of drug use on young people	32	5	23	3	51%
The impact of parental mental health	41	1	10	13	63%
Understanding and responding to child sexual abuse	36	5	12	7	60%
Young people at risk of sexual exploitation	82	17	35	16	51%
Young people who self-harm	73	5	5	20	71%
TOTAL	1151	151	289	271	59%

Online training in 2015-2016:

Module	Completions	Yet to complete
An introduction to safeguarding children	183	3
Awareness of child abuse and neglect - Core version	159	8
Awareness of child abuse and neglect - Foundation version	56	9
Awareness of child abuse and neglect - young people version	18	0
Awareness of child abuse and neglect core level - Police version	1	1
Awareness of domestic violence and abuse including the impact on children, young people and adults at risk	22	1
Hidden Harm	15	2
Safeguarding and leadership	24	3
Safeguarding children from abuse by sexual exploitation	103	11
Self-harm and suicidal thoughts in children and young people	2	0
Think Safe, Be Safe, Stay Safe	4	0
Female Genital Mutilation: Recognising and Preventing	176	2
TOTAL	763	40

Planned actions for 2016-2017

Going forward the Training Sub Group will look at:

- Promoting the directory across organisations and to the people who will benefit from training.
- Encourage registration for the new online booking system.
- Increase training pools.
- Work on implementing Ofsted recommendations
- Work to develop any training areas identified by the LSCB

Gateshead Council has implemented a new HR & Payroll system which includes the ability to book onto training, this system has been extended so those external to Gateshead Council can also use the system to book onto training. Work will continue with this system so that the LSCB can ensure that training meets demands and is effective.

APPENDIX 6 – Glossary

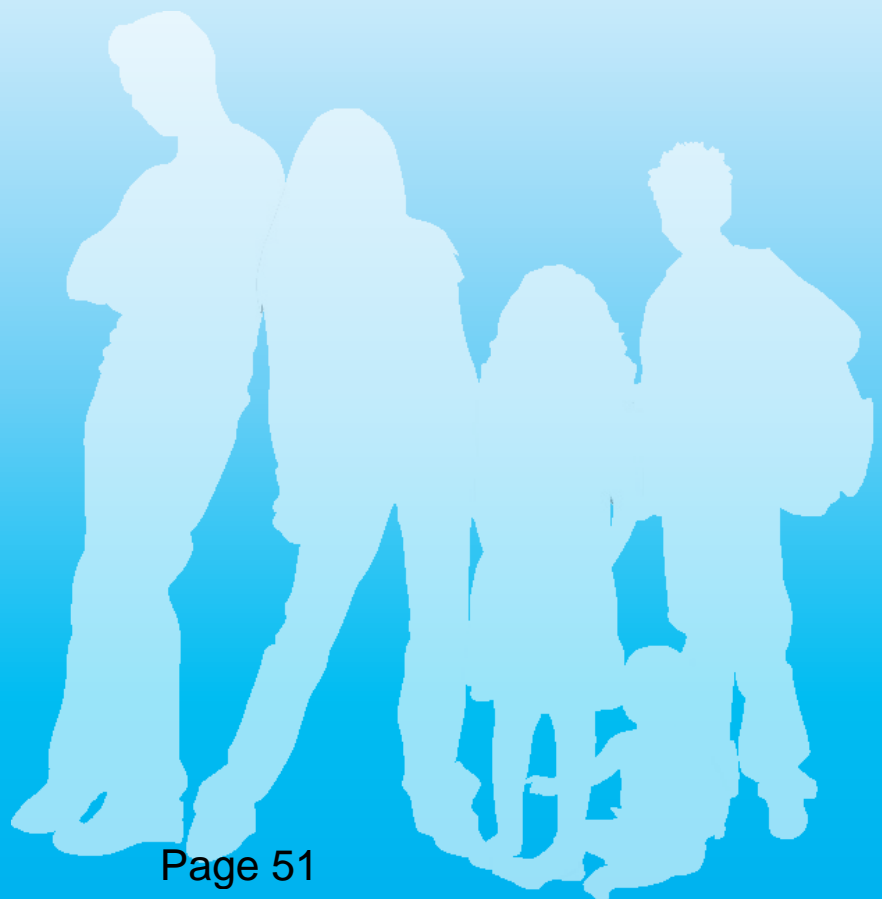
ACPC	Area Child Protection Committee
ARMG	Adolescent Risk Management Group
CAF	Common Assessment Framework
Cafcass	Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CDOP	Child Death Overview Panel
CIN	Child In Need
CIN assessment	Child In Need assessment
CP plan	Child protection plan
CQC	Care Quality Commission
CRC	Community Rehabilitation Company
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DfE	Department for Education
DoH	Department of Health
DoLs	Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FIT	Family Intervention Team
FT	Foundation Trust (NHS)
FTE	First Time Entrant (to Youth Justice System)
GHNFT	Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary
ICPC	Initial Child Protection Conference
LAC	Looked After Child
LADO	Local Authority Designated Officer
LSCB	Local Safeguarding Children Board
MARAC	Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (for domestic abuse)
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MCA	Mental Capacity Act
MSET	Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Sub Group (sub group of LSCB)
NICE	National Institute for Health and Care Excellence
NTW	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
PRU	Pupil Referral Unit
PVP	Protection of Vulnerable People Department (Police)
QA	Quality Assurance
RCPC	Review Child Protection Conference
SAB	Safeguarding Adults Board
SCR	Serious Case Review
SILP	Significant Incident Learning Process
STFT	South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust
TAF	Team Around the Family
VAWGS	Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy
VCL	Vulnerability checklist
YOT	Youth Offending Team



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Gateshead LSCB Business Plan 2014-2017

2016-2017 Action Plan





Vision

Our vision is that every child should grow up feeling safe and in a loving, secure environment, free from abuse, neglect and crime, enabling them to enjoy a happy and healthy childhood in which they can fulfil their social and economic potential.

Role of the Business Plan

The Gateshead LSCB Business Plan sets the strategic direction for the LSCB. The Business Plan also reinforces the specific role of the LSCB to **lead, challenge** and support **learning**. The plan identifies specific priorities for action and is clear about roles and accountability.

The Gateshead Approach 2014-2017

Gateshead LSCB agreed a new approach in 2014 and adopted a three year Business Plan to cover the period from 2014-2017. This document provides a focus for Year 3 of the plan, which enables the Board to focus on the specific role and remit of LSCBs in ensuring that the welfare of children is safeguarded and protected, as set out in Working Together (2015) and the Children Act 2004.

The Business Plan emphasises the role of Gateshead LSCB in **leading** the safeguarding agenda, in **challenging** the work of partner organisations, and in committing to an approach which **learns** lessons, embeds good practice and which is continually influenced by the views of children and young people.

The Business Plan can be found at www.gateshead.gov.uk/LSCB

In years one and two we developed and utilised a new "LSCB inquiry" model to undertake task and finish work around the specific areas of neglect and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). We have reviewed the use of this model and found that, whilst it provided us with useful results, the bulk of the workload fell onto one or two Board members and it was agreed that we should use a more traditional task and finish group model in year three to encourage greater participation.



Summary of Key Achievements in 2015-2016

A full breakdown of progress in 2015-2016 can be found in the Gateshead LSCB 2015-2016 Annual Report. Highlights are shown in the table below

Area of work	Progress in 2014-2015
Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A sub-regional CSE event was held in October 2015 for 500 professionals in Gateshead Work has continued to improve engagement with young people and this has been strengthened following recommendations made by Ofsted following the inspection of the LSCB The Business Planning Group arrangements and effectiveness were reviewed by the chair and strengthened further following the Ofsted inspection of the LSCB
Challenge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The second LSCB Inquiry was completed – this focused on CSE The first mini-peer review took place and evidenced effective multi-agency working Board members and partners contributed to the Gateshead Council Families Overview and Scrutiny Review of child protection The Board received reports on a number of areas of challenge including contribution to child protection conferences and the response to the rising problem of Novel Psychoactive Substances aka NPS aka "legal highs"
Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Learning and Improvement Framework was strengthened and judged to be comprehensive and proactive by Ofsted The Board and its partners learned from the findings of single agency inspections e.g. HMIC, CQC and Ofsted
Preventing harm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revised neglect guidance was developed following the LSCB Neglect Inquiry in 2014-2015 Task and finish work was undertaken to understand key areas e.g. children convicted of sex offences and high risk adolescents Work continued in relation to implementing the national Child Protection-Information Sharing Project (CP-IS), despite national delays
Protecting vulnerable children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Further work took place to strengthen the links between the LSCB and schools, including participation by schools in the annual Section 11 audit Approaches to extremism, cyber-crime and wellbeing in childhood were reviewed by the Board

As set out in the annual report, the LSCB was subject to an inspection of its effectiveness in 2015-2016 and Ofsted published the outcome of this in March 2016. We have subsequently developed an improvement plan, which we will continue to implement and monitor in 2016-2017.



2015-2016 Action Plan

In Year 3 the focus will continue to be on the three strategic business priorities:

- **Leadership**
- **Challenge**
- **Learning**

The focus will also remain on two strategic outcomes:

- **Protecting vulnerable children**
- **Preventing harm**

We will do the following to deliver our priorities and strategic outcomes and to implement the LSCB Improvement Plan:

In relation to **Learning** we will listen to what our young people have told us during our engagement work and act on this, develop an Effectiveness Framework and learn from best practice elsewhere and build on the learning from the Government’s national review of LSCBs. We will also continue to learn from practice in Gateshead and other areas via our Learning and Improvement Sub Group and Learning and Improvement Framework and build upon good practice. We will also continue to review processes to understand the impact of our training offer and maintain a focus on delivering high quality training that meets demand.

In relation to **protecting vulnerable children** we will focus on the issue of self-harm and ensure that there are robust processes in place to reduce the incidence of self-harm and to support those young people who do self-harm. We will also continue to maintain a focus on Sexual Exploitation, “legal highs” and other key areas by receiving reports from those agencies leading on operational practice. We will also continue to take a partnership approach to the local implementation of the national Child Protection – Information Sharing project (CP-IS) to ensure that agencies in Gateshead work together to share information to protect vulnerable children. We will also monitor the impact of Team Sanctuary South on some of our most vulnerable children and adults and understand the voice of the survivor in light of recommendations made in other areas such as South Yorkshire.

In relation to **preventing harm** we will review the increase in permanent exclusions in Gateshead to understand the reasons behind this and consider more effective ways of working together to prevent harm to this particular cohort of young people. We will also receive the “Threshold/ indicators of need” document once it has been reviewed by Children’s Social Care. We will also consider whether a locality risk assessment model would assist the Board in understanding where and what priority need is.

In relation to **Leadership** the Board will strengthen links with our local communities through our lay members and community representatives, receive reports on the redesign of Early Help arrangements in Gateshead to ensure that services are fit for purpose and continue to strengthen links with other partnerships such as the Health and Wellbeing Board and Safeguarding Adults Board and develop our visibility and influence to ensure that the importance of safeguarding children is not lost within the wider remit of partnership work in the borough. We will also continue to strengthen our engagement with young people and raise the profile of the Board with them.

In relation to **Challenge** the Board will ask partners to share their single agency audits and account for any areas of development identified, continue to build on the peer review process and receive the outcome of the Gateshead Council Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s review of child protection services. We will also continue to challenge our own performance through the development of an Effectiveness Framework and develop an updated dataset to enable us to continue to challenge areas of single-agency and multi-agency performance as when necessary.

Year 2 Action Plan

Action	Proposed Lead Officer	Target Date
LEADERSHIP		
Strengthen links with the local community through work with lay members and community representatives	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager, to lead with input from Carole Paz-Uceria, SAB Business Manager	Ongoing throughout 2016-2017
Receive reports on the redesign of Early Help services in Gateshead and consider the impact on protecting vulnerable children and preventing harm	Vall Hall, Service Director, Children and Families Support	March 2017
Work with other partnerships to strengthen links and improve the visibility of the LSCB: Receive an annual report from SAB on activity and priorities Receive an annual report from the Community Safety Partnership on activity and priorities Submit an annual report to the SAB Submit an annual report to the HWB	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager, to lead with input from Carole Paz-Uceria, SAB Business Manager, and Adam Lindridge, Community Safety Business Manager	Ongoing throughout 2016-2017
Continue to consider a Youth LSCB structure	Independent Chair and Business Planning Group	September 2016
Carry out specific pieces of work to improve engagement with young people	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager to coordinate programme with all BPG members involved	Ongoing throughout 2016-2017
CHALLENGE		
Single agency audits to be presented to the LSCB on a regular basis to strengthen the oversight of frontline practice	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager to coordinate programme with all Board members involved	Ongoing throughout 2016-2017 in line with the workplan
Develop and implement an Effectiveness Framework	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager	July 2016
Receive the outcome of the Families OSC review of child protection and respond as appropriate	Ann Day, Service Manager Children’s Commissioning	July 2016
Continue to implement a programme of mini-peer reviews to build on the learning from the 2016 Section 11 audit to demonstrate effective multi-agency working in Gateshead	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager to coordinate programme with all Board members involved	Ongoing throughout 2016-2017 in line with the workplan

Continued overleaf

Action	Proposed Lead Officer	Target Date
LEARNING		
Learn from what young people are telling us and Incorporate the findings of the engagement work with school councils to identify themes for task and finish work and reports to the Board where necessary	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager to coordinate programme with all Board members involved	Ongoing throughout 2016-2017
Review the learning from the national review of LSCBs and develop an action plan to take forward local areas for development	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager	TBC once review published
Continue to review cases where there are lessons to be learned through the Learning and Improvement Sub Group (and Serious Case Review Panel where necessary)	Elaine Devaney, Service Director – Social Work, Children and Families with support of LSCB Business Manager	As required
Review processes to understand the impact of our training offer and maintain a focus on delivering high quality training that meets demand	Naju Khanom, LSCB Workforce Development Officer	Ongoing throughout 2016-2017
Implement and embed the findings and recommendations from inspections/peer reviews as they arise and cascade the learning across partner agencies	For Ofsted inspections of CSC – TBC For HMIC inspections of Police – Lisa Orchard For HMIP inspections of Probation – Karin O'Neill and Martyn Strike For CQC inspections of health agencies – Lead dependant on agency e.g. Maggie Lilburn/Chris Piercy, Hilary Lloyd, Damian Robinson, Kathryn Dimmick For issues arising from Ofsted inspections of schools – Steve Horne/ Jeanne Pratt For issues arising from Ofsted inspection of Gateshead College – John Gray	As required
PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN		
Undertake task and finish work on the issue of self-harm in Gateshead to understand the data and ensure appropriate support is in place for young people who do self-harm	Kate Jones, Named Nurse, Gateshead Health NHS FT	March 2017
Receive reports on the following areas to understand the impact of operational practice: Sexual exploitation "legal highs" TBC	Louise Gill, LSCB Business Manager to coordinate programme with all Board members involved	Ongoing throughout 2016-2017 in line with the work plan
Continue to lead on the local implementation of the national Child Protection – Information Sharing project (CP-IS)	Ann Day, Service Manager, Children's Commissioning and Kate Jones, named nurse, GNHT	March 2017

Action	Proposed Lead Officer	Target Date
PREVENTING HARM		
Undertake task and finish work in relation to the increase in permanent exclusions and provide a report to enable the Board to understand this increase and areas for development required reduce the numbers of permanent exclusions if appropriate and future strategies to work together to support the young people at risk of permanent exclusion or who have been permanently excluded.	Steve Horne/Jeanne Pratt, EducationGateshead	March 2017
Receive the updated "Threshold/Indicators of Need" document from Children's Social Care and monitor the implementation	Elaine Devaney, Service Director – Social Work, Children and Families and Ann Day, Service Manager, Children's Commissioning	September 2016
Consider developing a locality risk assessment model to understand where and what the priority need is	Business Planning Group	September 2016



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Gateshead Safeguarding Adults from Abuse

Safeguarding Adults Board

Annual Report
- 2015/16 -

July 2016

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Introduction



Living a life that is free from harm and abuse is a fundamental right of every person.

I am pleased to introduce this Annual Report for 2015/16 on behalf of the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board.

The Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board has risen to the challenges prescribed in the Care Act 2014 by adopting an open and transparent approach to Safeguarding Adults that is person-led and outcome focussed. This is despite a background of considerable change with respect to the requirements set out in the Care Act, financial austerity, organisational changes and a significant change in the membership of the Board.

We know that the most effective way to safeguard adults is to work together in partnership. Board members and partners in Gateshead have worked hard to increase momentum in Safeguarding activity, initiating positive changes to increase our effectiveness. Importantly, the Board has shown a willingness to challenge and evolve. I would particularly like to welcome to the Board our lay members who provide additional independence and scrutiny.

Whilst the Board can demonstrate significant progress and a number of key achievements during 2015/16, the forward thinking Strategic Plan for 2016/19 illustrates that the Board understands that there is still much to do to ensure that our most vulnerable adults are provided with the appropriate support, guidance and protection that helps them to achieve their desired outcomes. We must continue to strive to raise local awareness of safeguarding and aspire to embed our safeguarding vision within all of our partner agencies. This requires fully embedding safeguarding in everything we do and, importantly, within the mind-set of our local communities.

Elizabeth Saunders
Gateshead Interim Safeguarding Adults Board Vice-Chair

Policy Context

The Care Act 2014 enshrined in law the principles of Safeguarding Adults, which will not only ensure that the most vulnerable members of society are afforded appropriate support and protection, but will also help them to live as independently as possible, for as long as possible.

Chapter 14 of the Care and Support Statutory Guidance issued under the Care Act replaces the No Secrets document as the statutory basis for all safeguarding activity. This was updated in March 2016 by the Department for Health.

The Care Act identifies six key principles which underpin all adult safeguarding work and, which apply equally to all sectors and settings:

- **Empowerment** – people being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and give informed consent
- **Prevention** – it is better to take action before harm occurs
- **Proportionality** – the least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented
- **Protection** – support and representation to those in greatest need
- **Partnership** – local solutions through services working with their communities
- **Accountability** – accountability and transparency in safeguarding practice

The Care Act sets out the Safeguarding Adult responsibilities for Local Authorities and their partners. It places a duty upon Local Authorities to establish Safeguarding Adults Boards and stipulates that Safeguarding Adult Boards must produce a Strategic Plan and Annual Report. The Statutory Guidance encourages the Safeguarding Adults Board to link with other partnerships in the locality and share relevant information and work plans.

Safeguarding in Gateshead

Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board

The Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board became a statutory body in April 2015. The Board's vision for adult safeguarding in Gateshead is:

'Everybody in Gateshead has the right to lead a fulfilling life and should be able to live safely, free from abuse and neglect – and to contribute to their own and other people's health and wellbeing'

The Board is responsible for assuming the strategic lead and overseeing the work of Adult Safeguarding and Mental Capacity Act / Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards arrangements in Gateshead. Within Gateshead we have commissioned an Independent Chair to enhance scrutiny and challenge. The Board has a comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding which provides the framework for identifying roles and responsibilities and demonstrating accountability.

In law, the statutory members of a Safeguarding Adults Board are defined as the local authority, the local police force and the relevant clinical commissioning group. However, in Gateshead, we recognise the importance of the contribution made by all of our partner agencies and this is reflected by the wider Board membership (correct as of July 2016):

- Gateshead Council
- Northumbria Police
- Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group
- Lay Members
- Gateshead NHS Foundation Trust
- South Tyneside Foundation Trust;
- Northumberland Tyne and Wear NHS Foundation Trust
- Gateshead College
- The Gateshead Housing Company
- Tyne and Wear Fire and Rescue Service
- Healthwatch
- Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company
- National Probation Service
- Oasis Aquila Housing

View from a Lay Member

First impressions of the Safeguarding Adults Board - very useful forum for lead professionals to share views and developments in their services. Potentially able to do more via effective collaboration, producing more streamlined and responsive services. The Board has a very important role to play through early identification of issues and the development of an effective local response.

Staff have always been approachable and ready to engage with lay members. Very important that higher proportion of named members attend meetings. Good training opportunities available.

The Safeguarding Adults Board is supported by four Sub-Groups:

- **Practice Delivery Group** (Chaired by Local Authority)
The role of the Practice Delivery Group is to ensure that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults policy and procedures and the Mental Capacity Act / Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards policy and procedures continue to be fit for purpose. The Group has responsibility for the production of the Strategic Plan, annual Business Plans and keeping up to date with national policy changes that may impact upon the work of the Safeguarding Adults Board. The Group also has responsibility for the development and implementation of the communications and engagement strategy and implementation of the Dignity Strategy.
- **Quality and Assurance Group** (Chaired by Clinical Commissioning Group)
The primary role of this group is to develop an oversight of all activity that is undertaken by Board member agencies and relevant services or organisations in order to safeguard those adults in Gateshead who are subject to the Safeguarding duties as stated in Section 42 of the Care Act 2014. Core activities include co-ordinating Safeguarding Adult Reviews and monitoring performance. The group monitors and scrutinises the quality of activities to ensure that the interventions offered were and continue to be person-centred, proportionate and appropriate. As well as retaining a strategic oversight of all safeguarding activity across Gateshead, the Quality and Assurance Group is responsible for considering any lessons learned that are identified nationally, regionally and locally from any cases requiring a Safeguarding Adults Review, Serious Case Review or any other review process relevant to the Safeguarding Adults agenda.

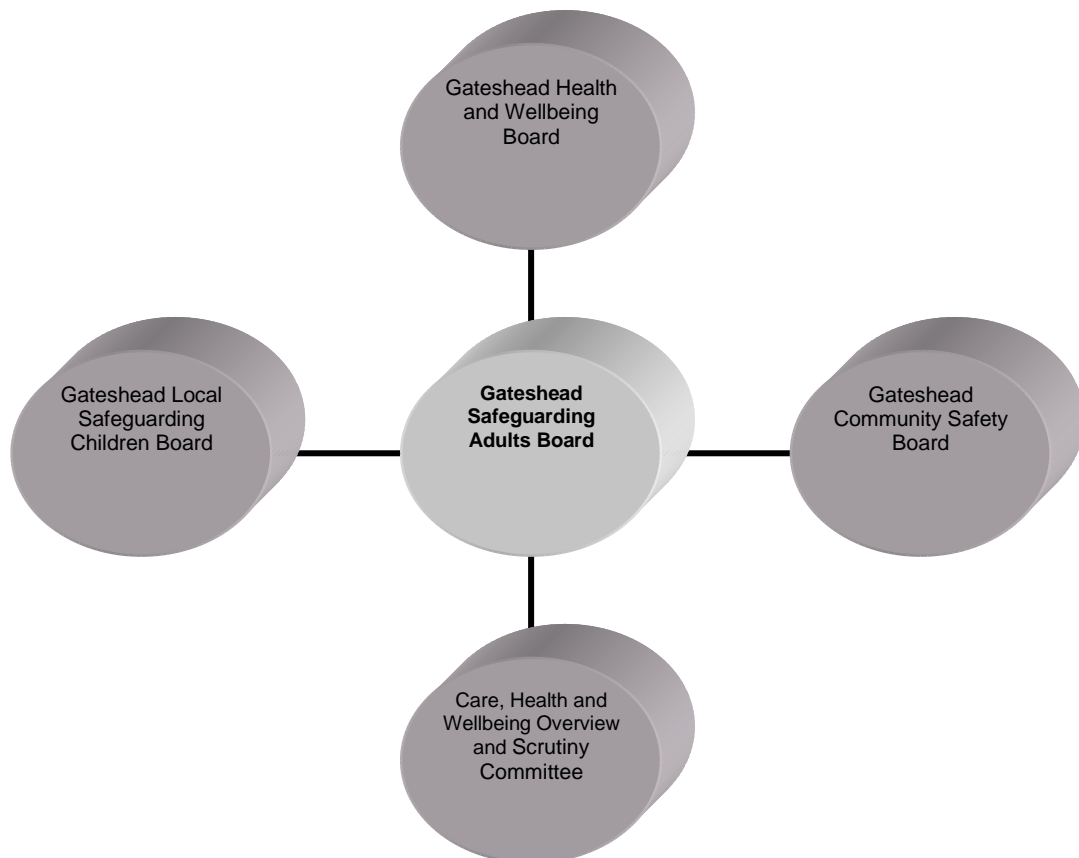
- Training Group** (Chaired by Local Authority)

The role of the Training Group is to coordinate and develop Safeguarding Adults training and Mental Capacity Act / Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards training that is accessible for practitioners and managers in a multi-agency setting. For the purposes of quality assurance data is monitored regarding attendance, cancellation as well as evaluation of training courses. The group develop and implement ad-hoc bespoke training courses to meet evidenced demand in addition to core training courses.
- Strategic Exploitation Group** (Chaired by Police)

The Strategic Exploitation Group is a new sub-group of both the Safeguarding Adults Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board. The group is responsible for overseeing all work with respect to sexual exploitation, modern slavery and trafficking in Gateshead.

The Board and the four sub-groups regularly commission time limited task and finish groups to undertake specific pieces of project work.

The Safeguarding Adults Board has developed strong links with other local partnerships:



Partner Governance Arrangements and Inspections

There is an expectation that each Board member is responsible for ensuring that governance arrangements for Safeguarding Adults are incorporated within the structure of each partner organisation, and that there are mechanisms for disseminating and sharing information from the Safeguarding Adults Board. Details of inspection results for partner organisations are also shared at the Safeguarding Adults Board. For example:

- Gateshead Council – The Care, Health and Wellbeing Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive updates from the Safeguarding Adults Board. Key areas of work are also submitted to Cabinet for approval. The Gateshead Council Internal Audit service are responsible for ensuring that the Board, and Gateshead Council, are meeting their statutory duties
- Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group – A Children and Adults Safeguarding committee meets six times per year and a quarterly strategic safeguarding forum is held with providers. Training was delivered to the Governing Body Committee to ensure executive and lay members were aware of their corporate responsibilities as regards the Safeguarding agenda. An NHS England assurance visit illustrated positive results for Safeguarding arrangements
- Northumbria Police – The force have undertaken a restructure to create a new Safeguarding Department illustrating significant investment in this area of work. All learning from national and local serious case reviews are scrutinised during Critical Incident Boards which are attended by the Chief Officer Team and Senior Officers. Northumbria Police has been subject to numerous inspections by HMIC including vulnerability and Honour Based Violence (HBV), the force was deemed to be good in Vulnerability and prepared in all aspect for HBV.
- Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust - The Trust Safeguarding Committee continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis and is chaired by the Director of Nursing, Midwifery and Quality. The Queen Elizabeth Hospital was inspected by the Care Quality Commission from 29 September to 2 October 2015 and undertook an unannounced inspection on 23 October 2015. Overall, the Queen Elizabeth Hospital was rated as good for being safe, effective, responsive and well-led and outstanding for caring. The report highlighted Safeguarding procedures were in place and staff could demonstrate an understanding of their role and what action to take if they were concerned about a person.
- National Probation Service – Board member shares information from the Safeguarding Adults Board with the Divisional Safeguarding Lead who resides on a national Safeguarding group
- The Gateshead Housing Company – Safeguarding Adults is included within committee structures. An internal audit of TGHC approach to Safeguarding was undertaken in 2015/16. The control systems and procedures in place were found to be satisfactory,
- Oasis Aquila Housing – Ultimate safeguarding responsibility sits with the Board of Trustees. Overseeing safeguarding is one of their integral

responsibilities and as such they have received updates from the executive. Under the Board there is a Safeguarding Sub-committee which is chaired by the trustee designated 'safeguarding champion'.

- Gateshead College - The College operates a Safeguarding Steering Group which is attended by senior managers from across College to discuss and action safeguarding issues. In addition a College Governor acts in the role of 'Safeguarding Governor' and attends a termly safeguarding group to act as a critical friend. An annual Safeguarding report is provided to the Executive team and the Board of Governors. Week commencing 8th June 2015 Gateshead College had a full inspection and it is important to note that safeguarding received a Grade 1 Outstanding within Effectiveness of Leadership and Management Grade 1 Outstanding.

All partner organisations have their own Safeguarding Adult Policy and Procedures that link with the Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures

Strategic Plan 2016/19 and Annual Business Plan 20z16/17

The Gateshead Strategic Plan 2016/19 was approved by the Safeguarding Adults Board in March 2016. This is the first Strategic Plan for the now statutory Safeguarding Adults Board. The three year plan incorporates five strategic priorities:

- Quality Assurance
- Prevention
- Community Engagement and Communication
- Improved Operational Practice
- Implementing Mental Capacity Act / Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards

The three year Strategic Plan is supported by an Annual Business Plan to enable the Board to prioritise and focus activity over the three year period. To enable the Safeguarding Adults Board to fulfil its statutory obligations and the key principles of partnership and accountability, an additional priority of 'Strategic Governance' has been added.

Annual Report 2015/16 Consultation

The Annual Report has been developed in consultation with a variety of stakeholders, and underpinned by performance information and feedback from members of the general public, safeguarding adult service users, advocates and partner agencies. Stakeholder consultation included:

- Practice Delivery Group
- Health Partners Network
- Healthwatch – via inviting members to a consultation event
- General Public – via eight events during the Safeguarding Adults For Everyone (SAFE) week
- Commissioned providers – via two workshops

- Practitioner feedback – via training courses, self-neglect workshops, housing conference

The Safeguarding Adults Board held a development day in May 2016 to reflect upon progress during 2015/16 for the Annual Report and to ensure that the Annual Business Plan for 2016/17 would enable the Board to focus activity and assist in meeting the challenges identified within the Strategic Plan. To enable Board members and partners to contribute towards the Annual Report, Partners within the Board were also asked to complete a summary of achievements, progress and performance throughout the year.

Our Performance

Safeguarding Adults

The 2015/16 financial year was the first post implementation of the Care Act 2014 and this has proved to be problematic with regards to performance management. The focus of the Board was to implement the revised Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adult Policy and Procedures on 1st April 2015. The radical change to the procedures meant that the Safeguarding Adults electronic recording system required a complete overhaul. The new electronic forms were introduced in November 2015 and following practitioner feedback, and changes to the annual statutory reporting requirements, they have been subsequently revised. The new forms will, from April 2016 onwards, enable the Safeguarding Adults Board to:

- Develop a new performance management framework
- Report on performance with regards to Making Safeguarding Personal – have adults achieved the outcomes which they desired
- Provide greater clarity with regards to the use of the Mental Capacity Act within Safeguarding
- Provide much greater detail with regards to performance and effectiveness

During 2015/16 the Performance Management and Information Team within Gateshead Council have done an exceptional job in compiling safeguarding performance information in these difficult circumstances.

As this is the baseline year for performance information post implementation of the Care Act 2014 it is helpful to provide detailed performance information with regards to Concerns and Enquiries to enable the Safeguarding Adults Board and partners to be fully informed whilst developing new policies, procedures and strategies. This detailed information is included within Appendix 1. Succinct headline information is provided below.

Headline Performance

- **Volume of Concerns and Enquiries**

In 2015/16 there were 2034 Safeguarding Adult Concerns which led to 1638 Section 42 Safeguarding Enquiries. In percentage terms, 80.5% of Concerns led to a Section 42 Enquiry.

For a Concern to progress to a Section 42 Enquiry it must meet the statutory criteria. The Safeguarding duties apply to an adult who:

- Has needs for care and support (whether or not the local authority is meeting any of those needs)
- Is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse or neglect

- As a result of those care and support need is unable to protect themselves from either the risk of, or the experience of abuse or neglect

The high percentage of Concerns that progress to Enquiries demonstrates that those raising Concerns have a good understanding about the new statutory criteria established by the Care Act 2014. There are some concerns however that there is a significant number of cases progressing that do not meet the criteria and could be managed appropriately elsewhere, enabling the Safeguarding Adults Operational team and partners to focus upon those cases that do meet the criteria – often those with higher levels of risk and harm. It has been agreed by the Practice Delivery Group that a priority for the 2016/17 financial year is to develop more robust and comprehensive criteria that assists front line practitioners to make sure that only those cases that do meet the new Safeguarding criteria progress, and that there are appropriate referral mechanisms in place for those that do not progress.

This was the first year of the implementation of the Care Act so it is not possible to directly compare to previous years. It is helpful to note however that in 2014/15 there were 1844 Safeguarding initial alerts which does demonstrate that there has been an increase in Safeguarding Adult activity.

- **Categories of Abuse**

The following performance information relates to the primary category of abuse recorded. The most common category of abuse was Neglect and Acts of Omission which represented 44.99% of all Safeguarding Concerns raised. This was followed by Physical Abuse (22.52%) and Financial and Material (14.90%). This followed a similar pattern to the previous year.

The new categories of abuse introduced by the Care Act represented relatively small volumes in 2015/16:

- Domestic Violence – 30 cases, 1.47%
- Modern Slavery – 1 case, 0.05%
- Self Neglect – 92 cases, 4.52%

- **Age**

66.22% of all Safeguarding Concerns were raised for Adults aged 65 and older, equating to 1347 cases.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

During 2015/16 Gateshead Council received 1832 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard applications. This was an increase in activity of almost double from the previous financial year.

In line with the national average, the highest rate for DoLS applications remains with those over the age of 65. Within Gateshead this represents 1545 applications for those aged over 65 and 287 for those under 65.

There were 219 applications which have not been authorised, due to various standard reasons. The most significant reason was that the person was deemed to have capacity, which took place in 98 cases. Further work will be targeted to those who have made applications where the person has been assessed as being capacitated.

Key Achievements 2015/16

The Annual Report must demonstrate what both the Safeguarding Adults Board and its members have done to carry out and deliver the objectives of its strategic plan. In 2015/16 the Safeguarding Adults Board published a partnership 'plan on a page' and aligned the Strategic Priorities with the Care Act Safeguarding Six Principles. The key achievements for the Board during 2015/16 are therefore documented below and aligned to the Six Principles:

➤ Empowerment

- **Making Safeguarding Personal**

The revised Policy and Procedures implemented on 1st April 2015 embedded the Making Safeguarding Personal approach by ensuring that the desired outcomes of the Adult were actively sought throughout the safeguarding process and that practitioners worked with the Adult to help achieve those outcomes. This is reflected in all practice guidance, training courses, case recording and publicity material.

- **Publicity Information**

Publicity information for Safeguarding Adults was revised, including the publication of a generic Safeguarding Adults leaflet and an easy read version. Both documents focus on the importance of people being supported to make their own decisions and give informed consent.



- **Safeguarding Adults for Everyone (SAFE) week 2nd – 6th November 2015**

The Safeguarding Adults Board committed to contributing towards the first region-wide SAFE week with the aim of raising awareness of Safeguarding Adults. Safe Week was promoted with our commissioned providers and in total, 8 awareness raising events were held in Gateshead throughout the week involving residents, families and staff

members. An information stand was also placed within the Queen Elizabeth hospital for the duration of the week.

Safeguarding Adults For Everyone Week 2nd – 6th November 2015

Mencap Day Centre

A member of the Safeguarding Adults Team attended the day centre and supported the Manager and Deputy Manager to deliver a presentation on Safeguarding Adults to service users and carers.



Appletree Grange Residential Home

Appletree Grange Residential Care Home arranged a coffee afternoon for the relatives of residents. Relatives were given an overview of Safeguarding and advised that Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Some people were surprised to learn that Safeguarding also incorporated Domestic Abuse, Self-Neglect and Modern Slavery. Some relatives gave examples of Safeguarding Concerns they had been involved with.



- **Mental Capacity Action Day 15th March 2016**
In line with the National Mental Capacity Act Action Group, an event was held in Gateshead Civic Centre with the MCA/DoLS Strategic Lead and Principle Social Worker emphasising an individual's right to make unwise decisions, even if they lacked capacity.
- **Dignity Day 1st February 2016**
A letter was sent to all service providers in Gateshead to promote Dignity Day and asking them to take part. Members of the Gateshead Council Safeguarding Adults Team supported Dignity Day in partnership with The Highlands Residential Home who kindly agreed to hold a coffee morning where people who use their service came along to ask questions and share stories.

➤ **Prevention**

- **Further development of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**
The Gateshead MASH has adopted a preventative model and supports individuals who are vulnerable and yet do not meet the Safeguarding criteria. This unique approach adopted in Gateshead ensures that individuals are supported at the earliest opportunity prior to levels of harm and risk increasing. The MASH includes officers from Northumbria Police, Gateshead Council, Victim Support, Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company, Oasis Aquila Housing (Domestic Abuse) and Evolve (Substance Misuse).
- **Development and Publication of Practice Guidance Notes**
The Practice Review Group have developed a series of Practice Guidance notes to assist front line practitioners in their work. Practice Guidance Notes on Self-Neglect and Financial Abuse provide detailed guidance on the signs and symptoms of these categories of abuse to assist early identification of abuse and neglect. Two workshops were held for front line practitioners on self-neglect to support this work.
- **Security Measures for Domestic Violence Victims**
The Housing Services Team, that are now incorporated within The Gateshead Housing Company, were successful in a funding bid for £100,000 for security measures for Domestic Violence victims residing within their own homes.
- **Preventing Violent Extremism work (Prevent)**
The Gateshead Community Safety Board provide strategic oversight of the Prevent agenda, and the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board have led on Prevent at an operational level and incorporated Prevent within Policies, Procedures and training courses. All partners are

committed to the Prevent agenda. An example is that all Gateshead College staff have attended the WRAP 3 training, which helped contribute towards their Outstanding rating from Ofsted.

- **Expansion in QE Hospital Safeguarding Team**

Since the beginning of November 2015, there is a learning disability lead nurse employed in the safeguarding team of the QE hospital. The focus for this role is to ensure high quality patient centred care is delivered to patients with learning disabilities who require services. The scope involves ensuring care pathways are in place, appropriate reasonable adjustments are made and recorded and that staff delivering the care are appropriately informed and supported.

➤ **Proportionality and Protection**

- **Implementation of revised Care Act compliant Multi-Agency Policy and Procedures**

The Practice Delivery Group supported the Safeguarding Adults Board by developing and implementing the revised Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adult Policy and Procedures by the 1st April 2015. The key principles of proportionality and protection are wholly embedded throughout the document.

- **Development and implementation of Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Policy and Procedures**

The Safeguarding Adults Board approved revised Mental Capacity Act and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards Policy and Procedures which are more succinct and focussed upon the rights of the individual.

- **Maintaining compliance with Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards**

Despite a significant increase in the number of applications (nearly double compared to the previous year), during 2015/16 Gateshead continue to maintain compliance by co-ordinating DoLS applications in a timely manner ensuring protection for those individuals was provided where necessary.

- **Training**

The Training Group have prioritised the revision of the Level One Safeguarding Adults Raising Concerns Training and Level Two Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures Training to ensure that both courses reflect the revised Policy and Procedures and focus upon areas of necessary improvement raised by independent audits and case reviews. The Training Group have continued to support a multi-agency training pool of trainers who deliver the Level One course. Both courses have proved to be extremely popular during 2015/16:

Primary Support Reason	Number of Courses	Number of Delegates
Level One – Raising Concerns	49	990
Level Two – Policy and Procedures	16	330
Grand Total	65	1320

The Tyne and Wear Care Alliance provided additional bespoke training for commissioned providers throughout the borough. The Newcastle Gateshead Clinical Commissioning Group have increased their training provision, particularly for GPs (83% of GP staff have received safeguarding training, compared to 30% two years ago). All GP practices now have a named GP Adult Safeguarding Lead and specialised annual updates are delivered to this group across Newcastle and Gateshead with support from Gateshead Council.

Three training courses have also been implemented with respect to MCA and DoLS. Level two MCA/DoLS training has been undertaken by multi-agency workers including, housing, social care (adults and children’s workers), health workers and the police. This has been very well evaluated so far. Most of Adult Social Care have received training on Mental Capacity Act Complexities delivered by a former Barrister. The implications of the Supreme Court judgement have now been incorporated into Corporate Induction training for all staff within the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. In addition a network of MCA champions within the hospital has been established with training for this role currently being delivered.

➤ Partnership

- **Safeguarding Adults Board**

Safeguarding Adult Board meetings in Gateshead have been effectively chaired during most of 2015/16 via Independent Chair Jan Douglas who subsequently resigned at the January Board meeting. Board meetings have been well attended, although lay members have noted that there has been a notable reliance in some cases on nominated deputies and this will be audited during 2016/17. Partner organisations have consistently contributed towards Board meetings, with agendas reflecting varied multi-agency authors and topics. There are examples in which Board members have instigated challenge where necessary and influenced change. Now that the Safeguarding Adults Board has become statutory, the Board have developed an identity via the introduction of a Board logo and corporate colours.

- **Closer working with other local partnership boards**

The Safeguarding Adults Board has developed closer working relationships with the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). This

can be evidenced via the establishment of a joint Strategic Exploitation Group which focuses upon sexual exploitation, modern slavery and trafficking.

A joint Training Directory for 2015/16 was produced in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children Board and the Community Safety Board to maximise opportunities for raising awareness about training courses available.

The Business Managers for the Safeguarding Adults Board, Local Safeguarding Children Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and Community Safety Board have established a bi-monthly networking meeting to share good practice and avoid duplication.

- **Guidance for partner organisations on the development of single agency policy and procedures**

To support our partner organisations, the Practice Delivery Group produced guidance for partner organisations on the development of single agency policy and procedures. This has proved to be particularly popular with provider organisations and voluntary sector / community groups.

- **Commissioned Provider Workshops**

Over one hundred delegates from our commissioned providers attended bespoke workshops in May 2015 to raise awareness about the revised Multi-Agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures with a specific focus upon the increase in role and responsibilities for providers.

- **Housing and Safeguarding Conference**

The Safeguarding Adults Board hosted a conference in September 2015 aimed at encouraging more joint working between Housing and Adult Social Care and to improve understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities. Imogen Parry was invited to attend as a keynote speaker with a focus upon lessons learned for housing professionals determined from previous Serious Case Reviews. Recommendations from the conference, and the work of a task and finish group which implemented a self assessment for housing providers, have resulted in a joint action plan to be implemented by the Practice Delivery Group.

- **Accountability**

- **Appointment of lay members**

The Safeguarding Adults Board and Local Safeguarding Children Board worked together to jointly appoint three lay members in January

2016. The lay members provide independent scrutiny and challenge for the Boards.

- **Independent case file audits**

The Quality and Assurance Group have commissioned two ongoing independent case file audit processes to provide transparent and independent scrutiny of safeguarding adult case work. The Independent Chair is requested to undertake an annual audit of case files and during 2015/16 this took place in September 2015. This is the fourth audit of its type and therefore it was possible to assess progress over the intervening years. Additionally, a unique peer case file audit process has been developed with Darlington County Council. An audit tool has been developed with the aim of undertaking two audits per year in each locality. The first audit took place in Gateshead in January 2016. The audit findings were largely positive but where areas of improvements were identified these have been discussed at the Quality and Assurance Group and will be incorporated within the workplan for the Quality and Assurance Group for future development.

- **Heathwatch Gateshead**

Healthwatch Gateshead's role as an independent body is to represent the residents of Gateshead in the setting and delivery of the Adult Safeguarding Board strategies and policies. To ensure that the views presented by Healthwatch Gateshead represent vulnerable adults, they carry out a range of activities which listen, consult, investigate, promote, influence and represent their views.

Safeguarding Adults Reviews

The Quality and Assurance Group is responsible, on behalf of the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board, for statutory Safeguarding Adult Reviews introduced by the Care Act 2014. The Quality and Assurance Group produced a Safeguarding Adults Review Practice Guidance note to provide a framework for Safeguarding Adult Reviews in Gateshead. This was approved by the Safeguarding Adults Board in March 2015 ready for implementation in April 2015.

During the 2015/16 financial year the Gateshead Safeguarding Adults Board commissioned one Safeguarding Adults Review for Adult A. This commenced in November 2015. Adult A was an 81 year old lady who lived alone and died on 17th February 2015 in Queen Elizabeth Hospital (QEH). The cause of death was identified as cardiac failure, sepsis and extensive pressure sores due to immobility. Adult A's health was declining over the period before her death, she refused Hospital admission on a number of occasions. At times, Adult A also refused care and treatment at home. There were a number of agencies involved with Adult A and the Adult Safeguarding Board made the decision to refer Adult A for a Safeguarding Adults Review to learn the lessons from her unfortunate death and to improve how we co-ordinate self-neglect cases in the future.. The final Overview Report is scheduled to go to the Board in July 2016 and the recommendations will be implemented and monitored by the Quality and Assurance Group.

In addition to Adult A, the Quality and Assurance Group considered six other Safeguarding Adult Referrals throughout 2015/16, none of which were deemed to meet the criteria for undertaking a review. Nevertheless, each of these cases were scrutinised fully and four involved internal case reviews were undertaken.

APPENDIX 1: Detailed Performance Information

➤ Safeguarding Adult Concerns

The statistics below provide information about the Adult whom the Safeguarding Concern was raised:

- **Gender**

Gender	Number	%
Female	1224	60.18%
Male	810	39.82%
Grand Total	2034	100.00%

- **Age**

Age group	Total	%
18 to 64	687	33.78%
65 to 74	265	13.03%
75 to 84	505	24.83%
85 to 94	508	24.98%
95 plus	69	3.39%
Grand Total	2034	100.00%

Age group	Total	%
18 to 64	687	33.78%
65 plus	1347	66.22%
Total	2034	100.00%

- **Primary Support Reason**

Primary Support Reason	Total	%
Learning Disability Support	267	13.13%
Mental Health Support	347	17.06%
Physical Support	838	41.20%
Sensory Support	53	2.61%
Social Support - Social Isolation or Other Support	51	2.51%
Social Support - Substance Misuse Support	23	1.13%
Support with Memory and Cognition	238	11.70%
Not recorded	217	10.67%
Grand Total	2034	100.00%

- **Ethnicity**

Ethnicity	Total	%
Asian / Asian British	7	0.34%
Other Ethnic Group	5	0.25%
Undeclared / Not Known	115	5.65%
White	1907	93.76%
Grand Total	2034	100.00%

The below statistics provide further information with regards to the Concern:

- **Location of Abuse (first recorded location)**

Location of abuse	Total	%
Care Home	733	36.04%
Acute Hospital	19	0.93%
Alleged Perpetrators Home	7	0.34%
Community Group	2	0.10%
Community Hospital	9	0.44%
Day Centre/Services	10	0.49%
Education/Training/Workplace Establishment	2	0.10%
Mental Health Inpatient Setting	8	0.39%
Not Known	53	2.61%
Other	26	1.28%
Other Health Setting	7	0.34%
Own Home	991	48.72%
Public Area	38	1.87%
Someone Else's Home	27	1.33%
Supported Accommodation	100	4.92%
Not recorded	2	0.10%
Grand Total	2034	100.00%

- **Main Category of Abuse (first recorded category)**

Main Category of Abuse	Total	%
Discriminatory	13	0.64%
Domestic Violence	30	1.47%
Financial and Material	303	14.90%
Institutional Abuse	10	0.49%
Modern Slavery	1	0.05%
Neglect and Acts of Omission	915	44.99%
Physical	458	22.52%
Psychological / Emotional	138	6.78%
Self-Neglect	92	4.52%
Sexual	74	3.64%
Grand Total	2034	100.00%

- **Relationship with Alleged Perpetrator**

Relationship of alleged Perp	Total	%
Day Care Staff	61	3.00%
Domiciliary Care Staff	405	19.91%
Health Care Worker	28	1.38%
Main Family Carer	99	4.87%
Neighbour / Friend	145	7.13%
Not Known	176	8.65%
Other Family Member	195	9.59%
Other Professional	82	4.03%
Other Vulnerable Adult	313	15.39%
Partner	118	5.80%
Residential Care Staff	303	14.90%
Self Directed Care Staff	2	0.10%
Self Neglect	31	1.52%
Stranger	54	2.65%
Not Recorded	22	1.08%
Grand Total	2034	100.00%

➤ **Section 42 Concluded Enquiries**

- **Capacity of Adult**

Does the Adult lack capacity?	18 to 64	65 to 74	75 to 84	85 to 94	95 plus	Grand Total	%
Yes	81	40	82	122	16	341	22.43%
No	389	159	301	287	39	1175	77.30%
Don't know	2	0	2	0	0	4	0.26%
Total	472	199	385	409	55	1520	100.00%

- **Action Taken**

SAC ADJUSTED Action Taken	Total	%
No Action Taken	501	32.96%
Action taken and risk remains	78	5.13%
Action taken and risk reduced	700	46.05%
Action taken and risk removed	241	15.86%
Grand Total	1520	100.00%

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**ANNUAL REPORT ON
CHILDREN & FAMILIES SERVICES COMPLAINTS-COMPLIMENTS-
REPRESENTATIONS
APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016**

Introduction

The Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006 sets out the procedure that Local Authorities have a responsibility to follow when a complaint is made about Children's Social Services.

Regulation 13 (3) of this Act states that all local authorities must each financial year publish an Annual Report to identify the number, detail and outcomes to all complaints received.

The information within this Annual Report fulfils Gateshead Council's obligations under this regulation and covers the period from 1 April 2015 – 31 March 2016.

The Procedure

This procedure is for all representations received from children and young people, their parents, foster carers or other qualifying adults about Gateshead Council's Children's Services.

There are three stages to the procedure:

Stage 1 - Local Resolution

This stage is investigated by operational managers. Complaints at this level are expected to be concluded within 10 working days, with an extension of further 10 working days, (with the agreement of the complainant), if necessary. The maximum time for a Stage 1 investigation is 20 working days.

Stage 2 – Investigation

Investigations at Stage 2 are conducted at arms length to the operational service complained about, with full and formal reporting to the complainant by an Adjudicating Officer, (usually at Service Director level), within 25 working days, with extension up to 65 working days if necessary.

Stage 3 – Review Panel

If there is any residual dissatisfaction with the outcome at Stage 2, the complainant can request that the issues are taken to a Review Panel, (Stage 3). Such consideration forms the end of the statutory requirement.

Publicity and Information

Information about the Complaints Process can be made available in key languages and formats. Requests for information in these formats or from customers with sight or hearing impairment are provided via the Council's Communication Team.

There is also a leaflet for children and young people receiving a service. This leaflet was designed with help from the children and young people from One Voice, the Children and Young People's Forum. The leaflet includes a pre-paid slip that can be completed and posted back free of charge.

When young people are admitted into Local Authority care, part of the 20-day review requirements state that they are to be visited by the Council's Children's Rights Officer. The young person also receives a 'Welcome' pack', which includes information, leaflets and other guidance on how to make a complaint.

Children and young people are now able to use their smartphones or tablets to contact the services via Mind of My Own, (MoMo). MoMo is an app which allows the child or young person to comment on their service and if necessary, to raise dissatisfaction.

The Children's Rights Officer, Independent Visitors and Independent Reviewing Officers are important links between the child and the Complaints Manager and ensure that any issues of dissatisfaction are resolved at the earliest opportunity.

Advocacy and Special Needs

The purpose of advocacy in complaints procedures is to ensure that children and young people are given assistance when making or intending to make a complaint. Advocacy is about empowering children and young people to make sure that their rights are respected and that their views and wishes are fully considered and reflected in decision-making about their own lives. Any child or young person wishing to make a complaint must always be offered the services of an advocate.

The Independent Element

Under the complaints procedure, there is a requirement to provide Independent Persons for all Stage 2 complaints. There is a consortium arrangement with South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council and Sunderland City Council, which provides Independent People for Children Act 1989 complaints. There is also a requirement to ensure that Stage 3 Review Panels consist of three members who are fully independent of the Council.

Complaints Investigation Training

Training for Investigating Officers is undertaken on an annual basis. All investigating skills training courses are commissioned from the Local Government Ombudsman, (LGO). This ensures that investigating officers are trained to a specific standard with the focus being on swift resolution, proportionate investigations and appropriate redress. To ensure that all new Managers within Children's Services are fully able to investigate complaints, a LGO Investigating Skills Training Course will be organised for October 2016.

Complaint Recording & Resolution in Children's Residential Facilities

All children's residential homes have their own "in-house" complaints process to resolve low level complaints. Residential staff work with the young person and allow them to identify themselves how their issues can be resolved to their satisfaction. Information about low level complaints is retained within the facility and is available in the event of OFSTED inspections.

Complaints and Representations Received

During 2015/16, 37 complaints were received regarding Children's Services. This is an 18% decrease on complaints received during 2014/15, (45).

The number of low level issues received also decreased by 12.5% during 2015/16, (56 from 64). The majority of low level issues were dealt with directly by the service concerned and were resolved to the customer's satisfaction. In some cases, all that was required was a meeting between the complainant and the Team Manager to clarify the reasons why the service are involved with the family and what the next steps would be. The main themes from low level issues received during 2015/16 were regarding the quality of communication from the Service or individual workers or about organised contact. Contact issues were mainly about the lack of notice for family members if the contact needed to be cancelled.

Low level issues are dealt with by the relevant Team Manager. In all cases, the complainant is asked if they are satisfied that the issue had been resolved. In respect of the issues raised, all communication issues, including lack of information regarding the cancellation of contact sessions are dealt with directly with the worker concerned during individual supervision sessions.

When Children's Services become involved, it is generally due to concerns being raised about the welfare or safety of a child / children, as such, the Local Authority have a legal responsibility to assess the situation and take appropriate action. It is expected that in most cases, social work involvement is often unwelcome so relationships between social workers and families may be difficult or strained. In some cases, raising a complaint is seen as a way to delay or prevent further action.

During 2015/16, 3 Stage 1 and 4 Stage 2 complaints were received after child protection enquiries / proceedings had concluded with the complainants seeking to evidence that the action taken by the Council was unnecessary.

Key Themes of Complaint

After full consideration of all Stage 1 complaints received during 2015/16, 2 key themes have been identified.

1. Quality of Service

As in previous years, the quality of services delivered continues to generate a high number of complaints and accounted for 40% (15) of all complaints received during 2015/16.

Complaints about quality can range from low level issues, to significant concerns about the actions or decisions of the services involved.

The key theme from the complaints received about quality was the lack of effective communication with family members by workers involved with individual cases. When communication breaks down, family members often think that the lack of information is deliberate and then begin to develop negative feelings about the social work involvement rather than being encouraged to contribute to plans and assessments.

After discussion with the Team Managers concerned, it is clear that Service appreciate that good communication is essential to maintaining good relationships with families of children receiving a service. Team Managers are committed to ensuring that workers are aware of this requirement and any issues about communication is always discussed with the worker concerned and if necessary is monitored within regular supervision sessions.

Another theme highlighted within complaints about the quality of the service was disputes around information within social work assessments or reports. In these cases, if the disputed information is social work opinion, the complainant is invited to prepare a statement of what they feel is the correct information, which is then included within the child's case records. Factual errors within reports / assessments are always amended where they have been clearly shown to be incorrect.

During the investigation process, 3 complaints about the quality of the services provided were resolved to the customer's satisfaction and 2 complaints were later withdrawn. However, despite issues being withdrawn, the Service will still consider the concerns and take appropriate action to minimise the risk of similar situations occurring in future.

After investigation, 50% (5) of complaints about quality were not upheld 40% (4) were partially upheld and 10% (1) was fully upheld.

2. Staff Conduct

Although 40%, (15), of complaints were received where the main issue was identified to be about the behaviour of Children's Services employees, further analysis of these complaints show that 86% (13) included other issues. These additional issues included a lack of communication, disputes about information within reports or about alleged breaches of confidentiality.

Complaints about staff conduct cover a number of different areas. They may be regarding alleged rudeness, lack of professionalism, alleged bias to other family members during care proceedings or about the lack of updates or information regarding individual cases. However, in all cases, even minor staff issues do have a negative impact on how families then work with the Services concerned.

All complaints about attitude or behaviour of staff are formally investigated and responded to. After investigation, 33% (5) complaints were not upheld, 46% (7) were partially upheld and only 6% (1) was fully upheld. 2 complaints remain outstanding. It should be noted that after investigation of all complaints about staff behaviour, there was insufficient or no evidence of any inappropriate professional conduct that required any employment action taken against the worker. However, where some areas could be improved upon, the worker may be required to undertake additional training or personal development.

In respect of the complaint that was upheld, the investigation evidenced that the Social Worker concerned had not fully followed procedures in relation to an assessment and this failure had caused a relationship breakdown with the family. This had then caused the family to feel that the worker had deliberately acted unprofessionally.

All Complaints and Representations Received

Representations	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016
Compliments	83	74	77
Corporate Complaints	0	3	4
Complaint related queries	72	64	56
Data Breach	4	5	2
HCPC Referrals	0	0	1
LGO Investigation	n/a	1	4
Stage 1 Complaints	34	45	37
Stage 2 Complaints	4	3	5
Review Panels	0	1	1
Total	197	196	187
Trend %	3%	-1%	-5%

Stage 1 trend	2006 2007	2007 2008	2008 2009	2009 2010	2010 2011	2011 2012	2012 2013	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016
	22	32	18	10	19	29	36	34	45	37
%		45	-44	-44	90	53	24	-6	32	-18

- There has been an 18% decrease in the number of Children Act Stage I complaints received since 2014/15.
- The number of complaint related queries received has also reduced by 12.5% since 2014/15. Complaint related queries are issues that must be resolved within 1 working day of receipt.
- 51% (56 from 110) of formal concerns received were complaint related queries, this evidences that a number of issues are able to be resolved by either the Complaints Team or by services to the complainant's satisfaction. During 2015/16, only 2 complaint related queries moved to a Stage 1 complaint.
- Stage 2 investigations have increased by 67% since 2014/15. The number of Stage 2 complaints received during 2015/16, (5,) is the highest number received since the 2006 complaints procedure was introduced.

This rise may be due to increasing pressure on Team Manager's as previously, any complainant requesting a Stage 2 investigation was offered the opportunity to allow the service to look again at what they remained dissatisfied with. As a result, any residual dissatisfaction was able to be resolved without the need to invoke the Stage 2 process.

- However, only 2 Stage 1 complaints which were received during 2015/16 moved to Stage 2. All other Stage 2 complaints received were a result of complaints investigated at Stage 1 during 2014/16. This means that only 5.41% of Stage 1 complaints progressed to Stage 2 investigations.
- There was 1 Independent Review Panel held during 2015/16. The complaint was regarding the involvement of the Council's Referral and Assessment Team and The Child Protection Unit. The complaint related to issues that took place during 2009.
- The number of complaints, (37), represents 20% of all formal contacts received about Children's Services during 2015/16, (187).
- The number of formal contacts received regarding Children's Services decreased by 5% during 2015/16.
- During 2015/16, 41% of all Children's Services contacts were compliments.

Data Protection Issues

- During 2015/16, 2 formal issues were received regarding breaches of confidentiality. Complaints of this nature are not responded to through the statutory procedure. However, the service must still ensure that the complainant is provided with a full and detailed response. The response should also inform the complainant of their right to progress their complaint to the Information Commissioner should they remain dissatisfied.
- After investigation, 1 complaint was not upheld and 1 complaint was fully upheld. In respect of the complaint that was upheld, the complainant received an apology. A service improvement was also identified.

Specific Areas of Complaint

Service Area	2013 2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Safeguarding, Care Planning & Adoption	61.7%	21	62.2%	28	44.44%	20
Looked after Children Teams	11.7%	4	8.8%	4	13.33%	6
Referral & Assessment	14.7%	5	11.11%	5	13.33%	6
Out of Hours Duty Team	NA	NA	2.2%	1	2.22%	1
Children with Disabilities	5.8%	2	8.8%	4	6.67%	3
Fostering Team	5.8%	2	6.6%	3	0%	0
Reviewing Unit	0%	0	0%	0	2.22%	1
Total		34		45		37

- 44% (20) of complaints were regarding the Safeguarding, Care Planning & Adoption Teams. This was a decrease of 29%, from 2014/15.
- 13% (6) of complaints were regarding the services provided by the Referral and Assessment Team. This is an increase of 20% from 2014/15.
- 13% of complaints were about the Looked after Children's Teams.
- 4 complaints were received directly from looked after children.
- After investigation, 3 of the complaints from looked after children were partially upheld; the other complaint was later withdrawn.
- 5 complaint related queries were also received from looked after children. All issues were resolved by the services concerned.

Main Complaint Issues	2013 2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Quality	91%	30	100%	45	40.54%	15
Staff Conduct	0%	1	0%	0	40.54%	15
Delay	0%	0	0%	0	2.70%	1
Refusal of Service	0%	0	0%	0	0.00%	0
Lack of Service	8.8%	3	0%	0	16.22%	6
Total		34		45		37

Other issues raised within the complaint	2013 2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Quality of Staff Support (low level)	2.9%	1	0.0%	36	13.51%	5
Foster Care Issues	5.8%	2	0.0%	0	2.70%	1
Breach of Confidence / Confidentiality	5.8%	2	0.0%	0	8.11%	3
Poor Communication	14.7%	5	6.7%	3	32.43%	12
Contact Service Issues	8.8%	3	2.2%	1	5.41%	2
Move On Service	2.9%	1	0.0%	0	2.70%	1
Delays	52.9%	18	80.0%	0	5.41%	2
Dispute Assessments / Decisions	5.8%	2	11.1%	5	29.73%	11

- During 2015/16, complaints which included concerns about staff conduct increased. However, this is due to the way that complaints are now recorded. Any issue that includes specific concerns about a worker's professional behaviour will now be recorded under that category.

However, additional issues included within the complaint will also be recorded and responded to. This will ensure that accurate reporting on each complaint can be achieved.

- After investigation, there was insufficient or no evidence to indicate that there were any concerns about staff members that necessitated a referral to internal staff management procedures.
- Any areas of professional staff development are managed by the Team Manager of the Service complained about. This can include additional training or monitoring of work standards via individual supervision sessions
- Quality of Service complaints reduced by 86%. However as already stated, this is due to the way that complaints are now recorded as it is important that staff behaviour, where raised, is identified as the main element of a complaint.
- Quality of service includes:
 - Missed or late contact visits;
 - Contact visits that are cancelled at very short notice;
 - Conflicting or incorrect information by workers;
 - Quality of support from the services involved in individual cases;
 - Poor communication between the workers and family members.
- In respect of the additional issues raised within complaints, poor or lack of communication accounted for 32% of issues.
- Disputed information within assessments / reports or regarding professional decisions taken accounted for 29% of complaints. Complainant's often felt that their family circumstances had been unfairly recorded or they had disagreed with some of the information included within the reports. The complainants then assumed that this had resulted in the decisions made by Social Workers.
- 54% (6) of complaints about disputed reports or decisions were not upheld after investigation.
- 18% (2) complaints of these complaints were partially upheld.

Equalities Monitoring

Gateshead Council recognises that equality monitoring of service delivery is crucial for effective planning and scrutiny of the services that it provides. This monitoring can identify which groups are using services and gauge their level of satisfaction. This information can then be used to highlight possible inequalities, investigate their underlying causes and address any unfairness or disadvantage.

Currently in Gateshead 9.9%, (320) of 3227 children receiving a service are children from the BME communities. As the statutory process is only for service users, or their representatives, complaints numbers tend to be low.

- During 2015/16, there was 1 formal complaint from a member of the BME community. The issues complained about were similar to those that had been raised by other complainants and there was no evidence of bias by the social worker.
- There was 1 complaint related queries from members of the BME community. Again, after consideration of the issues, there was no evidence of any racial discrimination found.
- 8 compliments were received from members of the BME community.

Methods of Complaint

Method of Complaint	2013 2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Complaint Form	8%	3	6.6%	3	8.11%	3
E - mail	8%	3	29%	13	29.73%	11
Children's LAC Leaflet	5%	2	0%	0	0.00%	0
Letter	32%	11	24.4%	11	32.43%	12
Personal Visit	14%	5	15.5%	7	8.11%	3
Telephone	29%	10	24.4%	11	21.62%	8
Total		34		45		37

- Email and letters are the main method of complaint referral accounting for 62% (23) of all complaint referrals.
- During 2015/16, 21% (8) of complainants had contacted the Council by telephone. Complaints of this nature are from those who want an immediate resolution to their problem, in particular those who disagree with information within reports that they have just received.
- Complaints brought by relatives of children receiving a service accounted for 86% (32) of referrals.
- 11% (4) complaints were raised by children and young people receiving a service.
- This is a 100% increase on the number of complaints raised by children and young people during 2014/15, (2). 1 of these complaints was raised via Mind of My Own, (MoMo).

Timescales and Outcomes

Complaints Resolved within 20 Working Days	2014 2015	2015 2016
Not Resolved	22	16
Resolved	23	19

- The statutory timescales for resolution is 10 working days. This can be extended to 20 working days with the complainants' agreement.
- 7 complaints were completed within 10 working days.
- 19 complaints were completed within 20 working days.
- 16 complaints were not completed within 20 working days.
- As it is a statutory duty to respond to complaints within the prescribed timescales, the Service must consider how they can improve on this.

Outcomes of complaints	2013 2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Outstanding	1		0		2	
Closed or withdrawn	3%	1	4.4%	2	14.29%	5
Not upheld	45%	15	42.2%	19	34.29%	12
Partially upheld	36%	12	44.4%	20	40.00%	14
Upheld	15%	5	8.9%	4	11.43%	4
Total		33		45		35

- In 2015/16, 34% (12), of complaints were not upheld after investigation.
- This figure demonstrates that after investigation, there was no evidence of any service failure or inappropriate staff conduct.
- 40% (14) of complaints were partially upheld. Complaints that are partially upheld are often regarding a number of issues. After investigation, some issues of complaint may show some evidence that services may not have been of a sufficient standard expected by the Council, such

as areas around communication. However there may be other elements not upheld that evidence that the service had acted appropriately.

- In all cases, where there has been evidence of service failure, however minimal, the complainants will receive a written apology within their response.

Stage 2 and 3 Complaints

	2012 2013	2014 2015	2015 2016
Stage 2 Complaints	4	3	5
Stage 3 Complaints	0	1	1

- 5 complaints were registered at Stage 2 of the Complaints Procedure during 2015/16.
- This is a 67% increase from 2014/15 (3).
- Only 2 of these complaints were from Stage 1 complaints responded to during 2015/16. 3 Stage 2 complaints were progressions from 2014/15 Stage 1 complaints.
- This means that only 5% of complaints received during 2015/16 progressed to Stage 2 of the procedure.
- 3 complaints were regarding the services provided by the Referral and Assessment Team. All complaints included issues around the actions of the service after responding to safeguarding referrals.
- 1 complaint was about the actions of an out of hour's duty Duty Worker, which was also in response to a referral about the welfare of a child. This complaint also included issues relating to the Children with Disabilities Service.
- 1 complaint was regarding the lack of communication by the Safeguarding and Care Planning Teams. The complaint was also regarding the lack of information from the Child Protection Unit.
- All complaints received included multiple elements of complaint and desired outcomes.
- After investigation, all complaints were partially upheld.
- This is due to the number of individual elements within the statement of complaint. Some elements were found to be unjustified. However some elements were found to be either fully or partially justified.
- As required, all 5 Stage 2 complaint investigations were shadowed by an Independent Person. Independent Persons are not employed by the Council and are responsible for ensuring that the complaints investigation at Stage 2 is fair and transparent.
- As Independent Persons are external to the Council, their involvement has a financial impact on Children's Services. During 2015/16, the costs for Independent Person fees for 3 of the complaints investigated at Stage 2 was £3915.57.
- 1 complaint was considered by an Independent Review Panel. After their consideration of the complaint and how it had been investigated, the Panel Members had suggested that a Senior Officer reviewed the Stage 2 investigation. This has now been completed and an additional Stage 2 Report has now been sent to the complainant.
- All improvements from Stage 2 investigations are included within this report.

Learning from Complaints

At the end of every investigation the Investigating Officer is responsible for identifying any improvements or recommendations resulting from the complaint. Changes can include policy, procedure or staff development.

Complaints about individual practice or failure to follow procedures are dealt with by reinforcement of processes and reiterating customer care standards through Service / Team meetings or individual

supervision sessions. In addition to this, if it is felt that additional or refresher training is required for either workers or teams, this will be progressed by the relevant Team Manager.

In all cases, any issue regarding attitude or conduct of staff are dealt with in line with internal employment procedures. During 2015/16, no complaint about staff conduct had resulted in any employment action against an individual worker.

Improvements to Service:

- As a complaint investigation identified that a Social Worker did not have any experience in dealing with clients with a learning disability, the Manager of the Service agreed to invite an advocate with experience of working with those with a learning disability, to meet with the team and talk about her role and why advocates are important. This will ensure that workers understand how advocacy can support vulnerable parents to raise their views.
- That all workers must ensure that minutes of meetings are processed as soon as possible and sent out to the families concerned. This requirement will continue to be monitored by the services concerned to ensure compliance.
- When assessments are undertaken under Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, (Children in Need Assessments), workers must always obtain consent to undertake the assessment beforehand. This consent must then be recorded.
- A leaflet has been developed to explain the process of Children in Need Assessments. This will be shared with parents or young people before the assessment process commences.
- A leaflet explaining the requirements of Section 20 agreements has now been developed. This is in conjunction with a detailed Section 20 agreement form, which outlines the responsibilities of both the parent(s) and the Council. The form also fully informs on parents' rights under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989.
- To ensure that sensitive information is not shared with those who do not have a need to know, the Safeguarding Children Unit have reminded all senior clerks within the Unit to check the current contact details for individual family members before sending out child protection minutes and plans.
- The Safeguarding Children Unit's Induction Plan for all new staff has been reviewed and now includes a detailed section about confidentiality.
- The importance of timely and regular communication with families will continue to be highlighted during individual staff supervision sessions. This will ensure that any important information is shared and that family members feel included in any decisions taken that affect their children.
- Should there be any difficulties encountered when contacting either family members or others who are significant in the child's life / welfare, other means of contact should always be considered, such as letters / emails or text messaging.
- That during meetings with family members, any agreement for particular tasks or actions should be clearly recorded within the minutes to ensure that all parties understand what is expected of them.
- Children and young people are now given an appropriate and reasonable time by which investigations into actions or behaviour by Foster Carers will be concluded. It is also important that appropriate communication is kept open between the child's fostering and care planning Social Workers during this time.
- That all substitute Independent Reviewing Officers should ensure that they are fully conversant with the case before chairing a Child Protection Conference. This would include reading through the Social Work reports beforehand. This should be done even if it contributes to a delay in starting the meeting.
- That workers across the Service are reminded to always substantiate information before sharing it with other professionals. It is not appropriate to share information as fact without having enough evidence to support this view, as this could have an adverse impact on an individual's case.

- Whenever children are removed from their parent's care, the management overview responsibility should extend to considering whether a referral to Adult Services or Health should be made if there are any significant concerns about a parent's mental health or emotional wellbeing. This decision will be made on a case by case basis.

All improvements highlighted within this report have been verified and have been fully implemented by the Services concerned.

Compliments

There was a 4% increase in all compliments received during 2015/16, (77 from 74). 41% of all representations about Children Services were compliments.

- 17 compliments were regarding the Children with Disabilities Services including Grove House Children's Respite Facility.
- 26 compliments were regarding the Safeguarding and Care Planning Teams.
- 12 compliments were regarding the Adoption Team.
- 5 were regarding the Referral and Assessment Team.
- 4 compliments were regarding the Looked after Children Team.
- 6 compliments were regarding children's residential homes, 2 of these compliments were from looked after children.
- 4 compliments were about the support offered by Children's Commissioning Officers, LADO and Reviewing Officers.
- 3 compliments were regarding the Fostering Team.

Conclusions

Complaints about Children's Services decreased by 18% in 2015/16 in comparison with the number received during 2014/15, (45). Furthermore, 94% of complaints were resolved at Stage 1.

More complaints are being raised around referrals and the subsequent actions by individual services. It is important that all social workers ensure that they maintain good communication with the family during this difficult period. In particular, workers should always try to clearly explain any action that may be necessary, including Section 47 Enquiries or Children in Need Assessments.

Due to a number of issues being raised about the lack of information about Section 20 agreements, a new agreement and supporting leaflet has now been developed. However it is still important that workers ensure that they clarify the process and explain the information contained in the agreement to the parents at the time. It is also important, that despite dealing with very difficult situations, that parents are treated respectfully and where possible, any upset or distress should be minimised. It is hoped that the new leaflets and explanations about processes and assessments are beneficial in reducing complaints made about Children's Services.

It should be noted that Children's Services positively encourage feedback about their services and always ensure that publicity about complaints and compliments is available in public areas and to all families receiving a service. It is also evident that the services are generally well received as during 2015/16, 41% of formal contacts about Children's Services were compliments.

ANNUAL REPORT ON
ADULT SERVICES COMPLAINTS-COMPLIMENTS-REPRESENTATIONS
1 APRIL 2015 – 31 MARCH 2016

Introduction

The Local Authority Social Services and National Health Service Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 came into force on 1 April 2009. This legislation sets down the procedures that Adult Social Care Services and National Health Services, (NHS), must follow when complaints or representations are made.

Representations may not always be complaints; they might also be positive remarks or ideas that require a response from the Council. Enquiries or comments about the availability, delivery or quality of a service, which are not criticisms, also constitute representations.

As part of the responsibilities set out in the Act, local authorities must produce an annual report on all complaints and representations received. This report fulfils Gateshead Council's obligations and provides information on all representations received about the Council's Adult Social Care Services from 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015.

There are two steps to the Statutory Complaints Process;

1. Informal (Local) resolution by the Council;
2. Independent consideration by the Local Government Ombudsman, (LGO).

All complaints must be assessed and given a grading. Categories of complaint are:

- Green Low-level or minimal risk for either the service user or the Council;
- Amber Moderate or medium risk;
- Red Serious complaint graded as high risk.

There are no prescribed timescales for resolution as the quality of the investigation and outcome is significantly more important than attempting to adhere to a stipulated period for response. However, it is very important that the complainant is always kept up to date on the progress of investigation.

Publicity and Information

Publicity on how to complain can be provided in several formats, encouraging and facilitating easy access to the complaints process. All new service users receive a complaints leaflet in their information pack. A leaflet is also provided when a service user receives the outcome to an assessment / reassessment of need.

Independent Element

The Council operates an internal investigation procedure. Complaints administration is fully independent of any service delivery to ensure fairness and impartiality.

Advocacy and Special Needs

Vulnerable people receiving a Social Care service are encouraged and supported to express their views and to access the complaints procedure if they wish. In all cases advocacy is offered if it is felt that the complainant would benefit from this service.

Individuals who wish to complain about a Public Health service can obtain free independent advocacy support. This advocacy is Government funded and is exclusively for Health Service complaints.

Training and Employee Development

Training for Investigating Officers is provided on an annual basis. All Adult Social Care Team Managers / Service Managers are expected to have undertaken investigating skills training.

The Investigating Skills Training Course is facilitated by the Local Government Ombudsman. This training concentrates on defining, investigating and resolving complex complaints. It also emphasises the need to identify any improvements that may be necessary as a direct result of individual complaints.

A Local Government Ombudsman Investigating Skills Training Course is to be arranged for October 2016. This will allow new Adult Social Care Managers to be trained to the LGO investigation standards. It will also provide existing Managers with the opportunity to refresh their investigatory skills.

Equalities Monitoring

Gateshead Council recognises that equality monitoring of service delivery is crucial for effective planning and scrutiny of the services that it provides. This monitoring can identify which groups are using services and gauge their level of satisfaction. The information can then be used to highlight possible inequalities, investigate their underlying causes and address any unfairness or disadvantage.

Information about the complaints process can be made available in key languages and formats. Information for customers with sight or hearing impairment can also be provided.

Representations Received from 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016.

During 2015/16, 62 complaints were received regarding Adult Social Care Services. This is a 3% decrease on complaints received during 2014/15, (64).

The number of low level issues received also decreased by 23% during 2015/16, (44 from 57). The majority of low level issues were dealt with directly by the services concerned and were resolved to the customer's satisfaction. In some cases, all that was required was a discussion between the complainant and either the Social Worker or the Team Manager to clarify issues or to identify what was required to put things right. Before closure, the complainant is asked to confirm that they are satisfied that the issue had been resolved.

Themes of Complaints Received 2015/16

There were two main themes of complaints received during 2015/16.

1. Quality of Service

During 2015/16, quality of service remained the main theme of complaint. 53%, (33), of complaints that were received during this period were regarding the quality of the services being provided. Issues raised included:

- The quality of support given to individuals;
- Disputes when workers did not support the views of family members;
- Disputes when workers were acting in the best interests of the service user;
- Issues about how assessments were carried out. In particular sharing information about charging for care.

After investigation, 34%, (10), of complaints were not found to be justified and 41%, (12), were partially upheld. Only 20%, (6), of complaints about quality of service were upheld. Any improvements from these complaints are included within this report.

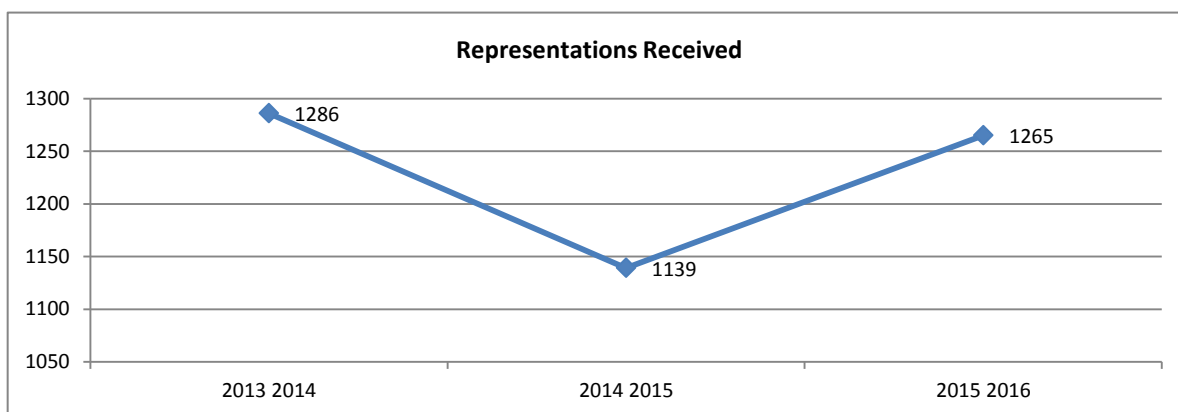
2. Staff Issues

18 complaints were received which included issues around staff conduct. From this figure, 15 complaints had attitude / behaviour as their main issue. In all cases any areas about staff behaviour are fully investigated to ensure that any inappropriate conduct is dealt with and measures are put in place to prevent any reoccurrence. This could be either monitoring staff behaviour through individual supervision sessions or by providing additional or refresher training. If the issues were serious, the Council may also invoke their own internal employment procedures.

Details and numbers of Complaints and representations over the past 3 years

This section deals with the number of complaints and representations received over the past 3 years

All Formal Contacts	2013 2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
	Commissioned Service - Own investigation	0.08%	1	1.23%	14	1.35%
Corporate Complaints	0.00%	0	0.09%	1	0.16%	2
Complaints	6.30%	81	5.62%	64	4.91%	62
Complaint Related Queries	4.43%	57	5.00%	57	3.40%	43
Commissioned Services Issues	0.00%	n/a	5.62%	64	4.04%	51
Compliments	87.71%	1128	80.42%	916	85.04%	1074
Data Breach	0.00%	n/a	0.18%	2	0.00%	0
Health & Social Care Joint Investigations	0.47%	6	0.44%	5	0.24%	3
Insurance Claim	Na	Na	0.26%	3	0.08%	1
Inter-Agency Concerns	0.39%	5	0.35%	4	0.16%	2
MP / MEP Responses	0.16%	2	0.18%	2	0.24%	3
Safeguarding Alerts	0.39%	5	0.44%	5	0.16%	4
Whistle Blow	0.08%	1	0.18%	2	0.24%	3
		1286		1139		1265



- There has been a 11% increase in formal recorded contacts since 2014/15.
- However this is due to the increase in compliments received during this period as the number of formal concerns received have reduced by 3%.
- Complaint related queries reduced by 25%. Complaint related queries are low-level representations that must be resolved within one working day after receipt.
- The main theme from low level issues received during 2015/16 was regarding the quality of home care services, (9). 5 were regarding commissioned home care and 4 were about Council provided home care and were mostly around charging for care. All home care issues were resolved to the complainant's satisfaction.
- After consideration of all low level issues received during 2015/16, it was found that no low level concern had resulted in a formal complaint.
- Commissioned Service Issues are concerns received by other professionals on behalf of service users which are then shared with the providers to resolve themselves. During 2015/16, 51 commissioned service issues were received. This is a 20% decrease on the number received during 2014/15, (64).

- After consideration of the issues raised, 4 statutory complaints were immediately referred to the Safeguarding Adults Procedure. Safeguarding Adult Co-ordinators are then responsible for liaising with the complainant and ensuring that they are kept up to date of any developments.
- 85% of representations made during 2015/16 were compliments and only 15% were concerns or formal complaints.

Complaint Categories	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016
Green	40	7	4
Amber	40	56	57
Red	1	1	1
All	81	64	62

- Overall, Adult Services complaints decreased by 3% compared to 2014/15 figures.
- Complaints about Assessment and Personalisation and Provider Services increased since 2014/15, but have continued to reduce from the number received during 2013/14, (81). The Services have confirmed that the continued reduction from 2013/14 is partly a result of more people having a better understanding of changes in practice resulting from the Care Act 2014.
- The number of complaints assessed as Green (minimal risk to the Council or service user) accounted for 6% of the total number of complaints received.
- Amber complaints, which are medium risk to the Council or the service user, accounted for 92% of all complaints received. This evidences that complaints are continuing to increase in complexity and often include a number of issues.
- The number of complaints that are assessed as Red, (high risk to the Council or the service user), has remained constant since 2013/14.

Service Area	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016
Assessment & Personalisation	67.90% 55	40.63% 26	54.84% 34
Care Call	3.70% 3	7.81% 5	6.45% 4
Commissioning & Business Development	7.41% 6	23.44% 15	6.45% 4
Finance & ICT	2.47% 2	0.00% 0	3.23% 2
Health & Housing Support	2.47% 2	12.50% 8	8.06% 5
Provider Services	16.05% 13	15.63% 10	20.97% 13
Total	81	64	62

- During 2015/16, almost 55%, (34), of complaints were about the Assessment & Personalisation service.
- This is a 31% increase on the number received during 2014/15, (26).
- Only 6%, (3), complaints were regarding disputes to assessed needs. This is a reduction of 86% on the number of complaints regarding this area received during 2014/15 (**21**). This has been attributed to how Assessing Officers apply the eligibility criteria and to the improved communication of decisions made to the service user or their family.
- 29%, (10), of Assessment & Personalisation complaints were regarding the attitude or behaviour of staff. All included elements of alleged improper conduct. This dissatisfaction was mainly about how the professional conduct of the worker carrying out assessments or reviews was perceived.
- After investigation, 25%, (2), of complaints about staff were not upheld, 50% (4) were partially upheld, 12.5% (1) was upheld and 12.5%, (1), was moved to the Insurance Process.
- One complaint was dealt with through the Council's internal employment procedures.
- Complaints about Council Provider Services increased by 30%, (13), since 2014/15.
- Provider Services include Promoting Independence Centres, Shared Lives Services and Council homecare.
- 46%, (6), of complaints about Provider Services were regarding the standard of care provided by the Promoting Independence Centres.
- After investigation, 80%, (4), of complaints were partially upheld, 20%, (1), was fully upheld and 20%, (1), was not upheld. Any improvements resulting from these complaints will be detailed within this report.

- 15%, (2), complaints were about the attitude of staff members. After investigation, 1 complaint was partially upheld and the other complaint was later withdrawn.

Distribution by Service Division	2013 2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Services for People under 65	49.38%	40	36%	23	30.65%	19
Services for People over 65	49.38%	40	64%	41	67.74%	42
Health & Housing Support – Children's Services	1.23%	1	Na	Na	1.61%	1
Total		81		64		62

- 67%, (42), of complaints were about services for people over 65. This figure has been consistent over the last three years.
- 12%, (5), of these complaints were made by service users themselves.
- 1 complaint, 1 low level issue and 35 compliments were received from service users with a learning disability.

Issues of Complaint	2013/2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Delay	6.1%	5	3%	2	6.45%	4
Lack of Service	2.4%	2	5%	3	11.29%	7
Quality of Service	72.8%	59	80%	51	53.23%	33
Refusal of Service	3.7%	3	6%	4	0.00%	0
Staff Issues	14.8%	12	6%	4	29.03%	18
Service User Conduct	0%	0	0%	0	0.00%	0
Total		81		64		62

- 53%, (33), of complaints were around the quality of services received and remains the greatest cause for complaint. However, the number of complaints raised regarding quality decreased by 35%, (51), from 2014/15.
 - Quality of service involves alleged failure of service delivery, for example:
 - Home carers not turning up;
 - Non return of telephone calls;
 - Late or missed visits, either by assessing officers or by social workers;
 - Poor response after a request for service.
- 24%, (8), of complaints were regarding the quality of the support provided.
- 28%, (2), of the 7 complaints responded to regarding support were not upheld. 28%, (2), were partially upheld, 28%, (2), was not upheld and 14%, (1), was later withdrawn.
- 29%, (18), complaints were regarding attitude or behaviour of staff.
- 83%, (15), of these complaints cited staff attitude as their main issue. After investigation, 61% of complaints about attitude or behaviour of staff were either partially or fully upheld.
- All staff conduct complaints are formally investigated and responded to by either a Team or a Service Manager. Any professional development areas, including standards of work are highlighted and closely monitored where appropriate.

Outcomes of complaints	2013/2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Outstanding		2		8		6
Closed or withdrawn	2.5%	2	1.5%	1	12.50%	7
Not upheld	43.0%	34	41%	23	28.57%	16
Partially upheld	31.6%	25	22%	18	35.71%	20
Upheld	22.8%	18	25%	14	23.21%	13
Total		81		64		56

- 28%, (16), of all complaints were not upheld after investigation.
- 59%, (33), of complaints were either fully or partially upheld during 2015/16. This is a 12% increase on the number of complaints that were either fully or partially upheld during 2014/15.
- After initial investigation, 1 complaint was closed and transferred to the Safeguarding Adults Process.

Timescales

- 40 working days was the average time to investigate complaints during 2015/16.
- Although there are no statutory timescales for response, the Council expects all complaints to be completed within **30** working days of receipt. However, after consideration of the issues raised, it is clear that complaints are becoming more complex and often include a number of issues requiring investigation. Therefore, it is important that the quality of the investigation is not compromised to achieve timescales. In all cases, the Investigating Officer is expected to ensure that the complainant is kept informed of any delays and is informed on when they can expect a response.

Method of Complaint	2013/2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
Service Feedback Form	7%	6	7.9%	5	4.84%	3
Complaints Form	10%	8	0%	0	3.23%	2
Email	22%	18	31.3%	20	33.87%	21
Letter	28%	23	39.1%	25	27.42%	17
Personal Visit	6%	5	4.7%	3	9.68%	6
Telephone	26%	21	17.2%	11	20.97%	13
		81		64		62

- Letters and emails are now the main method of referral accounting for 61%, (38), of all complaints received.
- In response to a request from members of the Physical Disability, Sensory Impairment Forum, it was agreed to set up a Text Messaging Service for complaints and representations. However, despite the number being included on all complaint documentation, no text representations have yet been received.

Equalities Monitoring

Ethnic Status	2013 2014		2014 2015		2015 2016	
White British	97.53%	79	96.88%	62	98.39%	61
Black/ Black British	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	1.61%	1
Chinese	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
Mixed	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	0.00%	0
Asian / Asian British	0.00%	0	1.56%	1	0.00%	0
Other White	2.47%	2	1.56%	1	0.00%	0
		81		64		62

- 1 formal complaint and 11 compliments were raised by members of the BME community.
- All compliments were regarding the quality of the services provided by Adult Social Care.

Specific Areas of Complaint within Adult Social Care

Commissioned Care Services – All issues received

Commissioned Services	2013 2014	2014 2015	2015 2016
Formal Complaints	6	10	1
Complaint Related Queries	7	8	7
Commissioned Service Issues	NA	64	51
Provider – Own Response	1	14	19
Insurance Claim	0	1	0
Moved to Safeguarding	Na	Na	3
Whistle Blows	0	2	2
Total	15	99	83

- During 2015/16, 1 formal complaint was received regarding a commissioned care home. This issue was investigated and responded to by a Contract Management Officer, within the Commissioning Team, and was found to be partially upheld.

- 19 complaints were assessed and deemed suitable to be passed to the commissioned service to progress through their own complaints procedure. In each case, the service is requested to share a copy of the response letter with the Council for contract monitoring purposes.
- 63%, (12), of complaints investigated through commissioned services own procedures were regarding commissioned home care.
- 31%, (6), were regarding the quality of care provided by commissioned care homes.
- 51 low level issues about commissioned services were also received from either Assessing Officers or Social Workers in relation to concerns raised during an assessment or review.
- 82 of these concerns were regarding the quality of home care services.
- Concerns about late, missed or short care visits remains the main theme of complaint.
- 11 issues were regarding the quality of the care provided by residential homes.

Once complaints are resolved, Contract Management Officers are expected to ensure that any proposed actions or improvements to service are carried out and fully monitored. Any feedback, which includes dissatisfaction, is helpful to inform the Commissioning Team of how the current care services are operating and how they could be commissioned in the future.

- During 2015/16, 4 compliments were received about the quality of the work carried out by individual Contract Management Officers.

Health & Social Care Joint Investigations

The statutory complaints process covers NHS and Social Care Services.

All complaints that are received which are about services provided by both Health and Social Care are co-ordinated by either the Council's Complaints Manager or the Complaints Manager responsible for the Health Service area subject to the complaint. The organisation responsible for the majority of the complaint will take the lead in the investigation and will ensure that a combined response letter is sent to the complainant within the agreed timescales.

3 complaints were around services provided by both Health and Social Care during 2015/16. This is a decrease of 40%, (5), since 2014/15.

2 complaints were led by Adult Social Care, 1 complaint was led by colleagues within Health. All complaints included elements regarding the Queen Elizabeth Hospital. Issues complained about included the standard of care provided to the service user by both Adult Social Care and Health workers, the quality of support provided in relation to discharge, how sensitive information was dealt with and delays organising a service.

After investigation, 2 complaints were upheld and 1 complaint was partially upheld. Any improvements to Adult Services are outlined within this report.

Safeguarding Adults Concerns

During 2015/16, 4 concerns were received which immediately identified areas of possible abuse against vulnerable adults. All 4 complaints were considered through the Safeguarding Adults Process.

3 complaints were received about the management of the Safeguarding Process. This is a decrease of 40%, (5), since 2014/15. The complaints were all regarding the quality of communication to families or representatives of service users who were the subject of the alleged abuse. After investigation, 1 complaint was not upheld, 1 complaint was partially upheld and 1 complaint was later withdrawn.

Public Health Complaints

During 2015/16, there were no formal complaints received by the Council regarding Public Health Services. However, as all commissioned services, which includes Public Health, are required to have their own complaints procedure, the services are responsible for the management of their complaints and compliments themselves.

To ensure that all of the services offered by Public Health are of a recognised standard, the Public Health Contract Management Officer has developed a reporting mechanism so satisfaction / dissatisfaction can be monitored.

The agencies have continued to report the number of complaints and compliments received on a regular basis. During 2015/16, there have been 19 concerns and 199 compliments about Public Health Services.

Public Health Complaints & Compliments	2015 - 2016	
	Compliments	Concerns
Gateshead Evolve	11	3
Platform Gateshead	3	0
South Tyneside Foundation Trust	123	7
Integrated Sexual Health	62	7
Live Well	0	2
	199	19

Learning from Complaints: Examples of Service Improvements

Learning from complaints is critical to prevent recurrence of the cause(s) of the original complaint. It is important that we make sure that people's experiences help the Council to improve services where possible. Changes can include policy, procedure or employee development.

Complaints about individual practice or failure to follow procedures are dealt with by reinforcement of processes and reiterating customer care standards through Service / Team meetings or individual supervision sessions.

In all cases, any justified issues regarding attitude or conduct of staff are dealt with in line with internal employment procedures.

Improvements after a complaint include:

Promoting Independence Centres

- If medical assistance for a resident within the Promoting Independence Centre is summoned, even if non-urgent, family or carers must be informed at the earliest opportunity, even if they are expected at some point the same day. This recommendation is now embedded in the service quality assurance systems and has been communicated to all staff.
- Staff at Promoting Independence Centres now contact Gateshead Equipment Service, (GES), immediately if there are any concerns relating to equipment supplied by GES. After which they will inform the Social Worker, district nurse and/or other professionals involved in the persons care.
- Promoting Independence Staff should record all settings of equipment installed, to ensure that they are appropriate to the person using the equipment.
- All Promoting Independence Centre equipment is now inspected and reviewed on a regular basis and prior to use to ensure that it meets health and safety requirements. This inspection is then validated within written records.
- On admission to the Promoting Independence Centre where multi-agency involvement is required, all professionals will be expected to meet with service users and their families to explain roles and responsibilities. This will ensure well-defined goal plans and outcomes and guarantee a positive experience within the Centre.

- Appropriate documentation has been developed for multi-agency use to ensure records demonstrate seamless and chronological recordings of the input and actions of professionals' involvement.
- Regular planning and review meetings are now held with service users/families to update on progress. It will also gather views about service user's experiences during their stay within a Promoting Independence Centre.
- Carer consultations are also now carried out on a regular and timely basis to ensure that they are reassured and satisfied with the care being provided.
- A timetable of activities should be fully visible within Promoting Independence Centres to ensure service users and their families are aware of social opportunities during a stay. This information is also now discussed on admission and within review meetings.
- At least one member of staff now remains visible in residential communal areas where a number of service users' are present to provide assistance when necessary.
- Promoting Independence Staff now ensure that all visitors, including nurses or other professionals are reminded to sign the visitor's book. A visual notice has also been placed above the book instructing all visitors to sign in/out.
- All Promoting Independence Centre's who accept an emergency admission must ensure that they confirm that the service user or their representative is aware of the fees and charges required for their stay and gain the service user/representatives agreement to this.
- All staff within Promoting Independence Centres have been reminded of their own personal responsibility when dealing with dissatisfaction. Staff have also been reminded that any concerns reported to them directly should be dealt with through the appropriate process / procedure.

Assessment & Personalisation

- All workers have been reminded of the need to include close family members, (or any others significant in the care of the service user), in the assessment and care planning process. This requirement will be regularly discussed and recorded on personal supervision documents.
- All staff have been reminded to ensure that clear information is given to service users and their families when terminating services.
- It has been arranged with the Queen Elizabeth Hospital that before a referral to Adult Social Care is made, that staff must gain written confirmation from either the service user or appropriate family members. This will ensure that people want to engage with Adult Social Care beforehand. It has also been arranged with Hospital staff that a private room is made available for those patients and relatives who want to talk confidentially with a social worker or assessing officer.
- The Rapid Response Team have developed a contingency plan as part of their Standard Operating Procedures, which is now followed in times of increased pressure on the service. This will ensure that staff are aware of the procedure and give them confidence to accept all appropriate referrals with the knowledge they will be able to respond within their target time of 2 hours.
- A clear method of communication has been set up between the Rapid Response Team and the out of hours Care Call and Emergency Duty Team, to keep them informed of service developments and clarifying the remit of the Rapid Response service.

Compliments

Information about compliments is fed into all Adult Social Care Services, including the Commissioning Team, to highlight good practice and to identify opportunities for improvements to services.

There has been a 17% increase in compliments compared to the amount received during 2014/15. Compliments accounted for 85% of all representations made during 2015/16.

- 32%, (347), of compliments, received in 2015/16 focused on the care provided by the Councils Promoting Independence Centres.
- 30%, (327), were regarding Council provided Domiciliary Care.
- 55%, (181), of Council Domiciliary Care compliments were about the START service. The START Service is a short term reablement team who concentrate on providing service users with the skills to remain at home. This service can help prevent the need for larger or more long term packages of care.
- 14%, (154), of compliments were regarding Services provided by Assessment & Personalisation.
- 58%, (89), of compliments about Assessment & Personalisation were about the Physical Disability Teams.
- 5%, (56), of all compliments were regarding Health & Housing Support.

Conclusions

Adult Services complaints decreased by 3% compared to 2014/15 figures.

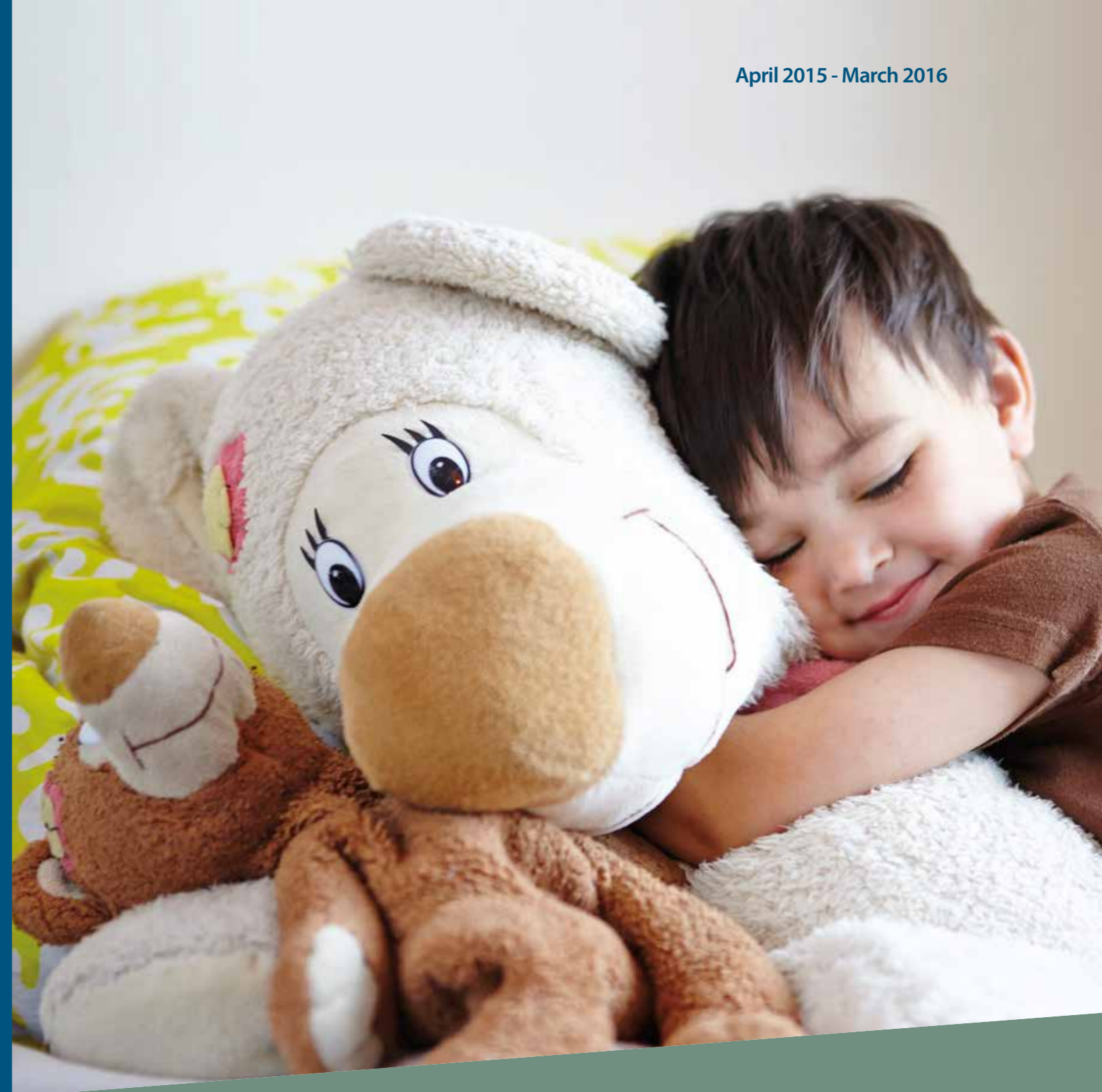
Although complaints about Assessment and Personalisation and Provider Services increased, the Service have confirmed that the continued reduction from the high number received in 2013/14 is partly a result of more people having a better understanding of changes in practice resulting from the Care Act 2014. Workers are now applying eligibility criteria robustly which often results in dissatisfaction from those who either dispute the outcome of their assessment or feel that the Assessing Officer had not conducted the assessment / review appropriately.

The national profile of Commissioned Care Services continues to be raised throughout national and local media. This scrutiny is reflected with the number of concerns raised either by relatives of those receiving a service or by other professionals undertaking reviews of services. This evidences that all those who are involved in a service user's care, either professionally or a family member ensure that any concerns are highlighted and dealt with appropriately.

Gateshead Council's Adult Social Care has recently been reviewed. It is expected that changes to how the services are delivered in future will be beneficial to both current service users and those who may later require a service. It will also mean that referrals and requests for support are dealt with quickly and any identified needs of service users are met in a timely manner.

Thinking about adoption, but not sure where to start...

...Start your journey with Gateshead Council



Adoption Service

Gateshead Council
Regent Street
Civic Centre
Gateshead NE8 1HH

Telephone: 0191 433 6388
Email: adoptionandfostering@gateshead.gov.uk
Website: www.gateshead.gov.uk/adoption

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June 2016

Adoption Service

Annual Report

adopt with Gateshead



Introduction

It gives us great pleasure to introduce Gateshead Council's 2015/16 Adoption Service Annual Report. As Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Acting Strategic Director Care, Wellbeing and Learning in Gateshead we hold the responsibility to ensure that children requiring adoption receive good quality services which will support them. Giving children the best start in life is one of the four main priorities of the Council's Plan for 2014-2017. One of the key priorities is to maximise available placement choices for children who can no longer live with their birth family by recruiting a wide range of prospective adoptive families.

Achieving positive outcomes for children and effective support for all those affected by adoption is a crucial component of the work of the service and integral to the strategic vision for Gateshead, Vision 2030, which sets out targets for the improvement of the lives for all Gateshead residents.

We are highly committed in Gateshead to achieving the best outcomes for our children and young people and we know that, for some children, the best way to achieve this is through providing new forever families for them. For many, this is through being adopted. We continue to be proud of our record in this area but will always strive to further improve the support we offer to children, adoptive parents and birth families.

This Annual Report highlights the progress in adoption services over the past year and describes the work we do as an Adoption Agency.

The Adoption Service continues to operate in an environment where major procedural and legislative reform is being proposed. A key challenge for the Service is to address these changes as they arise, review and update policies and procedures and implement any necessary improvements.

We look forward to the challenges for the coming year and building on the existing work of the service in order to continue to improve the outcomes for children and families.

We would like to thank all the members of the Adoption Panel for their commitment during the past year and all the staff, from within the Council and other organisations, for their continued hard work in making adoption a positive outcome for many children in Gateshead.



Angela Douglas

Councillor Angela Douglas
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People



Allison Elliott

Allison Elliott
Acting Strategic Director Care, Wellbeing and Learning

The Children

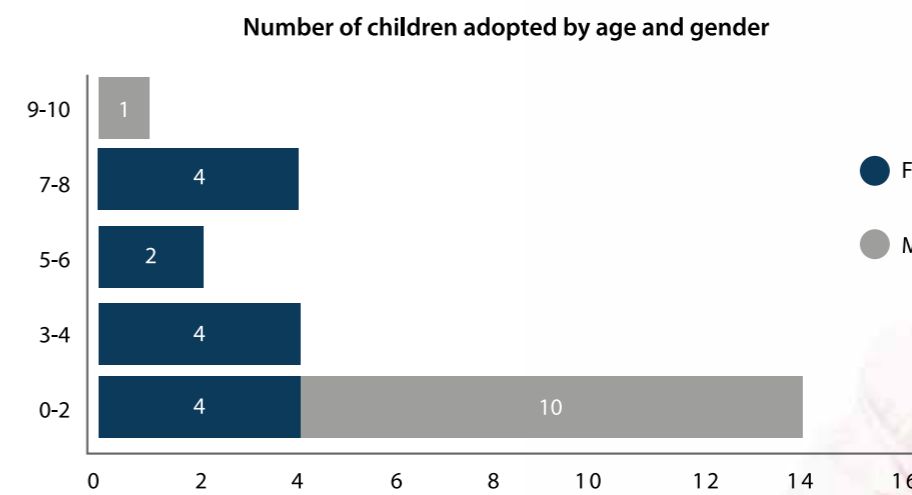
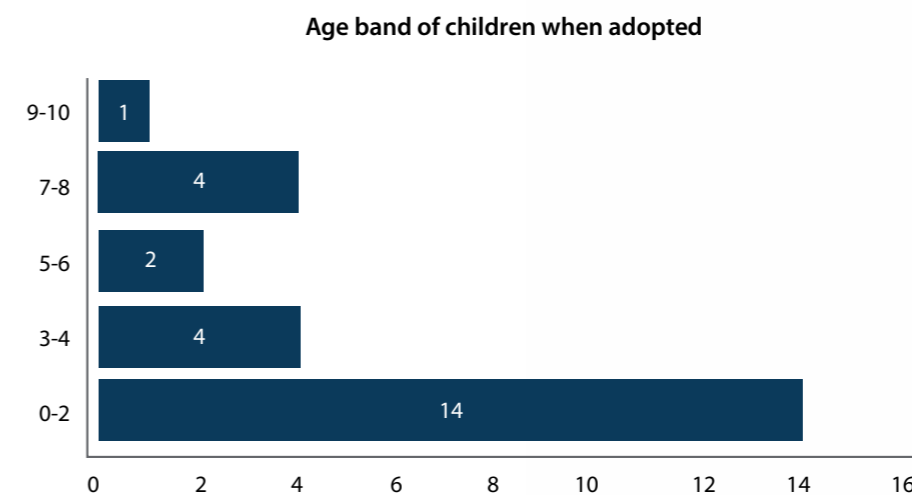
Our results

At the year ending March 2016 **25** children placed for adoption by Gateshead Council had been adopted, a further **16** children were currently placed awaiting their adoption, and the team were actively family finding for adoptive families for a further **11** children. For some of these children the Service had already identified that it would need to look outside of its own internal resources, given the children's specific needs or a requirement to geographically place outside the north-east.

Of the **25** children adopted during the year 2015/16

- **11** were boys and **14** were girls.
- **23** children were placed individually and **2** children were part of a sibling group.

The ages of the children adopted are illustrated below.



In 2013/14 and 2014/15 there were slightly more boys than girls adopted; however this year there were slightly more girls.

80% of children were aged 6 or below at the date of their adoption, with 56% aged 2 or under. However, as in previous years, the Adoption Service has also been successful in achieving adoptions for a small number of older and more complex children.

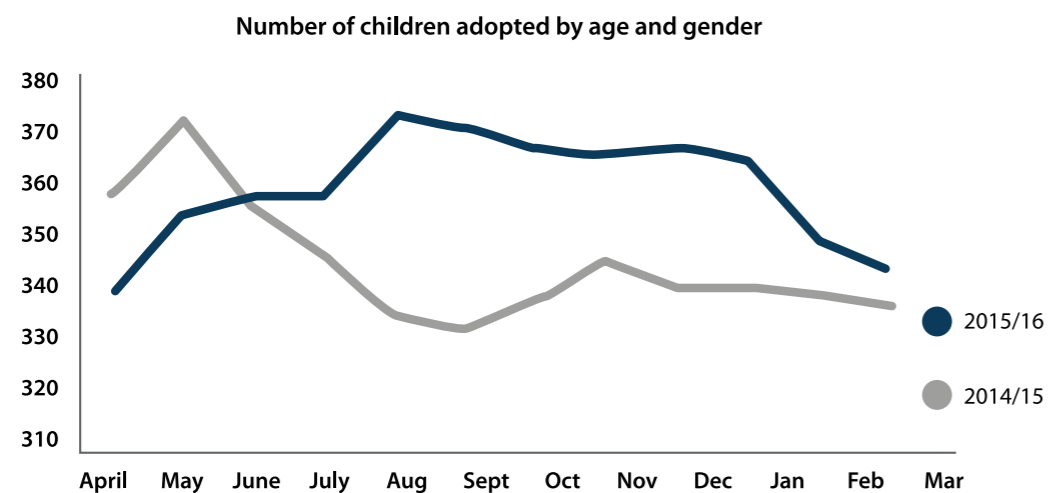
Adoption panel considered **27** matches of children with prospective adopters during the year 2015/16 compared to **22** in the previous year. Some of these 27 children went onto be adopted in 2015/16 whilst others are still awaiting the final legal order to be granted. Of these 27 children around **22** were matched with adopters assessed and approved by Gateshead and **5** were placed with adopters assessed by external agencies. This proportion is similar to our performance for the previous two years.

“ Adoption performance is good. Children are identified at an early stage when adoption is being considered as part of their plan for permanence and their parallel plans are effectively tracked to minimise delays. Recruitment practice is robust and the majority of assessments are completed within timescales. Good links exist with regional partners and agencies, which broadens the potential links for children. Children are well matched with adopters and effective ongoing support promotes stability, which adoptive families highly value. ”

Quote from Ofsted Inspection Report - 11 March 2016

Over the last year the number of Looked After Children in Gateshead has ranged from 340 at its lowest to 372 at its highest. We saw a peak of 372 Looked After Children in August 2015; this figure decreased over the following five months, then fell quite sharply to 343 for our 2016 year end figure.

As evident in the graph below the number of Looked After Children was higher during 2015/16 compared to 2014/15.



At 31 March 2015 there were 337 Looked After Children of which 23 had a Placement order granted (6.8%)

At 31 March 2016 there were 343 children of which 28 had a placement order granted (8.2%)

The reduction in the percentage of Looked After Children in 2015 and the number having placement orders granted had a corresponding effect on both adopter recruitment that year and the number of adoptions achieved in the following year.

If we take an average of the last two years as a benchmark for the number of Looked After Children who might require adoption then one could estimate that at the very most 10% of our Looked After Children may need adoptive placements. However, one would also need to monitor these figures on a regular basis to see if trends change.

For comparison,

- if we predict that 10% of our Looked After Children will need adopting then we would need to recruit adopters for 34 children.
- if we predict that the figure is nearer to 7 or 8% then we would need to recruit adopters for between 23 to 27 children respectively.

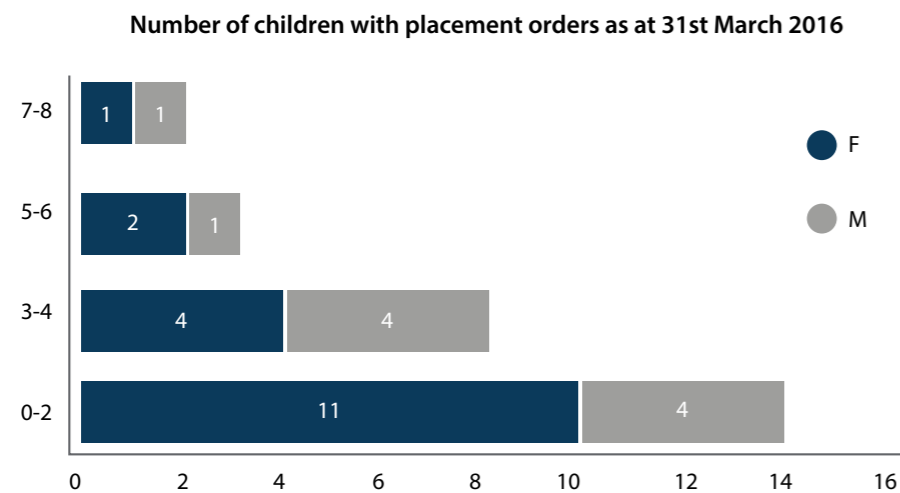
It would therefore seem sensible to plan our recruitment strategy to meet a minimum need for **23** placements but to also have contingency plans in place to increase activity if required.

Recruitment will need to centre mainly on prospective adopters able to consider young children and sibling groups. There will also be a need to recruit a small number of prospective adoptive families able to offer placements to older children and children with very complex developmental and health issues.

For the previous three years the Service has provided two-thirds of the families for Gateshead children requiring adoption from within its own internal resources. In order to maximise the placement choices for children the Service would wish to continue to work towards an increase in the number of options available in the forthcoming year.

To date the Service has also made effective use of a government grant which is currently available and reimburses agencies for the costs of an interagency placement providing certain criteria are met. To date, this provision has enabled us to recoup £97,000 in total, the costs of interagency placements for four children, which include one BME child, an older girl and a sibling group of 2 children respectively. At the time of writing this report it is unclear whether or not the government intends to extend the grant provision beyond the original deadline of 6th July 2016. However, it is anticipated that two further grant applications will be made before then in respect of 2 sibling groups who are shortly to be matched and placed with their prospective adopters.

Adopters for whom no suitable matches can be identified with Gateshead children within 3 months of their approval will continue to be encouraged and supported in their consideration of appropriate and suitable links with children from other agencies, which is not only of benefit to children elsewhere in the region waiting for adoption but also assists the Service to offset some of its costs in purchasing placements for children whose needs cannot be met via our own resources.



At the time of writing this report the level of family finding being undertaken within the Service has increased since year end March 2016. The Service is currently in the process of identifying prospective adoptive families for **18** children and has advance notice in respect of a further **16** children whose cases are currently in court proceedings and depending on the outcome may require adoptive placements. Whilst we anticipate that it will be possible to meet a significant proportion of this demand from within our own resources it will still be imperative to consider external options and to actively recruit further families in order to maximise placement choice for children.

“Children are well matched with suitable adopters. Where it is in the interests of children, further time is taken to find the right family. There are no undue delays..... The Service has a good record for placing older children and for placing brothers and sisters together.”

Ofsted inspection report March 2016

Adopters

Within the year April 2015 to March 2016 Gateshead Council Adoption Panel recommended approval for **12** prospective adoptive families recruited and assessed by the Adoption Team. This is a decrease on the previous year's number of **22** families. This drop in figures corresponds to the reduction in the number of Looked After Children being granted Placement Orders and subsequently needing an adoptive placement referred to earlier in this report. Given the agency already had sufficient numbers of adopters approved and waiting for placements, the recruitment of further adoptive families seeking to adopt children aged between of 0-2 was temporarily suspended for a short period of time. The age range of children requiring adoption at this time was much higher and consequently our efforts went towards prioritising those applications and assessments from prospective adopters who had indicated their interest at the outset in taking a slightly older child or a sibling group.

It is pleasing to see that two sets of adopters approved during the year were “second time adopters” i.e. adopters who had previously adopted a child via Gateshead Council and subsequently applied to us to adopt again.

In the same period the Adoption Panel considered matches for **27** children with their prospective adoptive families. This figure includes **19** children placed individually and **4** groups of siblings. The children ranged in age from two months to 9 years.

A substantial majority of the children, **22** to be precise, were matched with adopters recruited and assessed by Gateshead Adoption Service. These figures also include three foster carer families who had expressed an interest in adopting children they were looking after.

The current assessment process is a two stage process with the expectation that the first stage is completed within two months and the second part within four months. The majority of assessments are completed as near to timescales as possible but in the main where the Service has been unable to meet these deadlines this has generally been due to awaiting the return of essential information from other agencies such as police and health checks.

“Prospective adopters are well informed about adoption through information evenings and the pre-approval training prepares them well. The majority of the assessments are timely, robust and child centred with clear analysis supporting the recommendations. Where a few delays occur, there are viable reasons that are recorded and these delays are not due to lack of urgency by the service.”

Ofsted inspection report - March 2016.

At the date of writing this report the Service currently has **11** prospective adoptive families under assessment and a further **12** adoptive families already approved and awaiting placements. There are links already in progress for a number of these adopters and it is anticipated that several Gateshead children requiring adoption will be matched and placed with their adoptive families in the next few months.

Adopter Recruitment

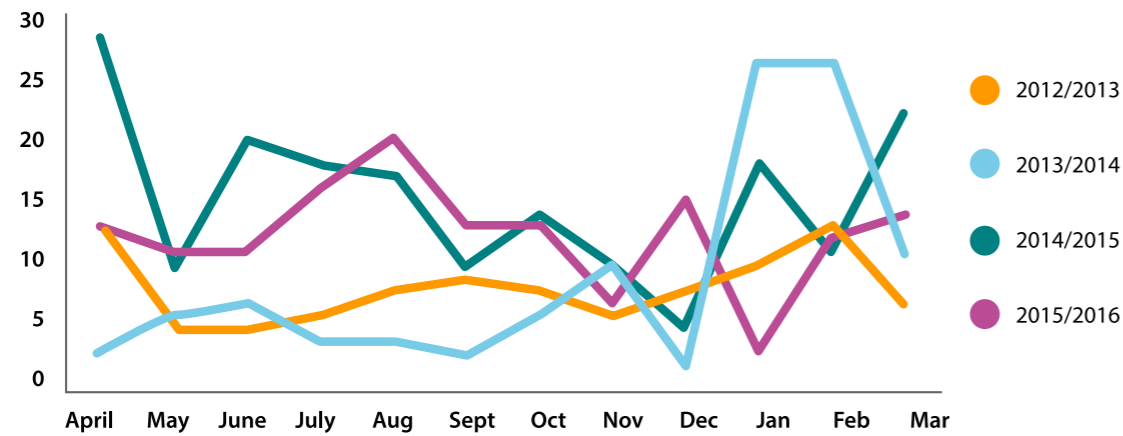
The recruitment strategy for 2015-16 aimed to recruit sufficient adoptive families to meet the needs of children to be placed for adoption locally. Where capacity allows the adoption service will also recruit prospective adopters who can meet the needs of children regionally and nationally.

A key aim of our strategy during the past year has been to strengthen the Adoption brand into the wider community and this was achieved through various activities including:

- Radio campaigns
- Regional outdoor (billboard) advertising
- Public Transport advertising

The graph below provides a visual representation of the enquiry rate and shows the impact of continuing marketing activities.

Adoption Enquiries by Month



The table on the following page highlights the spread of enquiries since April 2012. There has been a slight decrease in the overall number of enquiries since last year (19%) but as this still constitutes a higher level than years 2012/13 and 2013/14. During the early part of 2016 the service has noticed an increase in referrals from neighbouring local authorities who are not currently recruiting adopters.

Enquiries by month - Prospective Adopters

ENQUIRIES BY MONTH	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	TOTAL
April	13	3	28	13	57
May	5	6	10	11	32
June	5	7	20	11	43
July	6	4	18	16	44
August	8	4	17	20	49
September	9	3	10	13	35
October	8	6	14	13	41
November	6	10	10	7	33
December	8	2	5	15	30
January	10	26	18	3	57
February	13	26	11	12	62
March	7	11	22	14	54
TOTAL	98	108	183	148	537



Out of **148** enquiries we issued **19** registrations of interest forms. This represents a conversion rate of 12.8%; which equates to nearly 1 in every 8 enquiries progressing to the stage of being invited to register an application. This is a good outcome and response rate as we are aware that a high proportion of enquirers approach a number of agencies before finally deciding on which agency to register their interest with.

“ Thanks so much for your prompt reply and for arranging for information pack to be sent to us. ”

Email from enquirer - July 2015.

“ Hello, I was looking for information on Adoption. The initial “If you are thinking about adoption but not sure where to start ... you have come to the right place” was so comforting. Such a small sentence means so much when you are unsure where to go for advice. Thank you. ”

Email from enquirer in relation to recruitment materials - December 2015.

The table on the following page evidences the spread of the enquiries received by the Service during the year 2015/16. Given that one of the service aims is to offer an assessment to potential adopters within a fifty mile radius we will continue to promote Gateshead Council across a broad geographical area in order to attract prospective adopters from outside the Council boundaries.

This is particularly pertinent as there are occasions when the Service needs to identify options for children requiring placements outside the immediate Gateshead area. Our figures indicate that our approach to recruitment continues to attract a good level of enquiries from both Gateshead and surrounding areas.

Enquiries by Area - Prospective Adopters

ENQUIRIES BY AREA	2012/2013	%	2013/2014	%	2014/2015	%	2015/2016	%	TOTAL
County Durham	2	2.04	5	4.63	16	8.74	9	6.08	32
Cumbria					1	0.55	1	0.68	2
Gateshead	49	50.00	53	49.07	101	55.19	55	37.16	258
Hartlepool					1	0.55			1
Newcastle Upon Tyne	4	4.08	4	3.70	10	5.46	13	8.78	31
North Tyneside	3	3.06	3	2.78	15	8.20	11	7.43	31
Northumberland	3	3.06	6	5.56	1	0.55	12	8.11	22
Redcar and Cleveland					1	0.55	1	0.68	2
Slough					1	0.55			1
South Gloucestershire			1	0.93					1
South Tyneside	10	10.20	9	8.33	7	3.83	10	6.76	36
Sunderland	3	3.06	6	5.56	13	7.10	15	10.14	37
Not Recorded	24	24.49	21	19.44	16	8.74	21	14.19	82
TOTAL	98	100	108	100	183	100	148	100	537

Whilst the majority of enquiries continue to come from within the Gateshead area it can be seen that there has been an 18% decrease in enquiries from within Gateshead compared to the previous year which equates to the overall decrease in enquiry figures since 2014/15.

Recruitment from outside the area will continue but in order to ensure that we have sufficient adopters from within our own area we will also continue to target Gateshead residents in future recruitment and marketing, making full use of “Free of charge” tools such as Council News, Council Website, Council Info and Gateshead Now.

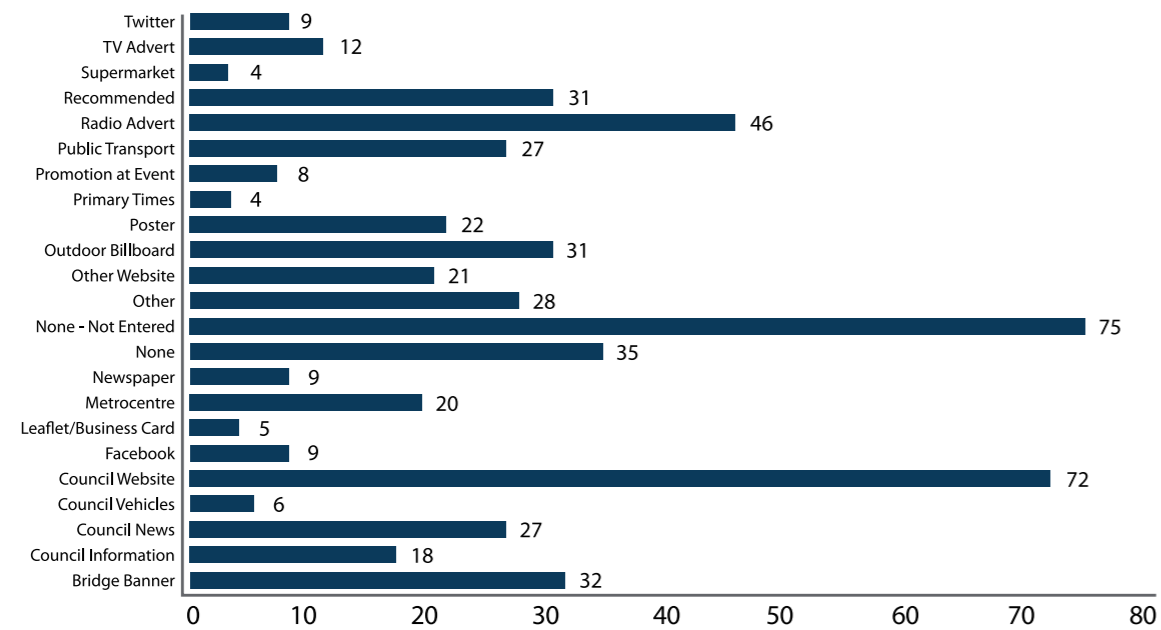
In order to monitor the effectiveness of our recruitment activity we routinely ask all our enquirers which of our promotional materials they have seen. The table on the following page shows all of the promotional materials which have been seen and used by enquirers during 2015/16.

The top six channels cited are:

- Council Website
- Radio Adverts
- Bridge Banners
- Billboards
- Public Transport & Council News



Promotional Materials



31 individuals commented that they came to us “by word of mouth” and indicated that Gateshead Council had been recommended to them by friends, colleagues or professionals. Further feedback also indicates that a large proportion of enquirers have found the sections on adoption on the Council website very informative and helpful. This feedback will also be utilised to help inform and improve our communication and recruitment plans for the year ahead.

The service will continue with its wide range of recruitment activities to ensure that we attract sufficient new adoptive families for children requiring adoptive placements. An outline plan for the year has been devised which maximises the use of “free of charge” marketing tools as well as delivering joint “paid for” campaigns with the Fostering Service, where appropriate. The ongoing monitoring of adopters under assessment and children requiring adoptive families will continue to take place in order to inform future plans and make changes where necessary.

“ There is a coherent recruitment strategy for adopters based on an analysis of the likely predicted numbers, needs and profiles of children. Marketing activities are effective and interest and enquiries have increased. Adopters report very positively on their initial contact with the service and the quality of information and welcome they receive. ”

Ofsted Inspection Report - March 2016

Family finding for children

The service continues to utilise a wide range of family finding methods for children such as the Adoption Register, Adoption Link, Be my Parent, Parents for children and national voluntary sector resources such as It’s All About Me. Members of the team will also continue to be involved in regional family finding events and meetings such as Activity days and as required will host our own “You, Me, Us” profiling events.

“ Family finding is purposeful with a dedicated worker pursuing options and links for children through a range of contacts, the national adoption register and regional information sharing... There is effective use of, and prompt referrals made to, the National Adoption Register to initiate nationwide family finding. In the last 12 months, seven children and eight adopters have been referred for national family finding.... The majority of children were matched successfully locally and within the wider region. ”

Ofsted inspection report - March 2016.



Foster for Adoption

We have incorporated information about Fostering for Adoption into all our information and publicity for prospective adopters and into their preparation training. Fostering for Adoption will not be suitable for all adopters so this is an aspect that would be robustly explored with prospective adopters both during the assessment process and following approval. Effective links are also in place with the Fostering Service to provide additional input and training with regard to the fostering requirements for prospective adopters who might be interested in offering such placements.

Since the implementation of Fostering for Adoption the Service has been able to offer a small number of Foster for Adoption placements. The background circumstances of each placement have been very different and the experience of the adopters involved to date has been varied, partly as a result of requirements of the courts in relation to some of the more recent cases.

A focus group involving three of our four Foster to Adopt families was held in September 2015 with the intention of obtaining feedback about their experience in order to help identify what works well, any points of learning and potential adjustments to current processes to better help support adopters and children.

“ It was a fantastic opportunity to meet the child when they are only days old and be a part of their life from such an early stage. ”

Adopter - focus group September 2015.

The majority of the feedback was positive and highlighted the positive support that the adopters felt they had received from both the Adoption and Fostering Services. The financial support provided was especially appreciated by the families who needed this. Following on from this meeting the Service has taken forward some of the suggestions such as the provision of training and support for extended members of the family who might be involved and crucial to an adoptive placement e.g. Grandparents.

“ Fostering to adopt is a relatively new initiative that is successfully achieving permanence through adoption for children. One fostering-to-adopt couple spoke positively of how they were able to care for a new-born baby through early medical treatments in hospital. The baby had the opportunity to form early attachments from birth... This is a very positive start and the Service is actively promoting this initiative as part of the options for adoption in all recruitment activity. ”

Ofsted inspection report - March 2016.

Adoption Support

In 2015-16 the government invested £19.3 million towards the creation of the National Adoption Support Fund (ASF). The fund came into operation on 1st May 2015 and is intended to be used for payments for therapeutic interventions to help support adoptive families. Recent announcements have confirmed that the ASF will continue to operate with increased funding every year until 2020, following which it is hoped plans will be in place to ensure its future sustainability.

Since implementation the remit of the fund has developed and changed over time and proposals are now in place to further extend the scope of the Fund to also include Special Guardians of children who were previously Looked After. This will create additional work for the agency which will have implications in terms of current processes and capacity for dealing with a likely increase in the number of applications and requests for support.

To date the Adoption Service has made six successful applications to the Fund, with further applications currently in the pipeline. It is anticipated that the level of our applications to the ASF will continue to rise in the year ahead as both professional and public awareness of the Fund grows and the number of requests for adoption support received by the Service continues to increase.

In addition, we will continue to review and consider what changes can be made in terms of our existing service provision and development to help us enhance the “Gateshead adoption support offer”.

We already have in place a well-established support group and the facility to offer a parenting skills group course for adopters.

We will also continue to run our annual “Summer Fun Day” for adopters in July each year. This day provides a great opportunity for adopted children and their parents to get together and enjoy fun activities and an excellent informal support opportunity as adoption social workers are available on the day.

The service has also maintained its involvement in local initiatives, such as the Sage Music Project, which not only provides support to adopters, but helps children’s development and attachment through the use of music, and we will continue to be involved in any future discussions with the project in relation to further project development.

We also continue to work alongside other adoption agencies in the region to run a monthly “Waiting Adopters Group”. This group provides support to approved adopters who are waiting to be matched with a child or children. These groups are generally well attended by Gateshead adopters alongside staff from the Adoption Team.

Our post adoption contact post-box is currently dealing with 443 different contact arrangements each year, an increase of 48 on the previous year figures. As well as dealing with an increased number of contacts our input and support to birth family members affected by adoption and adopters requiring support post adoption is also increasing.



We have experienced an increase in the level of referrals from families who are resident in Gateshead but who adopted children via other adoption agencies, once that agency's statutory responsibility for providing support has ceased. Our existing Service Level agreement with After Adoption currently enables us to pass on a small number of adoption support and access to birth record cases and to offer families requiring a support service the option of input that is independent of the local authority, thus adding capacity and flexibility to our adoption support offer.

“ Arrangements to support children and adopters pre and post adoption are effective and responsive. Timely assessments are completed to identify needs and tailor support packages. Adopters are well informed of their entitlements and the availability of the Adoption Support Fund. Adopters spoken with valued the support they receive and the difference it made to their confidence, relationships with children, understanding of attachment patterns and the improved stability in the family. In the last 12 months the service supported 31 families. A further 57 families are receiving assessed financial support. ”

Ofsted inspection report - March 2016.

“ Just to thank you all for the training, events and support we have received. We have found each and every one of you to be caring and professional. ”

Letter from adopters - March 2016

Disruptions, adopters withdrawing, changes of plan for children

During 2015/16 the Service experienced one significant adoption placement breakdown of a child it had placed with adopters. This involved a child with very complex needs which became more apparent and intensified following their placement in their adoptive family. A case review and disruption meeting was undertaken by an experienced independent social worker in August 2015 in order to help identify any points of learning and practice development.

“ There are minimal disruptions, with one break down in 2014-15. This demonstrates the quality of matches for children and the post-adoption support available. The potential lessons from a review of the disrupted placement have been reflected on by the service and the Adoption panel ”

Ofsted inspection report - March 2016.

For the year 2015/16 two prospective adoptive families where the agency had accepted Registrations of Interest were unable to be progressed beyond Stage One of the assessment process. In both cases this was because of major health issues which would not be conducive to the security and stability of a successful adoptive placement.

During the year 2015-2016 the plan for adoption was unable to be achieved for some children and their plan subsequently changed to long-term fostering.

“ For a small number of children (six) where extensive national searches have not found potential adopters, action has been taken to secure permanence through long-term fostering, in three cases with their existing foster carers. ”

Ofsted Inspection report - March 2016.



Complaints and compliments

For the year 2015/16 the Council's Complaints section has a record of **one** formal complaint from a birth parent in relation to post adoption letterbox contact which was not upheld and a record of two lower level issues dealt with internally by the Service. One concerned the non-acceptance of an expression of interest in adoption and the other a lack of support from the agency, the latter being partially upheld.

In addition the Complaints Section also has a record of **12** compliments for the same period received from a variety of sources including enquirers, adopters going through the assessment process or those who have successfully adopted. Some of these comments have already been incorporated into earlier sections of this report.

“ We really appreciate all the amazing support you have given us during our adoption journey. You have been so professional and honest whilst also being caring and we have felt prepared for all stages of the process and also the different findings. We have felt you have been so easy to talk to and we always felt we could open up to you and obtain support. We will miss you and can't thank you enough. You really are a special person. ”

Letter from adopters - March 2016

“ For all your time and support through matching panel and the introduction week, we cannot thank you enough. Knowing you were always at the end of the phone or email and then talking to you about our little joy, we couldn't have wished for a better support worker. And we are over the moon with our son - he is ACE! ”

Letter from adopters- August 2015



Central List membership for Adoption Panel - April 2015 to March 2016

Ian Gates, Independent Chair

Councillor Peter Mole

Paul Forbes, Social Worker, Barnardo's (Vice Chair)

Neil Carr, Foster Carer

Karen Wilson, Social Worker Fostering Team

Debbie Wilkinson, Team Manager, Safeguarding and Planning Team

Janet Dugdale, Team Manager, Safeguarding and Planning Team

Jill Smith, Clinical Psychologist

Ingrid Ford, Life story Adviser, Durham County Council (left 2015)

Ann Forster, Adopter (joined November 2015)

Sharon Jones, Adopter (joined February 2016)

Medical Adviser and Panel member

Dr Helen Palmer

Panel Advisers

Janice Cook, Legal Services

Anne Roberts, Adoption Team Manager

Panel Administrator

Sonia Forster

Whilst Ingrid Ford has had to resign from the Central List and the Panel has lost valuable input in terms of the life story perspective, we have been very fortunate in that two experienced adopters have subsequently expressed an interest in joining our Central List. This was an area where the agency had identified that it lacked representation at Panel meetings and had taken some steps to address this.

“ The adoption panel is suitably robust and carefully considers recommendations for approvals and the quality of matching children with adopters. The agency decision maker makes timely decisions and, where required, pursues additional information to inform well-considered decisions for children. ”

Ofsted report - March 2016.

Adoption Service Quality Assurance Framework

The Adoption Service has a robust quality assurance system in place to ensure that feedback is received at various stages of the adoption process. All feedback is collated and used to inform service planning. The table below outlines each stage of the quality assurance process:

ADOPTION SERVICE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK		
Stage	Mechanism	Person completing assessment
1.	Training Evaluation Form	Completed by prospective adopter following attendance at training
2.	End of Stage 1 meeting with Team Manager	Discussion led by Team Manager and outcome agreed
3.	Quality Assurance Visit (Pre Adoption Panel)	Adoption Team Manager or Senior Practitioner
4.	Adoption Panel Attendance Feedback Form	Adopter and Child's Social Worker
5.	Satisfaction Survey completed following adoption order	Adopter and Child's Social Worker

During the past year the majority of the feedback received through these processes has been extremely positive.

In summary the key themes are:

- Training sessions are well organised, facilitated and enjoyed by attendees; they are also a great opportunity to discuss issues with other people in the same situation.
- The end of Stage 1 meetings and the Quality Assurance Visits highlight that prospective adopters have had a positive journey so far. They value the recruitment process and support they have received from their worker. Prospective adopters often comment that they have found the experience very positive and friendly, with all staff making them feel relaxed and comfortable.
- Attendance at panel is also often seen as a positive experience from both the perspective of the prospective adopter(s) and the child's social worker. Feedback indicates that the atmosphere is friendly; the panel members are welcoming, attentive and professional.
- The satisfaction surveys indicate that satisfaction levels of both approved adopters and children's social workers are high with the majority of respondents saying that the service provided is either "Excellent" or "Good".



Key Issues and aims for the year ahead

Abuse, domestic violence and parental substance and alcohol misuse are significant issues in the background of many children requiring adoption. These trends have implications not only for family finding in that the needs of children are likely to be more complex and may mean they might be more difficult to place because of the higher level of special needs, health issues, and aspects such as foetal alcohol syndrome, but they will also be of relevance for the immediate and future support that families caring for such children will require.

In 2016/17 the key issues for the Adoption Service will be to:

- To build on our successful marketing approach and continue to recruit potential adopters from within a 50 mile radius of Gateshead. This activity will remain fluid in order to respond to the ever-changing needs of the service. Activities will be delivered in consultation with the Council's Communication Team. The service will maximise the use of all appropriate Council Communication channels, both internal and external, to achieve value for money. This will be supplemented by appropriate high level marketing activity throughout the region to attract as many prospective adopters to Gateshead.
- Increase the numbers of potential adopters wanting to adopt older children and sibling groups.
- Meeting the increasing demand for post adoption support as children with more complex needs are placed for adoption. To continue to develop and enhance the existing post adoption support that is on offer through more effective use of the Adoption Support Fund.
- To assist the agency in its response and development of new processes, procedures and support services as a result of the extension of the Adoption Support Fund to include Special Guardians.
- To explore opportunities for continued collaborative working with other Local Authorities and voluntary adoption agencies in order to maximise placement choices for children
- To consider creative options for family finding and build on new initiatives and arrangements with other agencies to generate a larger pool of available adopters and facilitate family finding
- Continued development of "fostering to adopt" opportunities to reduce delay for children being placed in permanent alternative families.
- Managing the changes and the requirements of the ongoing Adoption Reform agenda, and the implications of new proposals contained in the recently published DfE document, "Vision for Change," which requires local authorities to move to a system by 2020 where adopter recruitment, matching and adoption support are all delivered on a regional basis and to have plans in place by 2017 to evidence that they are working towards this outcome.
- Continued development of our performance and monitoring systems in order to effectively analyse outcomes and areas for future service development.

Conclusion

2015/16 has been a successful year for the service. **25** children have been successfully adopted. We have maintained a good level of recruitment of prospective adopters, placed several children for adoption with a low level of placement breakdown, continued to offer and develop our adoption support offer and built on new initiatives such as fostering to adopt. In addition, the Service achieved a good outcome and was the recipient of several positive comments in the recent Ofsted Inspection report.



“Is it easy? Not always...
...Is it worth it?
Absolutely”

Fostering Service

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Civic Centre, Gateshead NE8 1HH
Telephone: 0191 433 8333

Email: adoptionandfostering@gateshead.gov.uk
Website: www.gateshead.gov.uk/fostering

Different Formats

If you require this information in a different format such as Large Print, Braille, on CD/Audio/MP3 or in a different language please contact 0191 433 6388



June 2016



Fostering Service

Annual Report

foster for Gateshead



Introduction

As Lead Member for Children and Young People in Gateshead and Interim Strategic Director of Care, Wellbeing and Learning we hold the responsibility to ensure that children requiring fostering receive good quality services which will support them.

Foster carers play a vital role in helping children make sense of their past, live for today and enjoy their new future. Our Fostering Service and team of foster carers work in partnership to ensure children live in safe, nurturing family homes where they can achieve their potential and enjoy their childhood. One of the recruitment campaigns during this year said "Do something amazing in 2016 - Give a child and a family a future" and that is exactly what the service and our foster carers do.

This 2015/16 Fostering Annual Report of Gateshead Council highlights some real progress the fostering service has made over the past year. 26 new foster carers have been approved, and our carers continue to achieve success in their Level 3 Diploma in child care the Training support and development standards for the Children & Young People's Workforce. We look forward to building on this work and continuing to improve outcomes for children and families in Gateshead.

Gateshead Council continues to seek to improve outcomes for Looked After Children in order to improve their life chances and opportunities. These outcomes are closely linked to placement stability and ensuring that children have placement choice and are matched and placed with the right carers.

It's fantastic that this area of work was noted in the Ofsted Inspection Report, published in March 2016, which stated "Placement stability is very good and the vast majority of children looked after live with foster carers." They added, "The success of recruiting good-quality carers and careful matching is illustrated through very good placement stability. Foster carers are well supported."

We are extremely proud of the work that the whole Fostering Team does in order to provide the best possible service for our Looked After children in Gateshead. We are acutely aware that children in our care deserve the very best and colleagues and foster carers alike are to be commended for, not only the work they do but for their dedication and commitment.

We thank you all for making such a difference.



A Douglas

Councillor Angela Douglas

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People



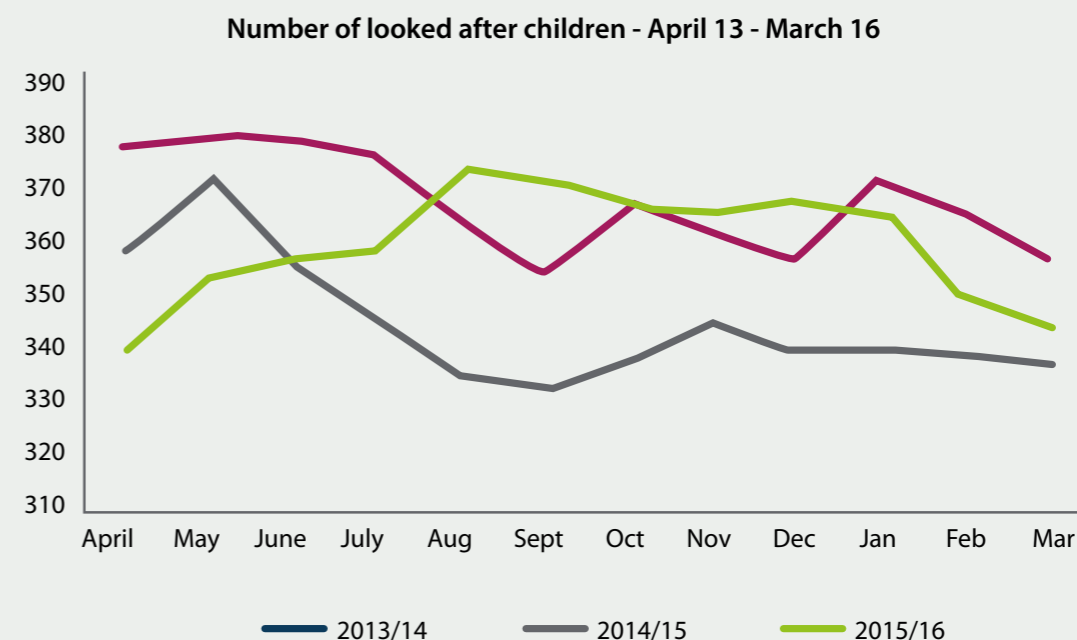
Allison Elliott

Allison Elliott

Acting Strategic Director Care, Wellbeing and Learning

The Fostering Service

The Fostering Service staff team is made up of the Team Manager, 2 Assistant Team Managers, 15 Supervising Social Workers, an Education Worker who liaises with the REALAC team and schools in the area, a Support Worker who engages with children and young people in the community on a one-to-one basis and a Recruitment and Marketing officer. The team is supported by a Business Support unit with dedicated support to foster carer payments, panel and duty administration..



Over the last year the number of Looked After Children in Gateshead has ranged from 340 to 376 with the majority of these children being placed with in-house foster carers.

Many of the children leaving care throughout the year are those who are already living with relatives under Fostering Regulations where other legal orders are obtained to secure their permanence with that family i.e. Special Guardianship or Residence Orders. This does not free up any fostering placements within the Service and consequently resources and placements have continued to be limited. This issue of limited placement capacity is not unique to Gateshead as the Fostering Network estimates that there is a shortfall of 8,750 fostering placements across the whole of the U.K.

Payment for Skills

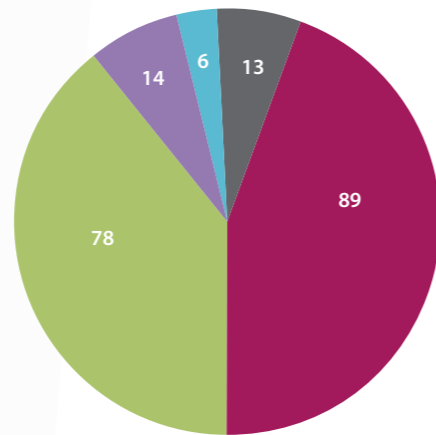
Gateshead Council seeks to continuously improve outcomes for Looked After Children in order to improve their life chances and opportunities. These outcomes are closely linked to the achievement of placement stability and ensuring that children have placement choice and are subsequently matched and placed with the right carers. These factors were at the heart of the Payment for Skills scheme which was developed to operate through a payment model that clearly defines the expectations and in September 2012 the scheme was approved by Cabinet for implementation within the Service.

There are four payment levels within the scheme structure; Level 1 being the lowest level of payment and Level 4 being the highest. The highest level of payment is based on the areas of greatest skills which are required in order to undertake the necessary care tasks. The payment levels were implemented for new and existing foster carers during the Summer of 2013 and all foster carers are now on one of the four levels, linked to their skills, knowledge and competencies.

This evidence based approach is also being used in the assessment of new foster carers, with the Fostering Panel linking the recommendation of approval of new carers with the Payment for Skills level. This has been reviewed during 2015/2016 and minor amendments have been made to the criteria.

Breakdown of Foster Carers by Payment for Skills Level

■ No Level ■ Level 1 ■ Level 2 ■ Level 3 ■ Level 4



The Foster Carers

At 31st March 2016 there were 201 approved fostering households comprising 351 foster carers, an increase on the previous year. During the year ending 31 March 2016, 26 new fostering households were approved at Fostering Panel, with 25 being de-registered.

The Fostering Service provides a wide range of resources including short break and emergency, short term, task centred and long term/permanent placements for Looked After Children and Young People. The Service also provides short breaks to families who have a child with a disability through the Home from Home scheme and we also have a growing number of foster carers who are providing placements for extended family members or connected children. Many foster carers can offer more than one type of placement, which increases the flexibility within the Service regarding the types of placements we can offer.

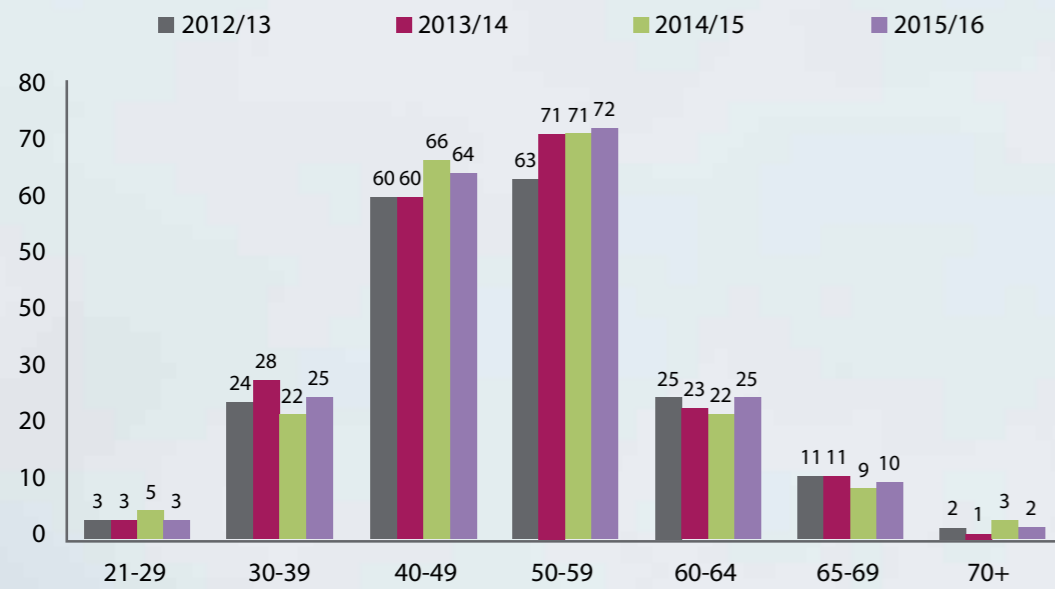
MAIN TYPE OF CARE	NUMBER OF HOUSEHOLDS
Short Break and Respite	1
Short Term and Task Centred	74
Long Term/Permanent	89
Home from Home	15
Connected Person	22

The majority of foster carers (98.6%) within Gateshead come from a White British ethnic background; however we also have fostering households from the Pakistani and Orthodox Jewish communities. This reflects the shortage of foster carers from ethnic minorities that is experienced nationally.

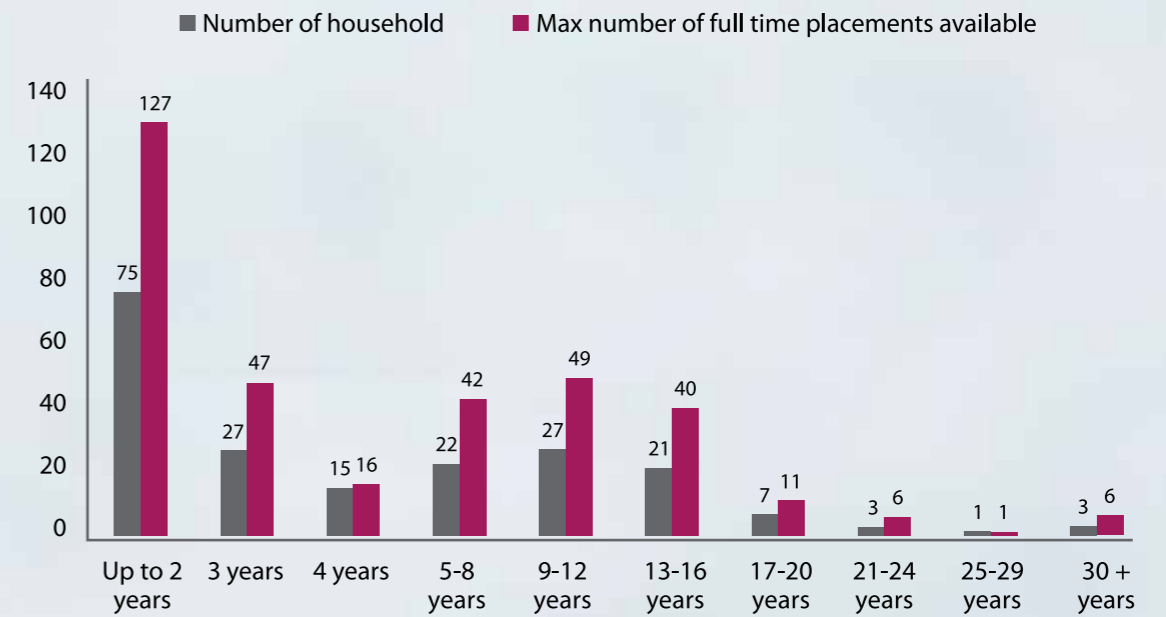
Though a high proportion (91%) of children in placement during the year ending March 2016 were White, our carers also provided placements for those from other ethnic groups.



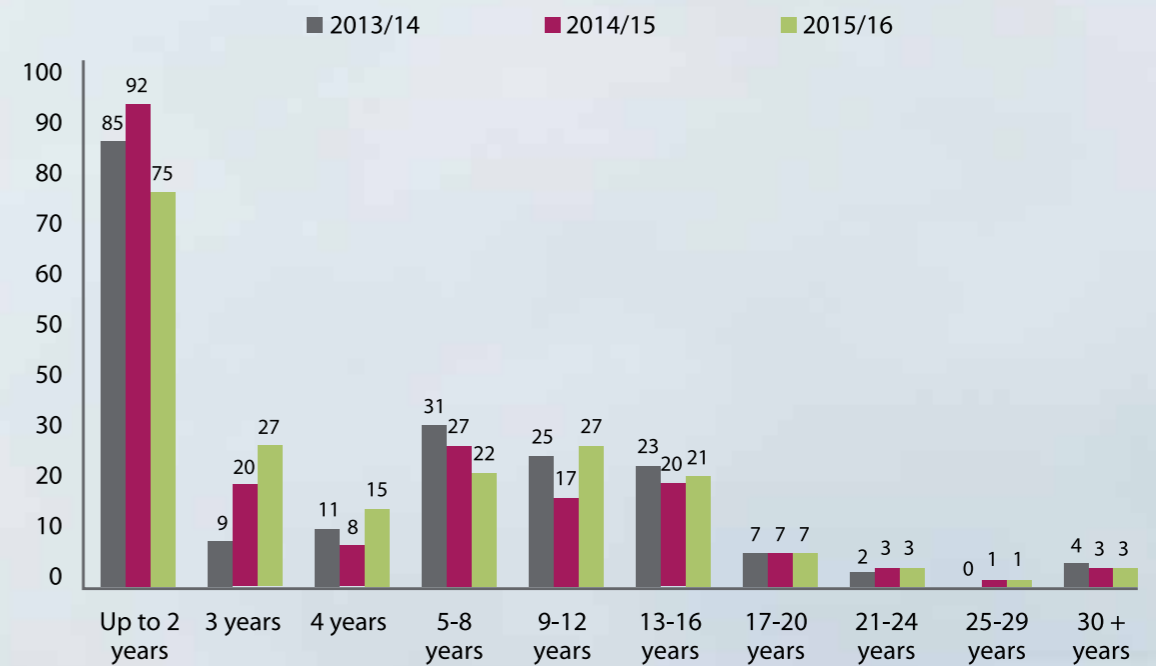
Age of Main Carer in Fostering Household:
2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16



Length of Approval and available full time placements: 2015-16



Length of Approval: 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16



The Fostering Service has recruited a significant number of new foster carers in the last 5 years, with 37% (75) of fostering households having 2 years or less service with the Authority. This number also includes Connected Person carers for specific named children. We also have a cohort of very experienced foster carers, with 15% of our fostering households having over 15 years service. 3 households have been fostering for at least 30 years.

We continue to have a high proportion of older foster carers within the Service. 54% (109) of main carers within fostering households are over the age of 50 and currently provide approximately 56% of the potential available full time placements.

It is anticipated that over the next 5 years between 10-15% of these older foster carers will retire and therefore it is a priority for us to ensure that we recruit enough new carers not only to replace those retiring but also to continue to increase the overall numbers of fostering households to between 200 and 230. This would provide a significant increase in placement choice and assist in reducing the numbers of children being placed in Independent Fostering Agencies.



Connected person

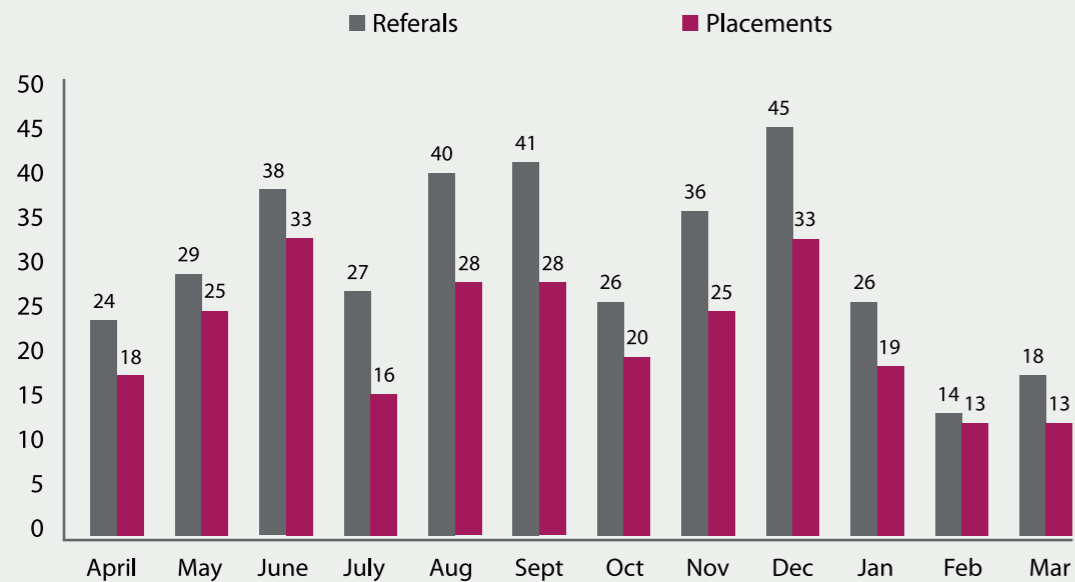
This area of work continues to increase as more children are being placed with family members, and given the tight timescales for assessments panel are monitoring these closely to ensure compliance with the regulations. To ensure compliance with regulations, two members of the team are leading on this area of work.

The service recognises that these carers are often dealing with complex family situations and have implemented special support groups for connected person carers. We have also developed strong regional links with the national support group Grandparents Plus, with two of our connected person carers being regional mentors for this group.

Referrals for Placements

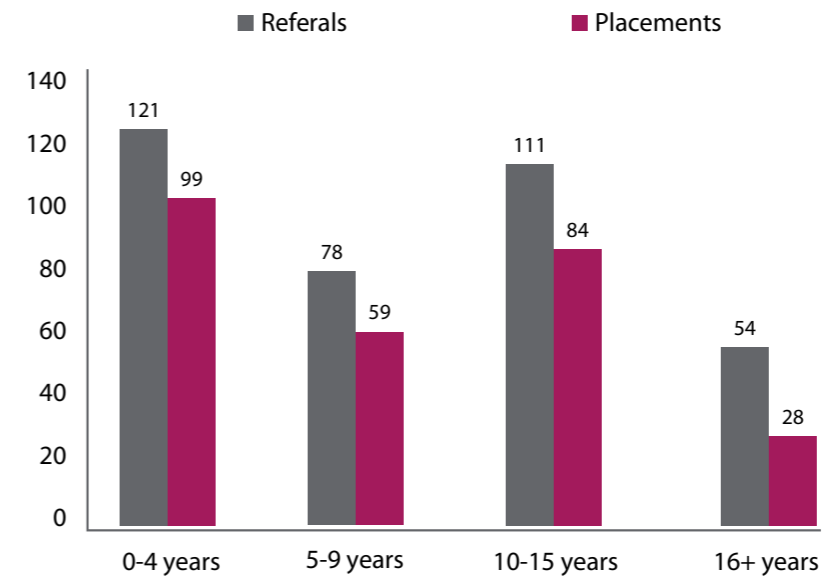
Gateshead's social work teams made 364 referrals to the Fostering Service for placements between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016. This is an increase of 6% on the previous year. Of these referrals, 272 (75%) placements were eventually made and 94 (25%) were withdrawn by social workers as alternative arrangements were made for the children in question.

Number of referrals and placements 2015-16



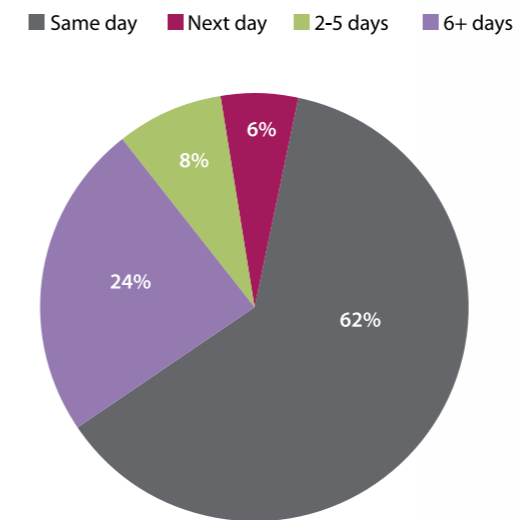
June, August, September and December saw the highest number of referrals during the year. One of the highest demands for placements during the year has been on the 10-15 years range, which continues to influence the marketing campaign to attract more carers for older children in particular teenagers.

Number of Referrals and Placement by Age Group



The majority of placement referrals from social work teams are for emergency requests where placements are needed on the day that the referral is submitted, 6% are needed for the following day and 8% are needed within 2-5 days. 24% of referrals were needed after six days.

Placement identification timescales



Over the year 42 sibling groups were referred to the Service for a total of 104 children, an increase of 35% on last year. In general requests are primarily to keep siblings together. This is often difficult to achieve given the size of sibling groups referred and has resulted in a number of sibling groups being placed in Independent Fostering placements. However, in the last year there have only been 11 sibling groups placed separately including 3 groups of 4 children and 1 group of 5 children.

SIZE OF SIBLING GROUP	NUMBER REFERRED	NUMBER OF GROUPS PLACED TOGETHER	NUMBER OF GROUPS SPLIT	TOTAL CHILDREN
2	28	27	1	56
3	9	3	6	27
4	4	1	3	16
5	1	0	1	5

Independent Fostering Placements

Occasionally, due to the type of placements requested and the availability of our own foster carers we are unable to place children in house. In this event the Service commissions placements through external independent fostering agencies, which are more expensive than placing a child with our own foster carers.

All Independent Fostering placements are approved and monitored by the regular External Placements Panel which is chaired by Service Director - Social Work. Every effort is made to keep the use of these placements to a minimum, and also to return children to our own foster placements as soon as possible. However if there are ongoing care proceedings the Service is often directed by Court to leave the children in their placements until these proceedings are concluded.

As of 31st March 2016, Gateshead had commissioned Independent Fostering Placements for 24 children. Of the 28 new placements commissioned during the last financial year, eighteen of these placements were needed for teenagers aged 15 years and older with complex and challenging behaviour where there were no in house foster carers with the necessary skills or space to accommodate them.

Several sibling groups were also placed in Independent placements where the requirement from social workers was to keep the children together and it was not possible to do this within the Service.

However, out of the 28 new Independent Placements commissioned between 1st April 2015 and 31st March 2016, 18 of these also ended during same period. Targeted recruitment has continued to take place over the year in an attempt to increase the number of teenage placements Gateshead can offer and this will continue into the next financial year.

To the period 31 March 2016 Independent placements ended for a total of 36 children which helped the Service's aim of reducing Independent placements.

REASONS FOR PLACEMENT ENDINGS:

NUMBER OF CHILDREN

Rehabilitated Home	7
Placed with Family Members	1
Moved to Residential Placement	5
Moved to Supported Lodgings/Independent Living/Staying Put	10
Carers transferred to Gateshead Fostering	1
Moved to In-house Placement	7
Moved to Secure Accommodation	1
Moved to Alternative IFA Provision	2
Recalled to Custody	1
Admitted to Hospital	1



Recruitment and Retention

Recruitment Strategy

The service set a target of recruiting at least **30 new foster carer** units between April 2015 and March 2016. The plan also aimed to ensure sufficient marketing activity took place in order to increase the number of initial enquiries but also improve the conversion rate of those enquiring to becoming carers.

With such a low conversion rate of people who enquire to those who are suitable and go on to be approved foster carers the 'net' needs to be cast as widely as possible. Promotion needs to be kept generic and not look to target people to foster for specific age ranges.

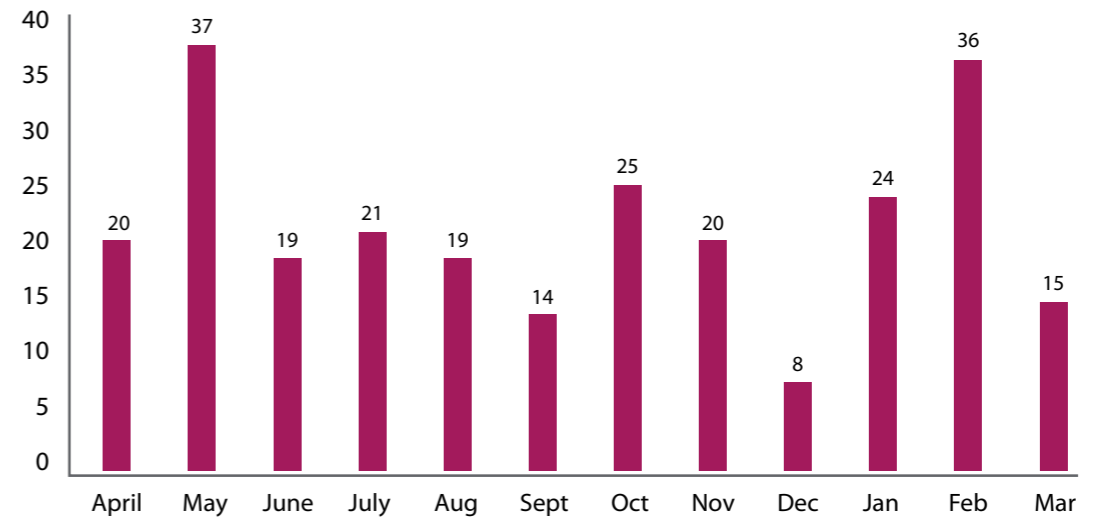
The key elements of the strategy included the following:

- Removal of the 'Information Evening Stage' of the recruitment process, so anybody successful at the telephone interview stage will be offered an initial visit. This will hopefully improve the conversion rate and speed of approval.
- Monthly follow up of people who haven't returned enquiry form.
- Career type events to be scheduled throughout the year to replace the Information Evening.

Enquiries

In the year to 31 March 2016 the Service received a total of 258 enquiries, a decrease of 20% on the previous year. The number of fostering households approved at panel has also decreased from 41 (2014-2015) to 21 (2015-16). It is acknowledged that the service did not meet its target this year but the number of fostering households still remains slightly higher than last year.

Enquiries per month for 2015-16

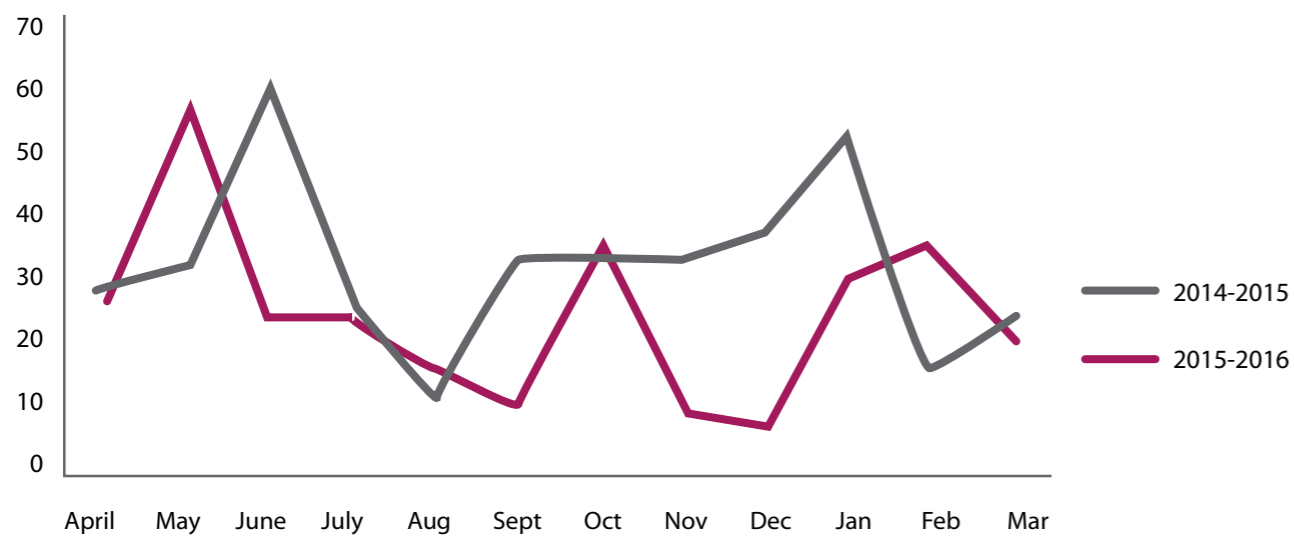


Conversion Rate

The Local Authority Fostering Service benchmark for 2015 shows that nationally 11% of enquiries proceed to approved foster carers. The conversion rate for the service during 2015/16 has fallen to 8%. This indicates that a reduction in enquiries has resulted in a lower number of suitable applicants progressing through the system.

The graph below highlights that the recruitment approach has not performed as well as the previous year. One factor which has severely affected performance is the departure of the Marketing and Recruitment Officer; who took up a new post in November 2015. The post was subsequently deleted from the structure and the duties are now being covered by the Adoption Service's Marketing and Recruitment Officer. High level marketing activity was reduced in November and December which is reflected in the graph below.

Fostering Enquiries by month



Application outcomes

Since introducing new monitoring systems in June 2014, the service has continued to monitor the outcomes of all enquiries. Of the 258 enquiries received in 2015-16, over half proceeded to the next stage of assessment (143/55%).

The service recognises that all enquiries need to be dealt with in a timely manner and wherever possible this should be dealt with on the day the person phones fostering. If possible potential applicants are immediately transferred to a duty worker to do the initial enquiry and there is also a back up duty worker every afternoon to help with this process.

The requirement to attend an information evening has been removed to streamline the process. This meant that potential applicants have been offered a home visit following a successful initial enquiry, thus speeding up the process.

Skills to Foster Preparation training

Skills to Foster Preparation training for prospective foster carers is planned by the Service in advance and is held at least every 6 to 8 weeks depending on the number of prospective applicants. 38 families attended this training during the year. This is a priority area for the Service and has already been planned for the next 12 months.

Promotional activity

Promotional activity throughout the year has been ongoing and has included the use of wider Council resources to target all Gateshead residents.

Use of Council Resources to target all Gateshead residents.

- Up to date website
- Regular use of council plasma screens
- Regular inclusion in Council News and Council Info
- Regular use of bridge banners and railing banners
- Regular poster distribution across council facilities, libraries, doctors surgeries, schools etc.
- Gateshead Now - direct email to Gateshead residents who sign up to this

Careers Events

3 recruitment careers events were held during 2015/16 with each event being widely promoted using a range of paid for and free of charge advertising in order to maximise attendance.

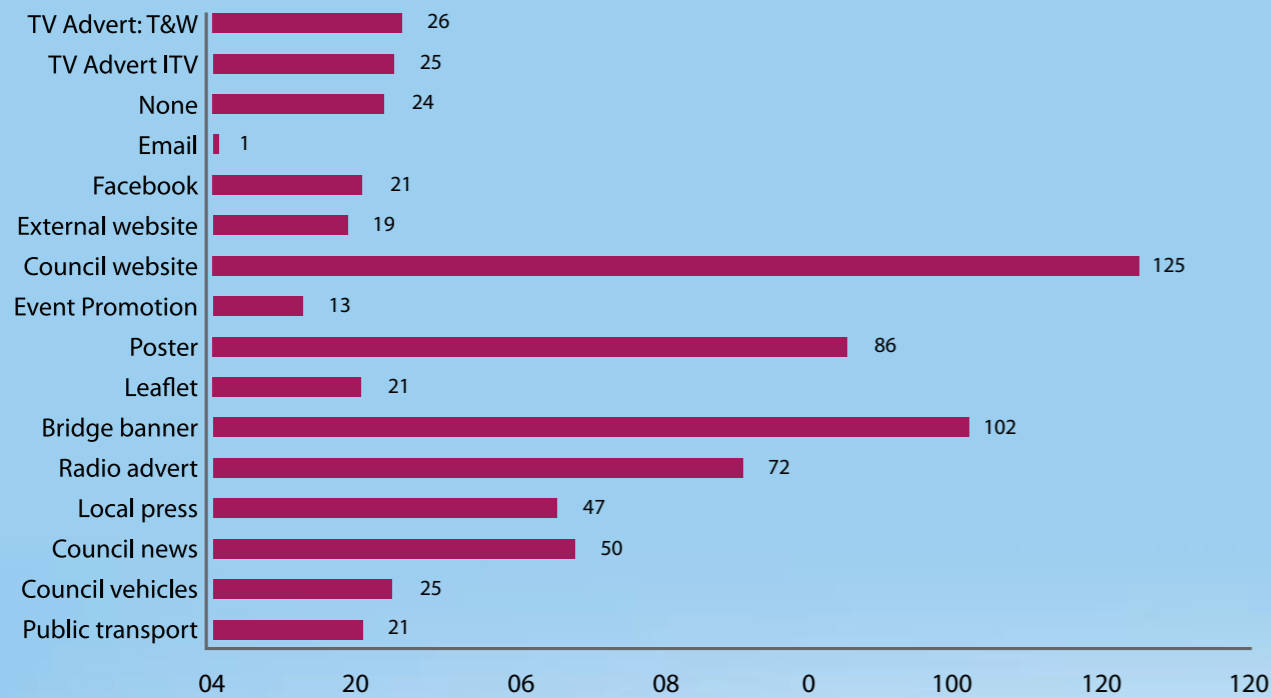
- May 2015
22 Family Units attended - 14 initial visits recommended
- October 2015
16 family Units attended - 5 initial visits recommended (Poor attendance rate)
- February 2016
20 Family Units attended and - 7 initial visits recommended

The service has also continued to use advertising on radio, public transport, outdoor billboards, public transport, Facebook and google adwords. The TV campaign was also rerun in January 2016 to coincide with the promotional activity surrounding the careers event in February.

So which channels are working?

The graph below shows the channels that our enquirers have said they have seen. This information details the responses collected between April 2014 and March 2016 and therefore captures the advertising channels used during that period.

Which of Gateshead Council's Fostering promotional materials has been seen by the enquirer?



The top six channels cited are

- Council Website
- Bridge Banner
- Poster
- Radio Advert
- Council News
- Local Press

This data will be used to plan future marketing activity during 2016/17 and we will continue to monitor the data collected

Motivations to foster - what have we learned?

Broad themes emerge why people choose to become foster carers and these need to be considered in planning future recruitment activity.

- Carers transferring from other agencies or authorities suggesting Gateshead Council's 'package' is attractive.
- Carers speak about their positive experiences or working with children and this desire to put these skills to better use to improve the life of a child.
- The majority of carers mention the 'timing to be right'. A significant number of carers mention thinking about fostering for years, and the time being right to do it now (whether this be a change in family or work circumstances).

The next steps - recruitment

A plan for the year has been devised in order to maximise the use of "free of charge" marketing tools as well as deliver joint "paid for" campaigns with the adoption service, where appropriate. The marketing and recruitment officer will be evaluating the approach and aims to raise the profile of Gateshead Council's Fostering Service to ensure that we receive our market share of enquiries.

As the "careers event" approach has not produced the level of enquiries needed we have decided to run lower key "informal events" every two months to allow prospective foster carers to come and meet us and find out if fostering could be for them. Feedback from our own carers suggests that the formality of the word "career" is a little daunting so a less formal approach will be implemented.

Ultimately, this gives more opportunities for prospective foster carers to come and find out more and will hopefully lead to more foster carers being assessed and approved. An annual "Career's Style" event will be considered, depending on the success of the bi-monthly events.

We have a clear understanding of the most popular channels that our foster carers see but there is no "one size fits all" in terms of recruitment. As we have seen above, the "timing must be right" so having clear messaging across a range of different channels, which easily identify us as "Gateshead Council" will be our priority going forward.

Retention

Retention of existing foster carers is also a high priority for the Fostering Service and foster carers are provided with extensive support and training.

Each fostering household is reviewed on an annual basis, chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO). This process uses feedback from the foster carers, children in placement and children within the fostering family, as well as the carers' supervising social worker and social workers for children who are and who have been placed with the foster carers. This feedback is valued by the service and is used to develop and improve the service.

Training

The service continues to develop the training offered to all approved foster carers. These include specialist subjects such as Attachment, Child Protection Awareness, Equality and Diversity, Emergency First Aid, Level 1 Food Hygiene, Life Story Work, Promoting Positive Behaviour, Recording Skills and Safer Caring Training. Full time foster carers are expected to complete these courses within the first 12 months of their approval, and Home from Home and respite carers are given 18 months to complete these. Foster carers are also encouraged to attend further training through their fostering career. These courses, as well as any refresher training they require, are identified through discussions with their supervising social worker and forms their professional development plan. This is also linked to the payment for skills criteria and levels.

Following feedback from approved foster carers the service has begun to deliver four of the mandatory training courses for people currently in the assessment process and there is an expectation of any prospective foster carer that they will have completed all four courses by the time their assessment is presented to Fostering Panel.

All foster carers under the Fostering regulations have to complete their Training, Support and Development (TSD) Standards for Foster Carers within 12 months of approval. This year 26 foster carer households achieved this. Preparation training and regular workshops are provided for foster carers to help them with the information they need to be able to complete their portfolio, along with giving them practical hints and tips on gathering evidence and information.

The service also requires all foster carers on Payment for Skills level 2 or above to complete their Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's Workforce. 36 foster carers completed this during 2015-16

All of the carers who completed their Training Support & Development Standards or Diploma were presented with certificates for their achievements at the Foster Carer Awards Ceremony.

The training offered and taken up by Gateshead's carers is monitored and evaluated to ensure we are providing our carers with the skills and knowledge they need in order to support young people and help them achieve the best possible outcomes.

Support Groups

Regular support groups for foster carers have continued to take place covering a wide range of relevant topics including Early Years, Advocacy, Sexual Exploitation, Long Term Training and Delegated Authority, with speakers regularly invited to attend. They have proven to be very successful with positive feedback from both foster carers and invited speakers.

A consultation with foster carers takes place annually to help develop the support groups and to find out what carers would like from future support groups. This information has been used by the service to shape the format and frequency of the groups. Non-attendance at support groups is also monitored by the service with foster carers being regularly reminded by their supervising social workers of the importance of attendance to their professional development.

Email updates

Regular bulletins to carers about the Service and its recruitment activity have continued throughout the year as well as updates via the Facebook page.

Christmas Party and Summer Family Fun Day

A Family Fun Day took place in July at Cardinal Hume School. Children were able to take part in a range of activities including face painting, bouncy castles and football shoot outs, and there was the opportunity to see a range of insects and small reptiles with the 'Bug Man' and be entranced by a magician! This year there were also sessions in drumming, cheerleading, spray painting and jewellery making. Feedback from the carers and young people in attendance continued to be very positive and they welcome the opportunity to spend "quality time" with their families and fellow foster families, as well as colleagues from across the service.

Children enjoyed a visit from Santa at the annual Christmas Party, and carers met for a Christmas coffee morning, complete with mince pies and Christmas raffle. We also held a coffee morning for Foster Care Fortnight to acknowledge the excellent work foster carers do.



Foster Carers Awards Ceremony 2016

The annual Foster Carer Awards were held on 19 April 2016, at the Lancastrian Suite in Gateshead, recognising the dedication and hard work of all of the Council's foster carers. In Gateshead there are 297 children placed in short and long term foster placements, including those children placed with relative and friend foster carers. Without our foster carers Gateshead Council would not be able to offer these children safe, nurturing family homes.

These awards allow us the opportunity to celebrate some of the fantastic work that goes on behind the scenes every day in the Fostering Service. This year's event was slightly different as it had a theme running through it: the theme was what Fostering does for the children in Gateshead... "Live in the now and prepare for the future".

This year a working group of staff and foster carers were involved in reviewing this event.

The outcomes of the working group resulted in:

- A range of new awards being introduced.
- Nomination forms being redesigned.
- Looked after children and Supervising Social Workers being able to nominate foster carers for awards.
- Foster carers giving their opinions on prizes, the programme and who would host the ceremony.
- Foster carers sourcing raffle prizes and arranging small posies for all carers as a "thank you".
- Foster carers facilitating the dance performance and helping with set up arrangements on the day.

The involvement of carers proved a valuable exercise and encouraged "ownership" of the event.

Councillor Angela Douglas formally opened the event and presented many of the awards and Councillor Alex Geddes welcomed all to the event; speaking about the commitment of foster carers and the vital role they play in the lives of our Looked After Children.

The evening saw the acknowledgement of the following:

- 26 sets of new foster carers welcomed to the service,
- 27 sets of foster carers achieving their certificates for Department of Education, Training, Support & Development Standards,
- 15 foster carers achieving a Level 3 Diploma for the Children and Young People's workforce,
- 8 foster carers successfully completing the Bridging Units for the Level 3 Diploma, and
- Long Service awards were presented to 16 sets of foster carers for achieving their 5, 10, 15 and 20 year anniversaries.

In addition to these achievements we had one award, nominated by foster carers themselves, three awards that were nominated by colleagues and other professionals and the final award which were nominated by foster carers themselves.

These awards were

- Foster Carer Support Award - Awarded to fellow foster carers for proving peer support and advice.
- Extra Mile Award - Awarded to foster carers who regularly go above and beyond what is expected of them in delivering an exceptional standard of care. They provide a unique level of service that enhances the reputation of foster carers and Gateshead Council.
- Unsung Hero Award - Awarded to foster carers who have a sense of enthusiasm that drives them to put in extraordinary effort to deliver safe, high quality care and support. They epitomise dedication and drive and always deliver on their promises in an unassuming way. They never seek recognition and work really hard behind the scenes delivering what is needed.
- Outstanding Newcomer of the Year Award - Awarded to foster carers who have joined the organisation since 1 April 2015 and have brought a fresh perspective to the service. They show real drive, exceptional performance, enthusiasm, motivation and inspire those around them.
- Most Amazing Carer Award - We asked our looked after children to nominate their foster carer(s) for an award if they believe them to be amazing.

The evening saw two fantastic performances by looked after children and birth children of foster carers. The first performance being a contemporary dance, which was choreographed by one of our Looked After Children. The event ended on a high with a breath-taking singing performance by another of our very talented looked after young persons.

The event was inspiring for all who attended and the following quotes from children in foster care demonstrate the real difference foster carers in Gateshead make to the children in our care.

- "My foster family is one of the best things that have happened to me. They care for me, they support me and they help me. They also take you to school no matter what the weather is!"
- "Being with my foster family makes me feel warm, loved, protected and safe. I love them because they are kind helpful and joyful!"
- "My carers are amazing and make everyone smile. They never give up on me and I feel like I am part of the family."



Fostering Panel

In broad terms the role of the Fostering Panel provides an independent perspective on the business of the Fostering Service, informed by a range of expertise to monitor and quality assure social work practice in the best interests of children and young people in foster care. It provides recommendations to the Agency Decision Maker that accurately reflects the facts of the cases presented.

There is a need for Fostering Services to maintain a Central List of panel members consisting of a multidisciplinary membership of experienced professionals. No business can be conducted by panel unless at least the following people are present:

The Chair or one of the Vice-Chairs

One member who is a social worker (who may or may not be employed by the Fostering Service) with at least 3 years relevant post-qualifying experience

Three other members from the Central List

At least one member of the panel must be independent (this can be the Chair or Vice-Chair) - Regulation 24 (1)

The UK National Standards for Foster Care 2011 (14.8) recommends that:

"...the number, skills, knowledge and experience of persons on the central list are sufficient to enable the fostering service to constitute panels that are equipped to make competent recommendations to the fostering service provider, taking into account the nature of the children and carers that the service caters for"

Gateshead's fostering service continues to operate two panels per month, with membership being made up from the central list. Each panel has a consistent membership and is chaired by the same panel chair to ensure consistency and continuity when dealing with all panel business.

All panel members have an annual panel review, where they are consulted about their views, discuss how they are developing their role on panel, identify any areas of development and make suggestions on how panel can be improved. The review is carried out by Sue Holton - panel chair and Jill Little - agency advisor.

All new Panel members are given induction training, which is held over a half day and covers Panel's statutory function and business as well as the expectations of Panel members. This ensures people are fully aware of the legislation relating to panel, the function and running of panel and the expectations on panel members. People who have attended this training have given positive feedback and feel that it has helped them in their role as a panel member.

Training is also provided to all Panel members on a bi-annual basis. This year, the training has primarily focused on the implementation of the new Regulations, the Form F assessment process and analysis, Foster Carer Review paperwork and the long term matching process.

Following the retirement of Frances Powell in April 2015, new Service Director Deborah Patterson was appointed as Agency Decision Maker. Deborah will be leaving the authority at the beginning of the new financial year and an interim Agency Decision Maker will be appointed to cover.

The panel met twenty two times during the year to meet the increasing needs of the service.

ACTIVITY	2015-16
Form F assessments	21
Connected person	5
De-registrations of foster carers	14
De-registrations of connected persons	11
Change to approval category	9
Foster carer reviews	65
Identification of children needing long term foster care	6
Matching children and carers	24



Number of placements

The Service has acquired 21 new sets of non-connected person foster carers who can potentially offer up to 34 full time placements, if siblings can share a room. Panel have been flexible with their approval categories in relation to the age range and have tried to approve people up to the age of 18 if they are in agreement with this. They have recommended preferences in relation to the age range rather than being specific, which ensures carers do not need to come back to panel if they take a slightly older or younger child than their preference. In addition, 5 new sets of connected person foster carers were approved throughout the year, for a total of 5 children.

De-registrations

The 'Local Authority Fostering Services in England performance benchmark report 2013/14' shows that nationally 12% of foster carers left their service. In Gateshead 25 sets of foster carers were de-registered at panel, equating to 13%, which is roughly equivalent to this figure. The number of de-registrations in Gateshead has decreased significantly since the last financial year.

Panel Feedback Forms

The agency has implemented feedback forms for everyone attending panel. This includes all social workers, prospective foster carers and approved foster carers. This feedback is monitored by the Fostering Team Manager and used to improve panel. The feedback forms have largely identified that people attending panel have a positive experience, they feel that they are made to feel welcome and the questions they are asked are relevant.

REASON	NUMBER
Resignation	7
Retirement	1
Change of personal circumstances e.g. return to work, new partner	2
Change in family circumstances e.g. birth of child, adopted child	2
Allegations/concerns	2
Transferred to Supported Lodgings/Shared lives/staying put	0
Child Arrangement Order or Special Guardianship Order for carer	5
Connected person – rehabilitation home	2
Impact on Family/Unable to manage fostering task	3
Connected person – child turned 18 years old	1



Service Development

In addition to working to implement any proposed new governmental reforms to fostering practice, the key areas for development within the Fostering service are:

- To continue to develop the Staying Put scheme which allows and supports young people aged 18 and over to remain in their fostering placements.
- To work towards achieving targets for recruiting carers, with the aim being a minimum of 30 fostering households each financial year.
- To increase the number of foster carers willing to take complex teenage placement.
- To develop additional support and training for carers considering taking complex teenagers.
- To ensure that the recruitment strategy is robust and that there is evidence that we are providing a choice of appropriate placements for all children.
- To ensure that placement stability is improved and achieved.
- Continued reduction of Independent Fostering Placements.
- To continue to monitor the Fostering Service and evaluate all activities to ensure that the best performance and outcomes possible are achieved.



Safeguarding Children Unit Independent Reviewing Officers'

Annual Report

April 2015-March 2016

The Contribution of Independent Reviewing Officers
to Quality Assuring and Improving Services for
Looked After Children in Gateshead

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Executive summary

The completion of this report is a requirement of The Adoption and Children Act 2002. The statutory guidance for the Independent Reviewing Officers (the IRO Handbook) specifies that the manager of the IRO Service 'should be responsible for the production of an annual report for the scrutiny of members of the corporate parenting board'.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements set out in the Statutory Guidance for Independent Reviewing Officers (2010) and will be reported to Cabinet, the Corporate Parenting Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

The Annual IRO report is produced by the Children's Safeguarding Unit which sits within the Quality Assurance function of Care Wellbeing and Learning. The report provides quantitative and qualitative evidence relating to the IRO Service in Gateshead Local Authority. The report identifies good practice, as well as highlighting areas for further development in relation to the IRO function. In addition, the report provides an overview of the other activities and functions of the Children's Safeguarding Unit, including information on the performance of the unit in a range of responsibilities.

The report covers the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016 and should be read in conjunction with:

Annual Report – Child Protection Conference Chairs 2015/16

Annual Report – Local Authority Designated Officer 2015/16

Purpose of IRO Service and National Context

The Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) Service is set within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, Department for Children, Schools and Families (2010) and is linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which were introduced in April 2011.

Local Authorities are 'corporate parents' for the children and young people they are looking after, and effective care planning is essential for the children's wellbeing and the best possible outcomes. Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) were nationally introduced to represent the interests of looked after children, monitor the way that local authorities implement their plans, and ensure that the wishes and feelings of children are fully considered.

Their role was strengthened through the introduction of statutory guidance in April 2011. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of care planning for Looked After Children (LAC) and for challenging drift and delay in the implementation of care plans.

In November 2011, the Family Justice Review reported that 'the work of the IROs and their impact needs to be more clearly seen and understood'. If a dispute between an IRO and the local authority cannot be resolved locally, ultimately the IRO can refer the case to the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS).

The Legal and Statutory Context

Section 118 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 introduced the statutory role of the IRO, with responsibility for the process of reviewing children in care cases. Under this and the subsequent Review of Children's Cases (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2004, Local Authorities are required by regulation to:

- Appoint IROs to review all looked after children's cases
- Monitor the authority's function in respect of the review
- Refer a case to the Children and Families Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS), if the failure to implement the care plan might be considered to breach the child's human rights. (The Dispute Resolution Process)

All children in care, including those in adoptive placements prior to an Adoption Order being made, are covered by these regulations.

The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the subsequent 'Care Planning Placement and Review Regulations' developed the role of the IRO and introduced additional statutory requirements. The Regulations supported by specific guidance on the role of the IRO came into force on 1 April 2011. The new duties and responsibilities for IROs include:

- Additional visits to the child outside of their reviews
- Visits to children's placements if the looked after review was not held there
- Additional meetings with other key professionals, including the social worker and the children's guardian
- Reading court bundles and potentially attending court.

The Out of Authority Placement of Looked After Children Supplement to The Children Act 1989 Volume 2: Care planning, placement and case review guidance July 2014 states that the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) must be consulted before any final decision is made about making an out of authority placement, whether distant or not, to enable the IRO to discuss the proposed arrangements with the child.

The child's wishes and feelings should be taken into account, and where appropriate, the child's relatives or parents should be consulted. (The Children's Homes and Looked after Children Miscellaneous Amendments) (England) Regulations 2013 – Part 3:7).

Key Functions of an Independent Reviewing Officer Service

- (a) IROs make an important contribution to the goal of significantly improving outcomes for looked after children and were introduced to represent the interests of looked after children following a number of cases where care plans had not been implemented leading to harm. Their primary focus is to quality assure the care planning process for each child, and to ensure that his/her current wishes and feelings are given full consideration as well as challenging any drift and delay.
- (b) All looked after children should have an initial review within 20 working days of becoming looked after; the second review within a further three months and subsequent reviews within 6 months or earlier if required. A LAC review focuses on the child's care plan and future; all aspects of his/her life in care is reviewed to ensure all of the child's needs are being met and s/he is provided with every opportunity to reach his/her potential.
- (c) The Care Planning regulations have made a step change in the requirements of the IRO placing responsibility on them for monitoring the implementation of the care plans with the review process. IROs should be kept informed by frontline practitioners about any changes in placement, long-term planning, contact or education; significant changes in the child's own family or any safeguarding issues for the child. Where any of these may impact on the child or young person failing to achieve his/her anticipated progress, or require changes in planning, a review of the overall plan should be considered and the IRO should be involved in this.
- d) Where directed by courts, the IRO Service will hold quarterly reviews of children subject to Supervision Orders.

The National Children's Bureau research entitled 'The Role of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) in England' (March 2014) provides a wealth of information and findings with regard to the efficiency of IRO services and outlines a number of important recommendations at a National Level, Local Authority Level, and IRO Service Level, which are considered in this report. The foreword was written by Mr Justice Peter Jackson; in it he makes the following comment:

"The Independent Reviewing Officer must be the visible embodiment of our commitment to meet our legal obligations to this special group of children. The health and effectiveness of the IRO Service is a direct reflection of whether we are meeting that commitment, or we are failing."

Looked after Children Reviews: roles and responsibilities

The IRO chairs the 'Looked after Child' review and makes decisions in relation to the overall Care Plan, which is coordinated by the social worker.

The IRO has a responsibility to challenge the planning and practice of the professionals working with the child if any issues arise in achieving the agreed Care Plan or working towards good outcomes for the child. Within the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 there is a strengthening of this commitment and it is a requirement that an allocated IRO is identified at the point the child becomes 'Looked After' and should remain with the child throughout his/her life in the care of the Local Authority.

All Looked after Children cases have identified IROs as soon as the Safeguarding Children Unit is informed that a child has become looked after. The IROs remain responsible for a young person's Care Plan and Reviews throughout the time a child is looked after in line with good practice.

Out of 195 looked after children, who have been looked after for three years or less, 154 had the same IRO as their meeting chair in their reviews recorded since April 2015 (79%). This is in line with the figure of 78.9% (142/180) reported in 2014-2015.

IROs:

- Are legally responsible for ensuring the child's care plan is appropriate and meets his/her needs. A LAC review covers all aspects of a child's life, including placement, health, education, contact with family and friends and social activities;
- Ensure the wishes and the views of the child are shared and any requests are addressed during reviews;
- Require each agency involved with the child to provide a report to the review outlining progress to date and proposed work to be undertaken;
- Identify and challenge any drift and delay with regard to the child's care plan and needs;
- Complete and ensure the distribution of the LAC Chair's Report within 20 working days of the review.

The child or young person's social worker is:

- Responsible for ensuring his/her report and the proposed new care plan is available for the IRO 3 working days before the review;
- Responsible for the completion and distribution of the new care plan within 10 working days of the review.

Professional Profile of the IRO Service

The Independent Reviewing Officer in Gateshead

In order to fulfil their challenge role IROs must have an appropriate level of experience and authority. In Gateshead all IROs are qualified, registered and experienced social workers. Three IROs are experienced children's social work team managers.

All IROs have extensive experience of communicating and working with children and young people, including two who have worked in residential care and all have knowledge about what contributes to good quality practice in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including an understanding of the relevant legal processes. Most IROs have been working for Gateshead for many years and they are very familiar with the organisation and the services provided.

The range of reported skills and knowledge that IROs need in order to fulfil their duties is illustrated through the comments of one of the IRO managers who contributed to the NCB's The Role of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) in England Report March 2014:

'Skills and Knowledge of IROs' '[IROs] need a really in depth knowledge obviously about the IRO responsibilities, so they do need to understand the Handbook. They need to understand the care planning regulations, Working Together, the whole framework; legislative framework that works with looked after children and what children subject to safeguarding procedures are subject to really. They also need those personal skills and abilities to, for instance, manage multiagency meetings and they need to be mindful of issues around group dynamics and that ability to work across agencies really and bring that work together to focus on the needs of the child. And they need to be able to manage their professional accountability and their professional authority in a way that enables effective challenge really because that's one of the key things.. It's to do things in a way that actually brings about the required outcome for the child really and that is a really important quality that IROs need to have.' (IRO Manager).

Foster Carer Reviews

There is an identified Independent Reviewing Officer responsible for reviewing foster carers on an annual basis and reporting to the Fostering Panel. The number of foster carer reviews completed over the last 3 years has remained fairly consistent. 190 reviews were undertaken in 2015/16. The IRO provides an independent and consistent review for foster carers and links well with the supervisory SWs in LA fostering team to ensure foster carers are supported in providing the right care for the children they look after.

Current Staffing Structure

Responsibility for the activity and development of the Unit lies with the Service Manager Quality Assurance, who reports directly to the Service Director of Children's Commissioning, and links with the Service Director of Children's Social Care. Responsibility for the line management of the Safeguarding Unit is removed from operational Children's Social Care, which strengthens its independence and supports its role of challenge, whilst maintaining collaborative links with social work services.

The Service Manager for Quality Assurance is a member of the LSCB, ensuring the Safeguarding Unit is represented and well placed to provide quality assurance of inter-agency working and again supports its independence.

The staffing structure for the period includes:

- Service Manager, Quality Assurance
- 8.1 FTE Independent Reviewing Officers (including 1 post currently covered by agency staff)
- The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and IRO for Foster Carer Reviews are also located within the Unit.
- The team comprises three males and 7 females who are all white British.

The staff team have backgrounds in working with children who have suffered significant harm from abuse and neglect and children with attachment difficulties, both as looked after children and children subject to child protection plans and child in need plans living in the community, including working with disabled children, care leavers and young people who have offended. IROs have developed working partnerships with the Jewish community, voluntary sector, internal and external partners, and ethnic groups, including the use of interpreters for both meetings and the translation of documents.

IROs within Gateshead also undertake a number of additional tasks which include:

- Regulation 44 visits
- LADO cover for holidays and sickness
- Attendance at One Voice collating children's views
- Corporate Parenting Partnership meetings
- Deputise for Service Manager at MAPPA panel
- Secure Reviews
- Deliver external and internal training
- Links to teams within Social Work Children and Families
- Foster carer reviews
- Attendance at the LSCB Training sub group.

The team is supported by: 1 senior operational support coordinator, 6 FTE senior clerks and 1 apprentice.

The Safeguarding Manager Education is also part of the Safeguarding Children Unit, which has strengthened the IRO role within schools and academies.

During this period the CSU has had a number of challenges in recruiting and retaining its full complement of IROs and business support.

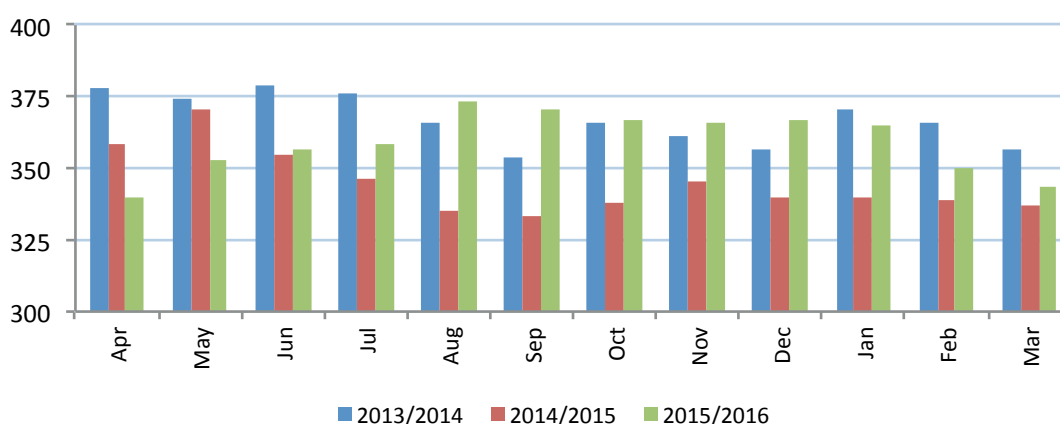
Quantitative information in relation to the IRO service

At the end of March 2016 there were 344 looked after children. This equates to 85.8 per 10,000 and is in line with the number of looked after children at the same time last year (341/84.8 per 10,000).

During 2015/16 the overall number of children becoming looked after increased back to the levels experienced in 2013/14, however, by the end of the year the number fell again to numbers more in line with last year. Gateshead continues to have higher numbers of looked after children compared with the regional rate of 82, and Gateshead's statistical neighbours' rate of 83.3. It is also significantly higher than the national rate of 60 per 10,000 (SSDA903 2014/2015).

Performance and statistical information

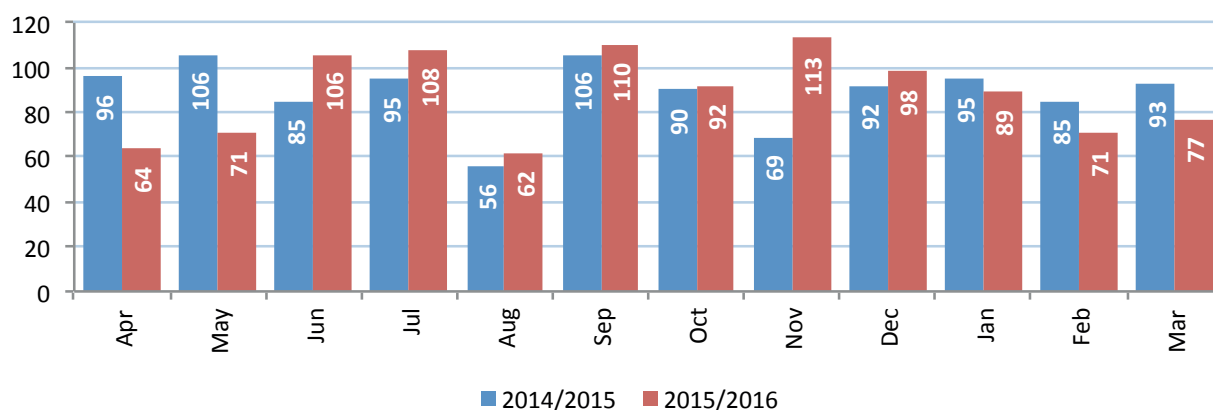
LAC Numbers



LAC Reviews held within timescale. 99.1% of Looked after children had their reviews held within timescale which is above the national average of 91%; of the 319 eligible Looked After children at the end of March 2016, there were three cases that had a review out of date.

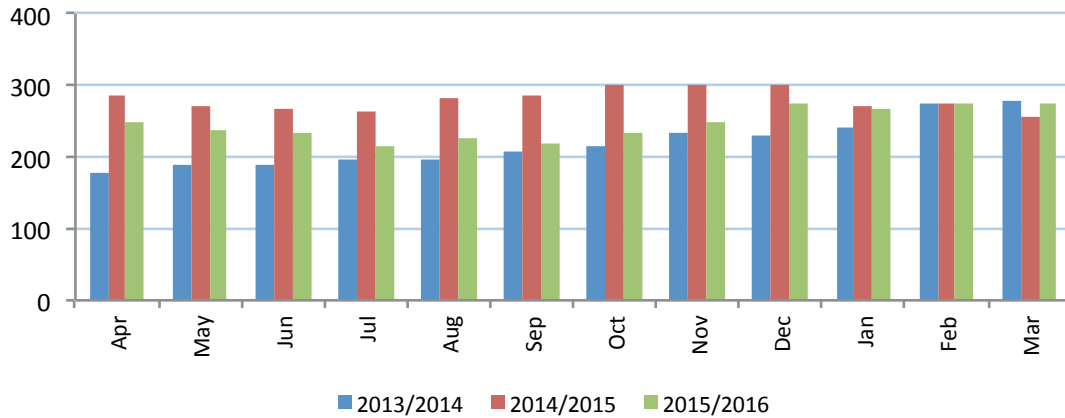
Work is ongoing to ensure that children and young people are sufficiently engaged in their LAC reviews. The number of reviews held in 2015/16 is in line with the number held during 2014/15. The chart below illustrates the distribution of reviews over the course of the year.

LAC Review Meetings



During the year despite the relatively stable headline figure for looked after children, the CSU has seen the impact of increasing child protection activity and increasing complexity of families coming into the child protection conference process. The chart below shows the number of children who were subject to a child protection plan at the end of each month for the last three years.

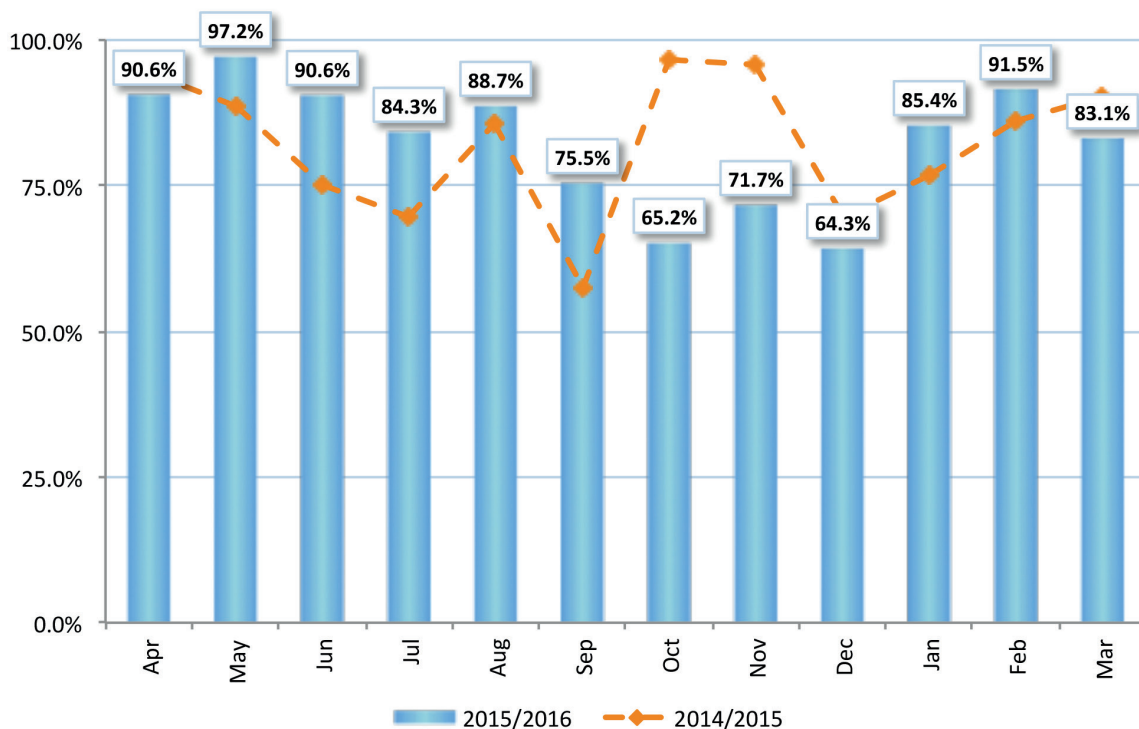
CP Numbers



During the period 394 initial child protection conferences were held. 338 children became subject to a child protection plan. At the end of the year 273 children were subject to a cp plan, which is an increase of 6.6% from the previous year.

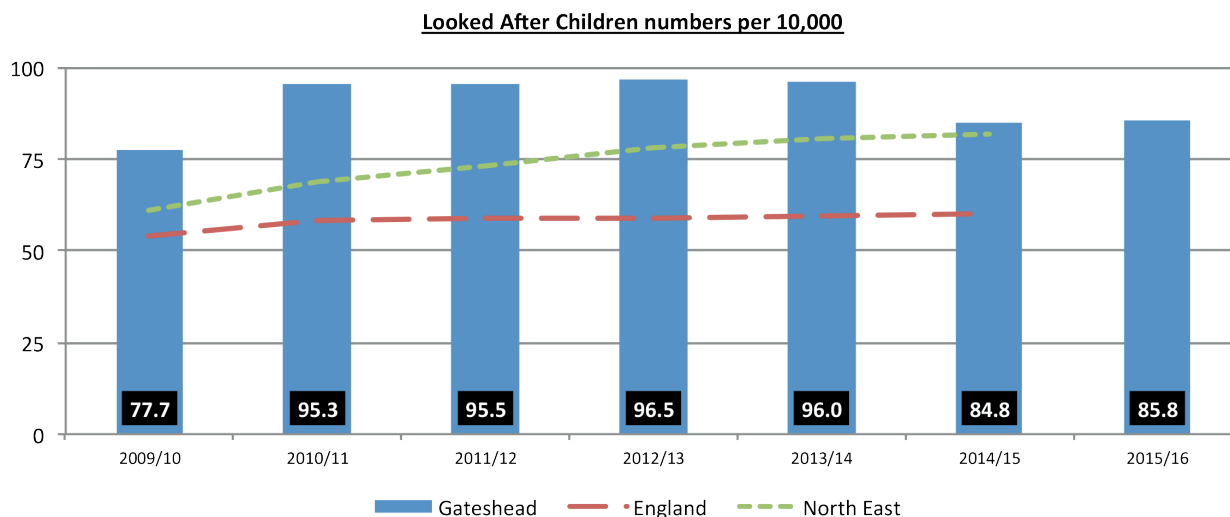
During April 2015 to March 2016, 81.1% of minutes were completed within the 20 working day timescale by the IROs (861/1061 meetings). This represents a small improvement over the figure reported last year (80.6%), although there was a notable dip in performance during October and November 2015 when compared to the preceding year (see graph). The dip corresponds to a period when cp numbers were rising and there were high numbers of LAC reviews scheduled. Overall, there were a similar number of meetings held during 2014 - 2015 (1068).

LAC Minutes completed within timescales

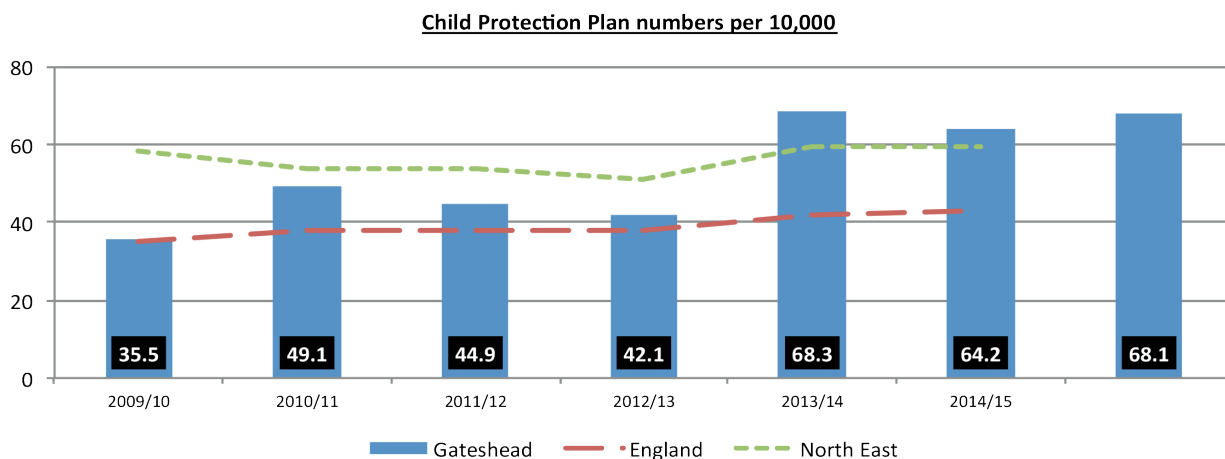


Rates per 10,000 are used as a method of benchmarking local authorities CPP and LAC numbers against each other, using a more comparable method than simply comparing actual numbers. Figures are expressed as a ratio and are calculated by dividing the local authorities' actual numbers by its total 0-17 child population estimate, sourced from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

The 2 charts which follow benchmark Gateshead's rates per 10,000 of children subject to a CPP and rates per 10,000 of LAC, against average rates for comparator groups of North East authorities and England as a whole.



The chart above shows Gateshead has historically had higher numbers of looked after children than the regional and national average. While the gap between Gateshead and the national average remains significant, in the last two years Gateshead's looked after population has reduced and has become more in line with the regional average for the North East.

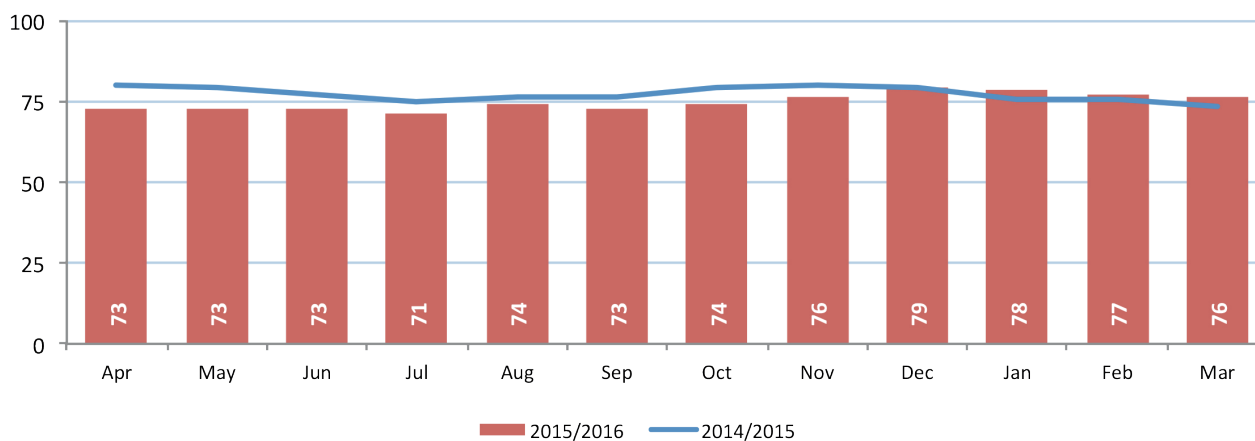


The chart above shows that for the last three years Gateshead has had higher than average rates for child protection and is notably higher than the England average with the gap widening during the last year. While always higher, rates have remained roughly parallel with the regional position.

Caseload

The IRO Handbook suggests that an IRO caseload should be between 50 to 70 Looked after Children. This represents good practice, and ensures the delivery of the full range of functions which are set out in the handbook and the provision of a quality service. There were 8.1 FTE IROs in the unit at the end of March 2016. The average number of LAC cases per IRO at the end of March 2016 was 43. The number of CP cases per IRO at the end of March 2016 was 33 CP per IRO. This equates to 76 LAC/CP cases per IRO. This is higher than the same time last year, when there was an average of 42 LAC cases per IRO, and 32 CP cases per IRO (totalling 74 cases per IRO on average).

Average IRO Caseload (LAC & CP cases only)



The size of caseload alone does not indicate the overall workload for each individual IRO as individual roles and responsibilities vary within the team as described throughout this report, including training, Private Fostering, Complex Abuse meetings, Secure Reviews, ICS / Carefirst developments, together with input into audits and case reviews.

Regulation 44 visits

The DfE amendments to the Children's Homes Regulations January 2014, which came into force from 1 April 2014, no-longer allow for IROs who are managed within the Local Authorities Directorate that carries out the social services functions relating to children to undertake Reg 44 visits in its own children's homes. Therefore, since 1 April 2014 reciprocal arrangements have been put in place with Newcastle City Council. The arrangement is subject to regular review to ensure quality, consistency and compliance.

During the year the SCU has, therefore, had responsibility for undertaking all Regulation 44 Visits to the 4 Newcastle Local Authority Residential Units. The Regulation 44 report form is quality assured and sent to Ofsted with a copy to the Assistant Director of Children's Social Care in Newcastle.

Timely distribution of IRO reports

The number of LAC Chairs' Reports being distributed within timescale remains challenging but the unit continues to improve in this area. By the end of March 2016, of 1061 reports required, 861 were produced within timescales (81.1%). Last year this figure stood at 80.6%, which represents a 0.6% improvement.

Inclusion of Personal Educational Plans (PEPS) in Care Planning

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked after Children is a key priority for IROs. All looked after children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral part.

The IRO should ensure that:

- The PEP's effectiveness is scrutinised in sufficient detail as part of the statutory review and at other times if necessary.
- Where a child has special educational needs, the IRO should ensure that the PEP review is linked with any review of those needs.
- The IRO should raise any unresolved concerns about a child's PEP or education provision with social workers and the Virtual School Head. However, some PEPs continue not to be updated/completed, which continues to be challenged by IROs with members of the care team.

The majority of children and young people who are LAC remain in their current schools when accommodated. This promotes improved educational outcomes as well as placement stability.

Inclusion of Health Assessments in Care Planning

The health plan or report from the most recent health assessment should be provided to the IRO at least three working days before the LAC review. Depending on the age and understanding of the child, the IRO may decide it is appropriate to discuss with the child whether s/he is happy for this information to be shared at the review.

The IRO will ensure consideration is given at the review to both the physical and emotional health of the child, including an update on any significant health issues or ongoing treatment. The IRO must be satisfied that any actions identified in the health plan are being implemented within an agreed timescale that will meet the needs of the child. In addition, the IRO will monitor with the child /young person and his/her carer when dental checks and optician appointments have taken place.

The number children who have been looked after for 12 months or more has decreased for the second year in a row. There were 258 in 2013-14, 231 in 2014/15 and 226 in 2015-16. Those who have up to date health assessments remain the same as last year at 93%, however, current data checks, should see this figure change slightly. 90% of those children received up to date dental checks, an increase from 85% last year. (subject to data checks currently being carried out prior to year-end returns)

Engagement of children and young people in their reviews

The 319 open LAC cases at the end of March 2016 accounted for 724 LAC reviews undertaken during the year. 42 children were under 4 years old. 117 children attended their reviews and were able to express their views directly. For the remaining 160 children and young people who were not present at their LAC reviews, they gave their views indirectly, either through consultation forms or an 'advocate'. Advocates speaking for children have continued to include family members, trusted teachers or carers. Not all children choose to use a formal advocate.

In most cases IROs have offered children and young people a discussion in private prior to their review, subject to age and understanding. A formal pre-meeting has not taken place in some cases, for example, where the young person chooses not to meet his/her IRO prior to the review because his/her placement remains stable, there have been no significant changes planned for the foreseeable future and the IRO and child/young person have already established a relationship or a young person chooses not to talk to his/her IRO.

In 2014-15, out of 729 reviews held, children attended 259 reviews (35%); this increased to 38% in 2015-16, when out of 724 reviews held, children attended 274 reviews.

Special efforts are required to accommodate the individual needs of Disabled children and young people in their LAC reviews. Parents, residential care staff, the involvement worker and Children with Disability Team members all work hard to ensure that the views of Disabled children and young people are known and reflected in the reviews.

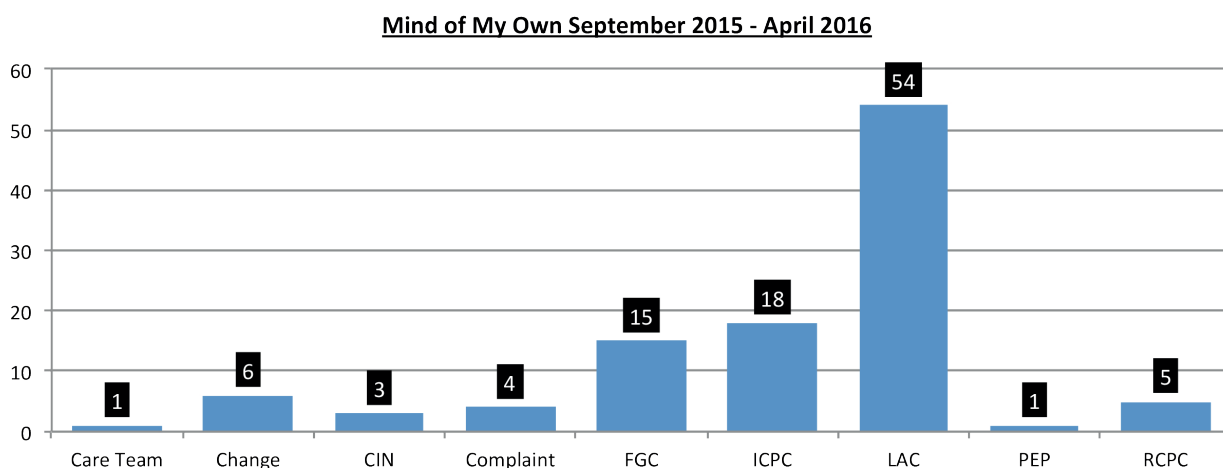
The reviews are intended to be participative, providing an opportunity particularly for the child/young person to contribute, according to age and understanding. They are also intended for the participation of parents, carers and others involved in implementing the child/young person's care plan and in planning for the future.

The Senior Clerk who has responsibility for arranging LAC reviews ensures a letter is sent to the child young person informing him/her of the name of his/her IRO. In addition, IROs give each child at his/her LAC review a card, which contains their contact details and how to obtain an advocate or independent visitor, if identified to be appropriate.

In September 2015 Gateshead introduced MOMO – Mind Of My Own. MOMO (an app), is a modern and award winning way to engage with young people. It makes it easier for them to express their views and to understand what they are saying. The app gives children in care the confidence and the ability to express their needs and to send their statements with one click. This makes it easier for them to communicate with the IRO when they need help or want to tell the IRO about a problem.

Since September 2015, 54 children have used the app to feed information into their LAC review. (107 reports overall have been provided from young people through the App)

Children's views



Case examples from MOMO

A young person raised several concerns regarding his contact with his mother – mum was giving all of her attention to a sibling during contact.

The young person requested that contact be held separately in the future. His views were fed into his looked after review and as a result it was agreed that contact arrangements would be changed accordingly.

Young person placed in a secure unit. The young person used MOMO to inform his IRO that he had been searched on a number of occasions. The IRO challenged the way the searches had been carried out and ensured that any future searches were carried out in line with and adhered to the secure unit's search policy.

One young person felt that MOMO provided her with an accessible way of being listened to and felt that the information fed into her looked after review was a better way for her to participate than attending.

A young person used MOMO to voice his unhappiness that he was not allowed to go on holiday and share a room with his "foster brother" who is now an adult in a shared lives placement. The IRO challenged the fostering service and agreed a positive outcome, meaning that the young person could go on the holiday.

Management oversight and dispute resolution process

Advocacy

The SCU is committed to promoting independent advocacy for children and young people. Gateshead Borough Council continues to have a contract with Action for Children which provides an independent and confidential service. The unit has a responsibility in ensuring that children and young people who are subject to Child Protection Plans and those looked after are aware of the Advocacy Service and how to access it. All children and young people who become looked after are provided with details of the role of advocates, how they can provide support and how they can be accessed.

Placement stability

At the end of the year there were 26 looked after children (LAC) who have had 3 or more placements out of a total of 344 looked after children (7.6%). At the same time last year, there were 24 out of 341 LAC who had three or more placements (7%).

During the period of April to March 2016, 104 children have been in their placement for at least 2 years, out of the 121 children who have been looked after for 2 and a half years or more (86%). At the same time last year there were 104 out of 132 (78.8%).

Care Leavers

There were 144 young people who turned 17, 18, 19, 20 or 21 during 2015-16 and there are 122 who were in suitable accommodation. There are 19 young people with whom we are not in touch, but who have been reported as not being in suitable accommodation for the purposes of this indicator. There are an additional three who are not in suitable accommodation; 2 young people are in custody and 1 young person is in hospital sectioned under the Mental Health Act.

Of the 122 care leavers who are in suitable accommodation, 73 are in some form of education, training or employment (ETE), a further 11 are not in ETE due to parenting commitments and a further 10 are not in ETE as a result of their disabilities.

Dispute Resolution Process

Gateshead, as a Local Authority is accountable for all children and young people in their care and needs to ensure that timely decisions based on clear assessments of their needs have been completed, and drift has been avoided.

The Dispute Resolution Procedure ensures any issues of practice and standards identified by the IROs are resolved. It identifies the issues and standards, which the IRO will bring to the attention of staff and managers. It identifies the level of management that the issues will be raised with initially and the different stages thereafter. The protocol acts as a check and balance of the tasks that need to be done.

Where all other methods of resolving a problem have proved unsuccessful, the IRO should use his/her power to refer a case to CAFCASS so that legal proceedings can be brought – this may be for further family proceedings (e.g. for discharge of a Care Order for contact), a freestanding application under the Human Rights Act or an application for judicial review. While the types of situations which lead to such a referral are not defined, it is anticipated that they will involve significant failure to meet a child's needs.

Gateshead's IROs have not had to refer any cases to CAFCASS as issues have been resolved locally with senior managers. However, there is a clear dispute resolution procedure in place should this be necessary, which is evidenced by the completion of alert forms on Carefirst. IROs also have access to independent legal advice if it is required.

During this reporting period, there have been no recorded reasons to progress to a Dispute Resolution Process with senior managers.

IROs have developed positive professional relationships with the Safeguarding and Care Planning and LAC teams. As a result where issues have arisen, informal discussions have taken place between the IRO, social worker and their team manager to resolve issues on a daily basis. Examples of these include:

- Social Worker to review with Team Manager the contact plan as a result of concern that the proposed plan was unworkable - this led to a revised plan which appropriately safeguarded the child.
- Quality of a parenting assessment - following the challenge further work was identified to complete the assessment satisfactorily.
- Challenging the placement of two siblings together who had a competitive and aggressive relationship - as a result a sibling assessment was undertaken by the Social Worker, with a three month timeframe around the placement. The outcome was that siblings were separated.
- Holding other agencies to account for their contributions to LAC reviews when their reports have not been available.

IROs have continued to highlight examples of good practice which include:

- Social Worker in the LAC Team who demonstrated clear planning for a very complex young person in terms of a transition from school to college and who had included the YP and foster carer within these plans and completed a clear, precise, specific care plan for the review.
- A number of examples of Social Workers from the Safeguarding teams who clearly knew the family they were working with and the issues they faced very well and were confident to challenge parents in conference appropriately, openly and honestly.
- Social workers' reports and updated care plans completed within time scale and of a high standard.
- Ensuring the voice of the child is heard.

IROs are aware that they have individual responsibility for the quality of their practice. They do not work in isolation and a supportive culture has been created in the Safeguarding Children Unit which encourages them to operate effectively. They regularly discuss difficult cases with their colleagues, the IRO Manager, the Service Director and the Service Manager Looked after Children. The Service Manager for Children's Commissioning and Performance has also attended team meetings on a regular basis to drive forward the improvements in performance.

Impact of the service

A key part of the role for IROs is developing trusting relationships with the children for whom they are reviewing officers. The SCU works hard to maintain the stability of those relationships for our children and young people to ensure that IROs can be genuine advocates for them, ensuring that the decisions made during the care planning process are made in children's best interests.

Case studies

Case study 1

A looked after 12 year old boy who has been in a residential unit in Cumbria for the past 3 years where he was educated on site. Prior to this he had spent six months in Ferndene Mental Health Unit, Prudhoe on a section. He had bounced through three placements with very troubling, highly sexualised and challenging behaviour.

Whilst he was in Cumbria he developed a liking for the outdoors – forest schools, fell running and camping. The IRO worked with the Care Team to search for a rural placement as all felt a return to the Gateshead area would revisit the trauma of his early experiences in the care of his parents.

DB has now moved into foster care with a family in Yorkshire and at his first LAC meeting in his new foster placement there was a really positive picture of his progress. He is now in full time EBD school, attends Scouts, goes swimming, climbing, has lots of new friends and has developed a strong relationship with his IRO, greeting the IRO with a big appropriate hug when visited. He has had five social workers and 1 IRO whilst he has been looked after. The IRO has had the benefit of having been involved for almost four years building a relationship with him and listening to his views. As a result this has helped decision making about his future and appropriate placement matching.

Case study 2

IRO involvement with and commendation of the Care Team, including maternal grandparents who are the young person's foster carers. Review meetings have been challenging and at times acrimonious between parents and grandparents.

As a result, Grandparents have been offered a lot of support and training from the Fostering Service and the last two looked after reviews have resulted in agreement over contact with everyone, and most importantly, in accordance with the young person's wishes.

Father is now able to appreciate the care that the young person is receiving and has supported boundaries and strategies put in place to manage his behaviour. As a result of the consistent approach of the IRO to reviews, the forum of the looked after review has been accepted by the family and is used appropriately as the place to discuss the young person's care calmly and rationally so that his best interests can be promoted.

Case study 3

Consistent relationship with the IRO has helped coax a young person (C) to participate in reviews and provide ongoing support for him outwith those reviews.

The IRO has known the young person for over 3 years supporting him throughout his placements including a placement move. When allocated to the IRO he was in a foster placement due to neglect at home, and court proceedings were concluding. C was a very angry 14 year old who did not feel he'd been included in the decision making. He was emotionally fragile, especially following his previous placement with a family friend and which he'd shared with his siblings had broken down.

The family friend held C responsible for this and over the next few years this led to difficulties re-establishing regular contact with the younger sibling who remained in the family friend placement. At this time C was introverted and spent most of his time in his room. Eventually this led to issues in placement and the placement broke down.

C moved to another IFA placement where he has been nurtured and as a result he has blossomed. He maintained his resistance to formal meetings, but with the support of his carers and gentle coaxing on the part of the IRO he started attending reviews on the understanding that his signs of anxiety were recognised (the fidgeting and tapping foot) and that he was allowed to get up and leave at any point.

The IRO agreed the level of engagement with C at his request and that there would be no visits unless he wanted them. There was, however, a clear understanding that the IRO would ring and if he felt able to, he would speak to the IRO on the phone. Initially the conversations were brief and monosyllabic, but more recently there has been a greater willingness to chat.

Continued on next page

Case study 3 *continued*

Over the past 6 months C has faced additional challenges including contact with siblings, the termination of his apprenticeship placement by his employer and C's mother died suddenly. There have been several occasions when the IRO has responded to emails and telephone calls from his carer and directly or indirectly offered support, including providing emotional support and encouraging and ensuring that other professionals respond in a timely way to support requests.

C recently had his last looked after review as his 18th birthday is approaching. He thanked the IRO for input, echoed by the carer, who acknowledged and thanked the IRO for always being there to support them. When permission was sought to use his experience in a case study he agreed and commented "It's been class."

Case study 4

Foster carer A, had been a carer for a number of years. When concerns were identified a clear action plan was developed with the foster carer-reviewing officer. Concerns were specific to standards of care, team working and attendance at training.

At the following review further concerns were identified specifically in relation to the carers ability to meet the young person's needs in placement. The importance of having an overview of all the information and being able to triangulate evidence including information for the review and historical information allowed a clearer picture of the foster carer's ability to make and sustain change.

Discussions were held with the fostering team manager and the child's social worker to highlight these concerns. The young person in placement was 16 at time of the review and had been in placement a number of years and it was felt that removing him from this placement would be detrimental to his emotional wellbeing. As a result a robustly monitored plan was put in place which has ensured the foster carer's provision of appropriate care and support for the child in her care has been maintained. She is currently working towards a Diploma in Child Care.

Planned developments and key priorities for 2016-1017

Effectiveness of IRO role:

- To develop a systematic way of collecting and collating evidence of the effectiveness of the IRO role, including oversight of cases, leading to robust plans and avoidance of unnecessary delay.
- IRO challenge, advice and support to operational Social Work teams is appropriately recorded and themes captured.

Ensuring Children's Voices influence planning for their future:

- Increasing the roll out of MOMO, ensuring the voices of children inform all aspects of planning and decision making in relation to their lives.
- Developing processes to ensure children's voices are captured and inform service improvement.

Ensuring processes are fit for purpose – including foster carer reviews:

- Reviewing foster carer review processes to streamline bureaucracy in consultation with the foster care panel.
- Review all business support tasks.

Training and development and Learning:

- Ensuring CSU staff continuously improve and develop, and use an evidenced based approach to their work.
- Ensuring the CSUs work informs and is informed by strategic plans and relevant operational groups and processes – enabling CSU staff to contribute and respond to the wider agenda.
- Ensuring that IROs play an active role in the development of the new planning frameworks for LAC and CP plans and are represented at all workshop events.

Appendix 1

GATESHEAD IRO PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK Figures are as 31.3.2016 unless otherwise specified

No.	Performance measure	April - March 2014-2015	% April - March 2014-2015	April - March 2015-2016	% April - March 2015-2016	Progress since last year	RAG rating	Commentary
1	Percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales	236/236	100.0%	176/176	100.0%	↑		Of the 176 children who have required reviews in between April and March 2016, who have been CP for at least three months and are currently CP, all have received their reviews within timescale.
2	Looked after children cases which were reviewed within required timescales	308/309	99.7%	316/319	99.1%	↑		Of the 319 eligible Looked After children at the end of March 2016, there are 3 cases that have out of date reviews (99.1% in time). A total of 724 reviews were completed during this time. 2 of the out of time cases relate to two siblings. The national average is 91%. Work is ongoing to ensure that children and young people are sufficiently engaged in their LAC reviews.
3	% of IRO's appointed within 5 days of child becoming LAC (must be appointed prior to the first review)	169/208	81.3%	196/219	89.5%	←		Of the 219 children who have become LAC in the last 12 months, 196 were assigned an IRO within 5 working days (89.5%).
4	% of LAC review minutes completed within 15 days	861/1068	80.6%	861/1061	81.1%	←		During April 2015 to March 2016, 81.1% of minutes were completed within the 20 working day timescale by the IROs (861/1061 meetings). This represents a small improvement over the figure reported last year (80.6%), although there was a notable dip in performance during October and November 2015 when compared to the preceding year (see graph). There were a similar number of meetings held during 2014 - 2015 (1068).
5	% of children and young people looked after for 3 years or less who have the same IRO throughout	142/180	78.9%	79.0%	79.0%	←		154 out of 195 LAC who have been looked after for three years or less have had the same IRO as a meeting chair in 79% of their reviews since April 2015.

No.	Performance measure	April - March 2014-2015	% April - March 2014-2015	April - March 2015-2016	% April - March 2015-2016	Progress since last year	RAG rating	Commentary
6	Proportion of ICPs held within 15 days of S47 starting	292/294	99.3%	393/394	99.7%	←		1 ICPs was held out of timescale between April 2015 and March 2016. There has been a 34% increase in the number of ICPs held compared to last year
7	Proportion of outline CP plans distributed within 1 day of review (conferences)	547/547	100%	477/477	100%	↑		All CP plans have been distributed within timescales (100%).
8	Proportion of CP minutes distributed within 20 working days of conference. (conferences)	374/722	51.8%	642/643	99.8%	←		During April 2015 to March 2016, all but one set of child protection minutes were distributed within the 20 working day timescale (99.8%). This figure is nearly double the figure reported to the same period last year when only 51.4% of minutes were distributed within timescales. Consistent weekly reporting and supervision of these reports has ensured high performance in this area.
9	Proportion of CP review conferences with a previous Core Group meeting	863/947	91.1%	766/841	91.1%	→		There have been 841 CP review conferences during the period, and 766 have had a Core Group meeting held prior to the conference.
10	LAC/CP cases with an assigned IRO	LAC 325/325 CP 242/242 LAC /CP 16/16	100% 100% 100%	LAC 325/325 CP 265/265 LAC/CP 8/8	100% 100% 100%	↑ ↑ ↑		All cases had an IRO allocated on 31/03/2016



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Gateshead Child Protection Conference Chairs'

Annual Report 2015-2016

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Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work, performance and achievements of the IRO function for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. This report has been prepared in accordance with Working Together 2015 and Gateshead LSCB Inter Agency Child Protection Procedures and will be reported to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

The report provides an overview of practice in relation to children and young people subject to CP Plans, highlighting the progress made during 2015 to 2016 in strengthening the IRO/CPC Chair's role within Gateshead. Whilst acknowledging the challenges faced by the service and recognising the areas for development, the report also seeks to celebrate achievements and successes in improving outcomes for children and young people subject to CP Plans.

Governing Legislation

The main legislation and regulations that govern and support professionals to safeguard children and hence surround the work of the IRO are as follows:

- **Children Act 1989**
- **Children Act 2004**
- **Human Rights Act 1998**
- **Data Protection Act 1998**
- **Children and Young Person's Act 1933**
- **The Protection of Children Act 1999**
- **Adoption and Children Act 2002**
- **The Criminal Justice Act 1998**
- **Sexual Offences Act 2003**
- **Protection From Harassment Act 1997**
- **Education Reform Act 1988**
- **Education Act 2002**
- **UN Convention of the Rights of the Child 1989**
- **Working Together 2015.**

Priority areas identified in 2014/15 for improvement and action during reporting period 2015/16

It will continue to be a priority of the service that the team improves consistency, standards and performance across all areas of it's work, and to fulfil its role as a key element in ensuring that children and young people are receiving the best possible support.

Key areas for development include:

- (1) **Continue to challenge practice and develop a process with external agencies so they can be immediately informed when an issue has been identified to ensure it is addressed.**

Update: *the lack of or late submissions in reports to conference is an ongoing concern from a professional perspective as key pieces of information may be missing that are crucial to decision making i.e. Baby T SCR, GP information. In addition, it limits the ability of Conference Chairs to prepare for conference and undertake a clear risk analysis.*

Concerns were expressed about the availability of GP reports at Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences. Previous year's figures averaged less than a third of required reports provided to conference. Visits were undertaken by SCU staff to a number of GP practices and the SCU hosted and facilitated 3 Improving Communication Workshop Sessions in conjunction with the Named GP, with 94% of practices attending. Significant improvement has now been made in the contribution of information and availability of reports at conference, now averaging 71%.

To address the reports issue from the SCU perspective internally and with external partners, the attendance section of the process and Chair's Report on Carefirst has been adapted to include an audit trail and record of all representatives present and reports provided to conference with detail recorded of when the report was shared with parents/carers and made available to the SCU/Conference Chair. As a result, all agencies will be targeted and this adaption made to internal processes will enable the SCU to have accurate data, placing the onus on individual agencies to account for practice. Performance information will be used more effectively to highlight evidence of shortfalls within procedural requirements internally or with partner agencies.

(2) Maintain a focus on ensuring chairs' reports and child protection plans continue to be distributed within timescale and maintain the 100% performance target.

Update: *From February 2015 we are able to evidence 100% performance in the distribution within timescales of chairs reports and child protection plans.*

(3) Continue to increase the involvement of children and young people in Child Protection Conferences.

Update: *the introduction of MOMO has enabled more young people to provide their views to conference; in addition, work continues in R&A with a dedicated worker supporting children and young people to attend or provide their views in child protection conferences. Child protection chairs have been pro-active in supporting children and young people to attend and, where appropriate, have adapted meeting style and agenda to facilitate this.*

(4) Use performance information to challenge and hold agencies to account when reports for conferences are available for the child protection chair within procedural timescales and have not been shared with family members, carers or young people prior to a conference taking place.

Update: *In line with issue 1 above, performance information is used to evidence the availability of reports to conference and hold agencies to account through direct representation and through the LSCB.*

(5) Whilst CPC Chairs consistently challenge practice, they need to demonstrate and evidence more clearly on Carefirst where they have challenged drift and delay or the quality of child protection plans.

Update: *This remains an area for focus during 2016/17. Conference Chairs have sound professional relationships with SW staff and good communication links have been established to ensure any drift and delay can be challenged, capturing this and evidencing that improvement is less robust.*

(6) Collate the views of parents, carers, children and young people to inform and develop practice and future IRO/Independent Chairs of child protection managers' annual reports.

Update: *This is an ongoing area of development for the unit.*

(7) Develop further the quality assurance framework so it includes a programme of auditing Child Protection Chairs' reports on a monthly basis, including the development of a peer review process.

Update: *This is an ongoing area of development for the unit.*

(8) To implement the CP-IS system and share information with NHS.

Update: *Work is ongoing with health colleagues to implement CP-IS and is on track for completion in Autumn 2016. An information sharing protocol is in place and there is buy-in across agencies to support this initiative.*

Professional profile

In order to fulfil their challenging role, CPC Chairs must have an appropriate level of experience and authority. In Gateshead all CPC Chairs are qualified, registered and experienced social workers. They have extensive experience of communicating and working with children and young people and have knowledge about what contributes to good quality practice in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including an understanding of the relevant legal processes.

A CP conference is chaired by the CPC Chair who is responsible for ensuring:

- Parents have been given copies of reports prepared by all agencies involved (excluding the police and GPs whose report is shared at the CP Conference) at least 1 working day before an Initial Conference and 5 working days for a Review Child Protection Conference.
- They meet with parents, any advocates and family prior to conference to ensure they understand the purpose of the conference and how it will be conducted.
- The appropriate involvement of parents and children.
- The involvement of any supports is clarified.
- The conference is child focussed.
- All issues/concerns are addressed and everyone has the opportunity to share information, concerns and views.
- A debate takes place which examines the findings of reports and risk assessment and analysis is encouraged.
- All options are considered and the conference reaches decisions about whether or not the child/children should/should not be subject of CP plans in a non-discriminatory way.
- The completion and sign off of CP plans within 1 working day of the conference.
- The distribution of Chairs' reports within 20 working days of the conference.

Current staffing structure

Responsibility for the activity and development of the Unit lies with the Service Manager for Quality Assurance, who reports to the Service Director for Children's Commissioning and since October to the Service Director for Child and Family Support. There are 8.1 IRO/child protection conference Chairs. They are supported by 1 senior operational support coordinator, 6 FTE senior clerks and 1 apprentice.

The role of the Senior Clerk is to:

- Arrange, allocate and minute Child Protection Conferences, whilst completing and distributing the new child protection plan within 1 working day of the conference and to ensure the chairs' reports are completed and distributed within 20 working days of conference.
- Complete all other administrative tasks within the Safeguarding Children Unit, including logging and monitoring all missing person notifications from other authorities, whilst liaising with partner agencies, communicating daily with health colleagues, providing all the daily updates, including any changes of new or current Child Protection cases.
- Ensure a comprehensive business support function is provided for MAPPA and LADO, which includes completing and returning MAPPA requests within timescale to Probation HQ, whilst ensuring the Data collection of high risk offenders is monitored and updated regularly and all electronic files of live cases are up to date with all the relevant information.
- Supporting the LADO to ensure all meetings, notifications and data is updated and monitored regularly, adhering to timescales and statutory guidelines.
- To maintain and update Carefirst, whilst monitoring performance management and providing statistical information when requested by the Service Manager.
- Key systems and procedures have been reviewed to support better practice, such as allocation meetings and induction packages, with performance being a standard agenda item at the weekly case allocation meeting.

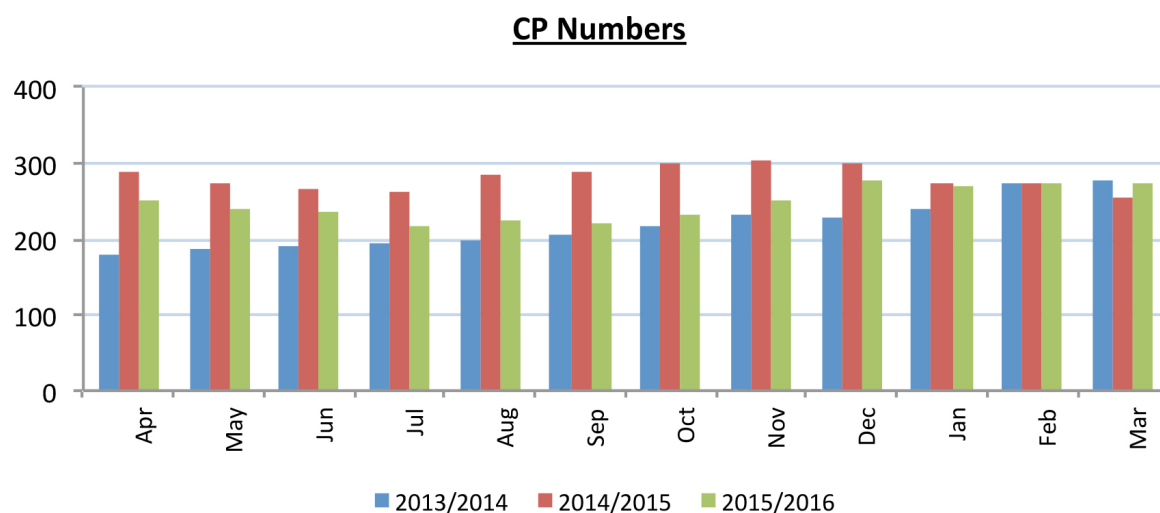
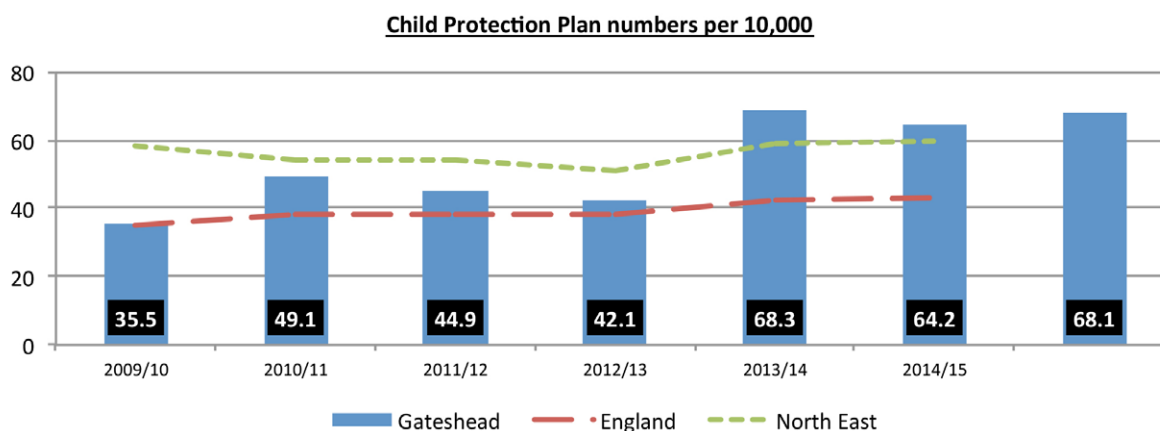
A Senior Operational Support Co-ordinator is in place to manage the activity and performance of the Business Support staff; all the Business Support team work closely with IROs and the Service Manager.

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) is also located within this Unit. The post provides a monitoring and development role which involves providing support, guidance, challenge, training and raising awareness across the children's workforce in relation to the management of allegations. LADO activity is shared with the LSCB in an annual report. In addition, an electronic referral process has been introduced and a performance management framework is in the early stages of development.

The Safeguarding Children Unit is informed about all Looked after Children and children who are the subject of Section 47 Enquiries which need to proceed to an Initial Child Protection Conference. This ensures that they are immediately allocated a designated IRO/CPC Chair, with the key aim that the allocated worker will remain consistent until the child is no-longer looked after or subject of a Child Protection Plan.

The numbers of children subject to a cp plan have increased during the year from 258 to 273 at 31st March 2016, an increase of 5.4%. At 68.1 per 10,000, Gateshead remains higher than the national average rate (42.9 per 10k), the regional average rate (59.5 per 10k) and Gateshead's statistical neighbour average rate (57 per 10k) (2014/15 CIN Census).

Performance and Statistical Information

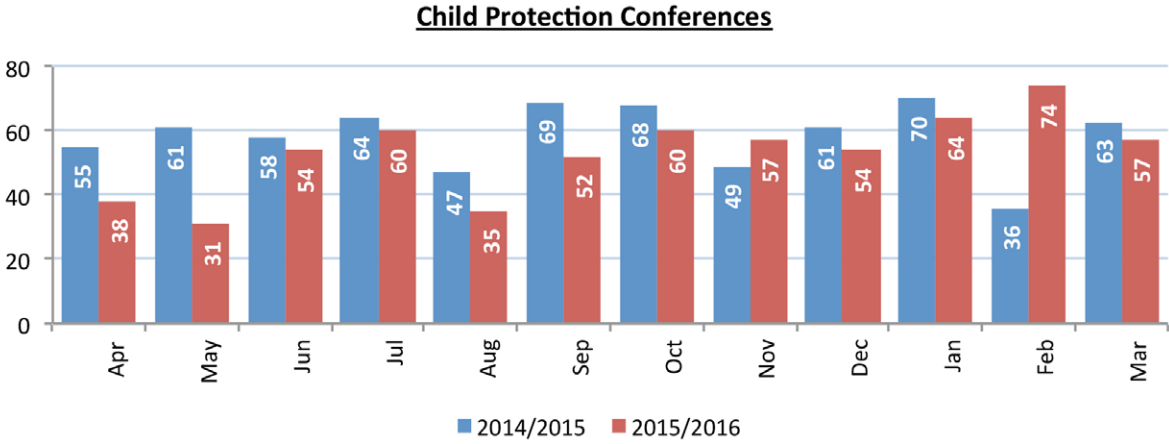


Those children who are subject to a plan as a result of neglect continue to remain the highest proportion at 61.9%, although this only shows a slight decrease since the end of March 2015 when it was 66.7%. Emotional abuse as a category has also shown some movement, increasing from 20.2% at March 2015, compared to 29.7% at March 2016.

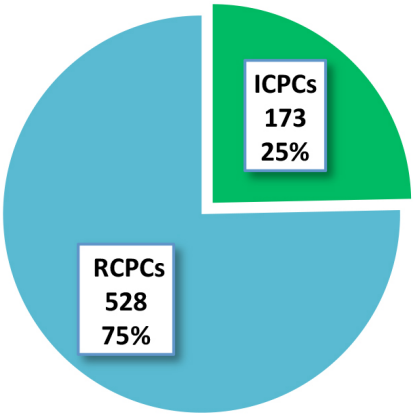
The table below provides key monitoring data relating to activity within the child protection process. There has been an increase in activity across all indicators during 2015/16 compared with the previous year although the figures are in line with those experienced in 2013/14.

Indicator	Year end 2013/14	Year end 2014/15	Year end 2015/16	Stat neighbour	National average
Rate of referrals to children's social care	617.9 (2484)	436.9 1752	518.7 2080	785.5	548.3
Rate of section 47s	144.2 (581)	120.1 (482)	166.8 (669)	157.9	138.2
Rate of ICPC per 10,000	82 (329)	73 (294)	98.2 (394)	77.4	61.6
Rate of CPP per 10,000	68.3	64.2	68.1	57	42.9

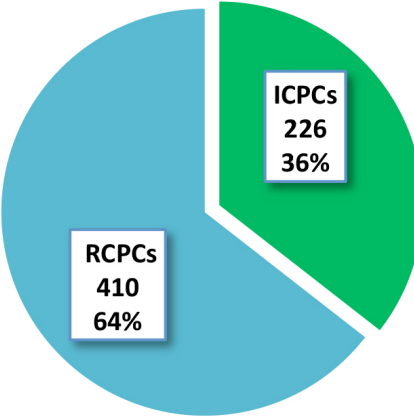
There were 394 children subject to an initial child protection conference during the period (this figure does not include 4 transfer conferences or ICPCs held after the end of the period), of which 338 (85.7%) resulted in the child being made subject to a child protection (CP) plan, which indicates the right cases are going to conference and that there is multiagency agreement on the way to progress these cases. 393 out of 394 initial conferences took place within the 15 working day timescale of the S47 being initiated (99.7%). This is well above the national average of 74.7%, the regional average of 81.7% and Gateshead's statistical neighbour average of 79.1% (2014/15 CIN Census).



Child Protection Conferences
2014-2015



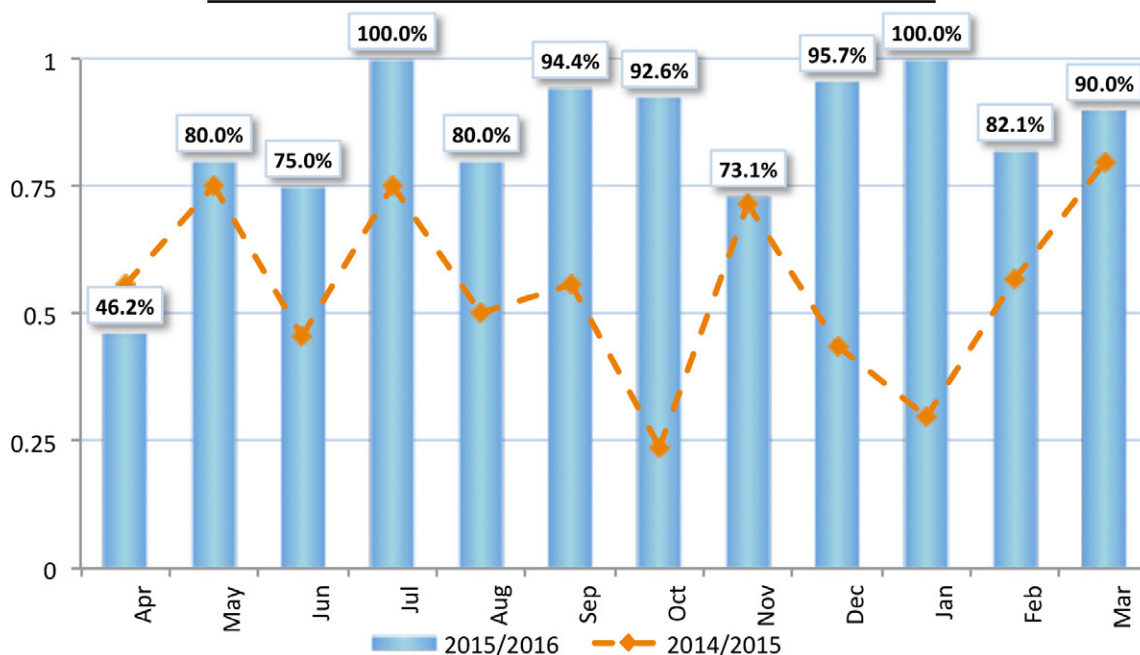
Child Protection Conferences
2015-2016



During 2015/16, 394 children were subject to an ICPC; in total, 226 conferences were held and 410 review child protection conferences.

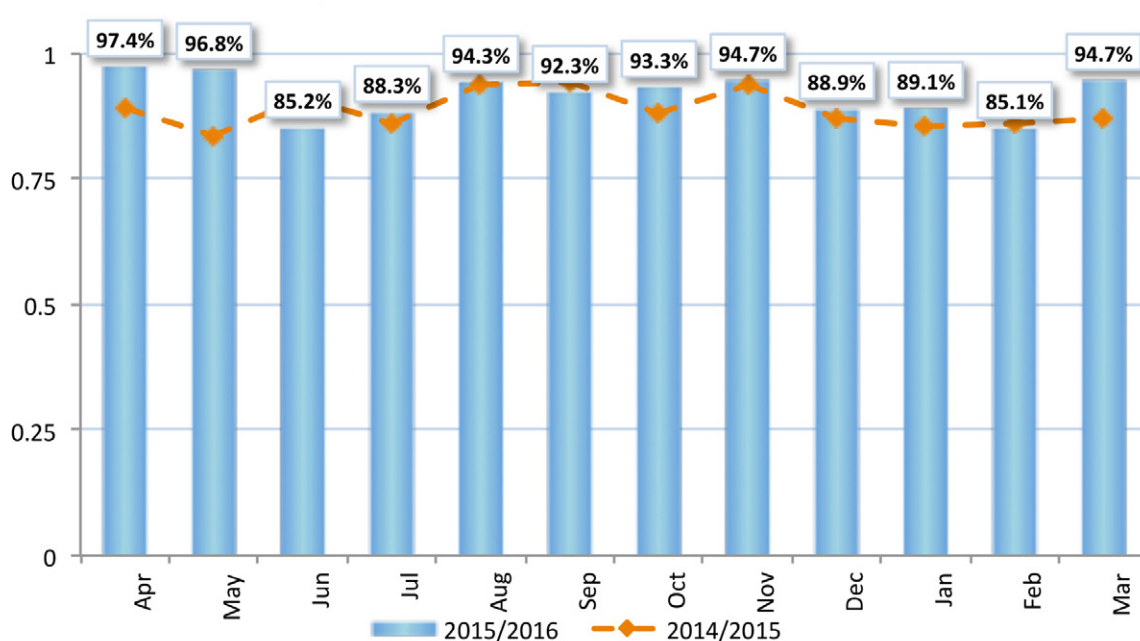
During April 2015 to March 2016, police attended 85% of all initial child protection conferences held (192/226 conferences). This represents a 56.5% variance increase over police attendance reported over the same period last year, when only 54.3% of conferences were attended by the police (94/173). It should also be noted that there has been a 30.6% increase in the number of initial conferences taking place in 2015-2016.

Police Attendance at Initial Child Protection Conferences



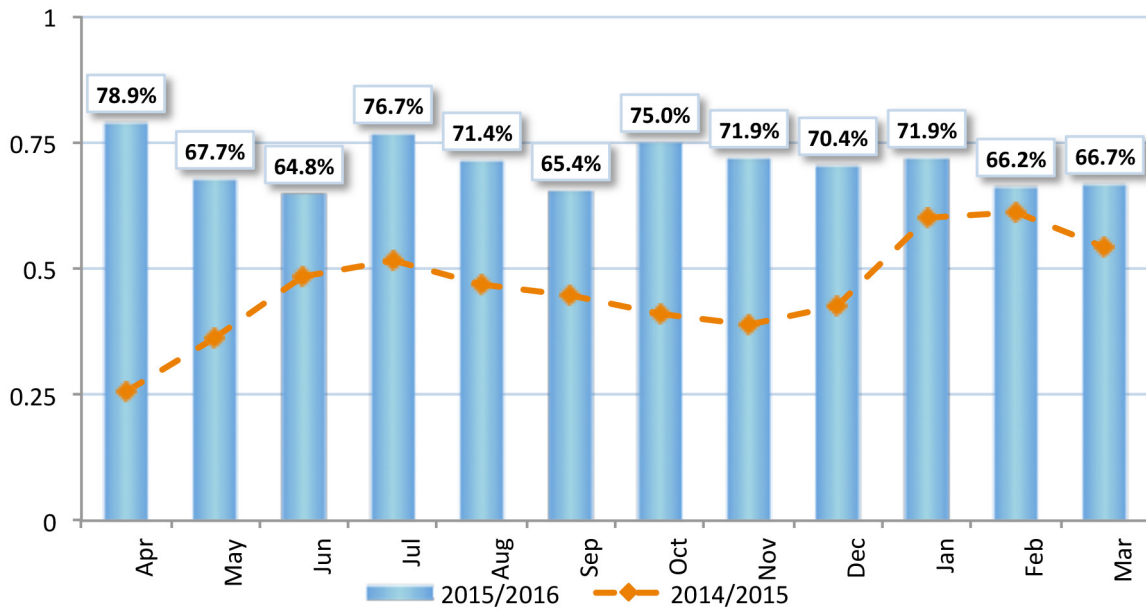
During April 2015 to March 2016, police reports were provided in 91% of all child protection conferences held (579/636 conferences). This represents a small improvement over police reports provided during the same period last year, when 88.7% of conferences had police reports provided (622/701).

Police Reports Presented at Child Protection Conferences



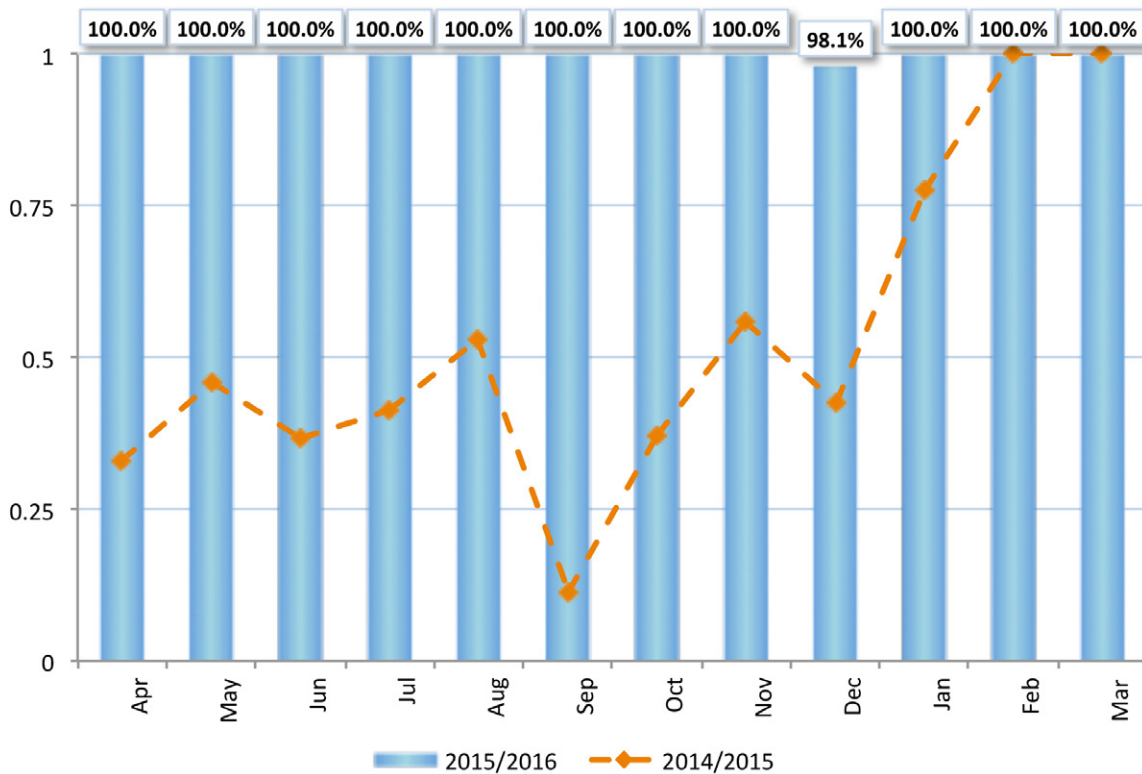
During April 2015 to March 2016, GP reports were provided in 70.4% of all child protection conferences held (448/636 conferences). This represents a 53.7% variance increase over GP reports provided during the same period last year, when only 45.8% of conferences had GP reports provided (321/701). However, it should be noted that whilst improvements in this area have occurred during the course of the year, there was a dip in performance in February and March 2016.

GP Reports Presented at Child Protection Conferences



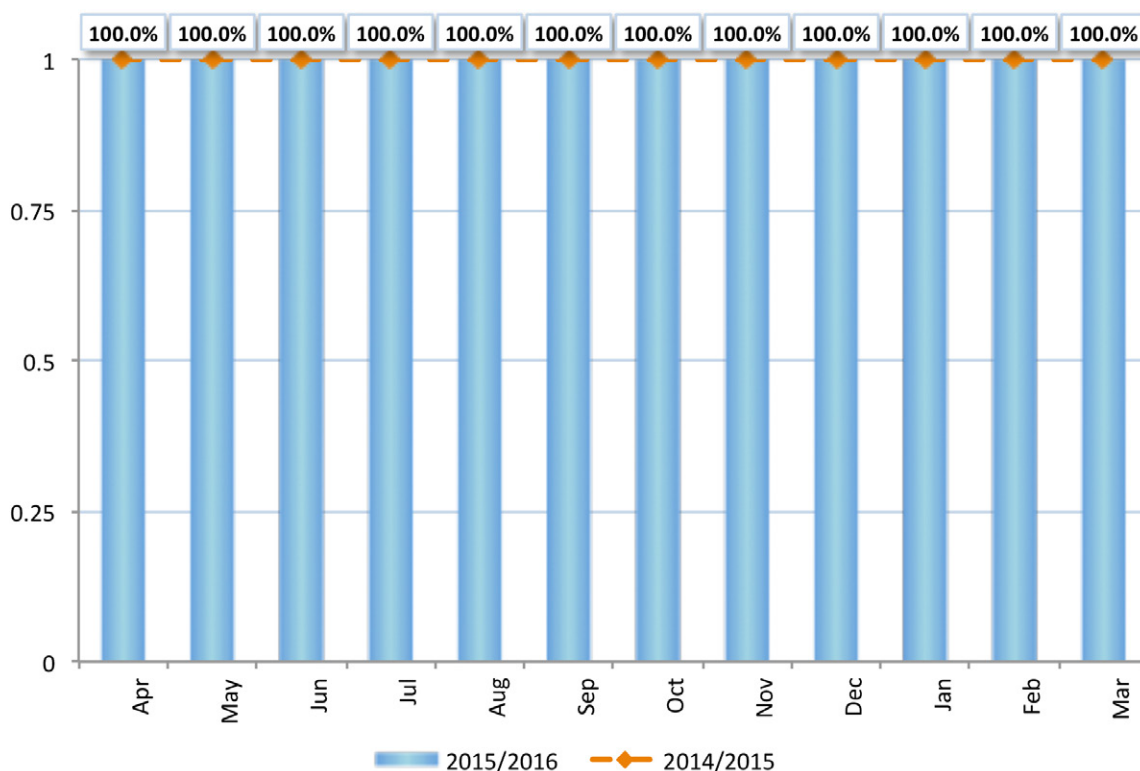
During April 2015 to March 2016, all but one set of child protection minutes were distributed within the 20 working day timescale (99.8%). This figure is nearly double the figure reported to the same period last year when only 51.4% of minutes were distributed within timescales. Consistent weekly reporting and supervision of these reports have ensured high performance in this area.

Child Protection Minutes distributed within timescale



All child protection plans have been distributed within 24 hours. Performance in this area has remained at its highest at 100%, with no variation compared to last year's performance.

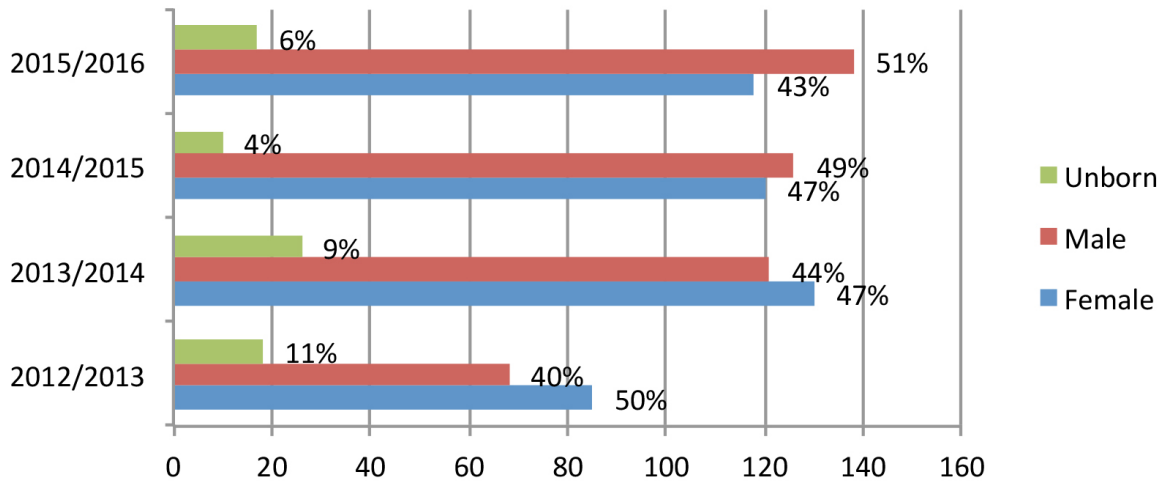
Child Protection Plans distributed within timescale



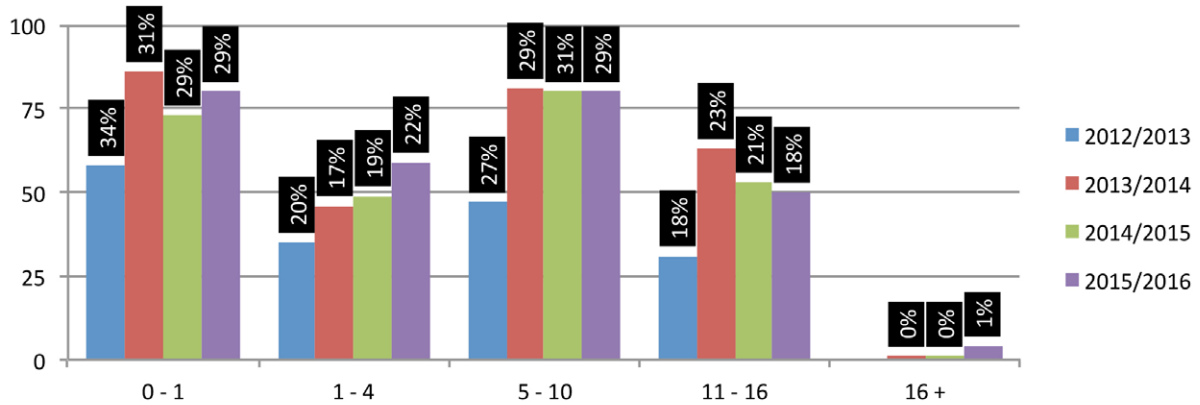
		CP in	CP Out	CP Change	CP as @
2015/2016	April	20	26	-6	250
2015/2016	May	11	23	-12	238
2015/2016	June	33	37	-4	234
2015/2016	July	22	39	-17	217
2015/2016	August	17	9	8	225
2015/2016	September	28	34	-6	219
2015/2016	October	39	25	14	233
2015/2016	November	35	18	17	250
2015/2016	December	36	10	26	276
2015/2016	January	25	33	-8	268
2015/2016	February	43	38	5	273
2015/2016	March	29	29	0	273

The chart above shows overall activity in relation to child protection plans, the numbers beginning and ending during the year. In total, 659 child protection plans were either started or discontinued in 2015/16. In total, 338 child protection plans were initiated during 2015/2016 compared to 300 in 2014/2015, which represents a 12.7% increase. 321 child protection plans were ending in 2015/2016 compared to 319 in 2014/2015 - only a 0.6% increase.

Children on Child Protection plans as at 31/03 by gender



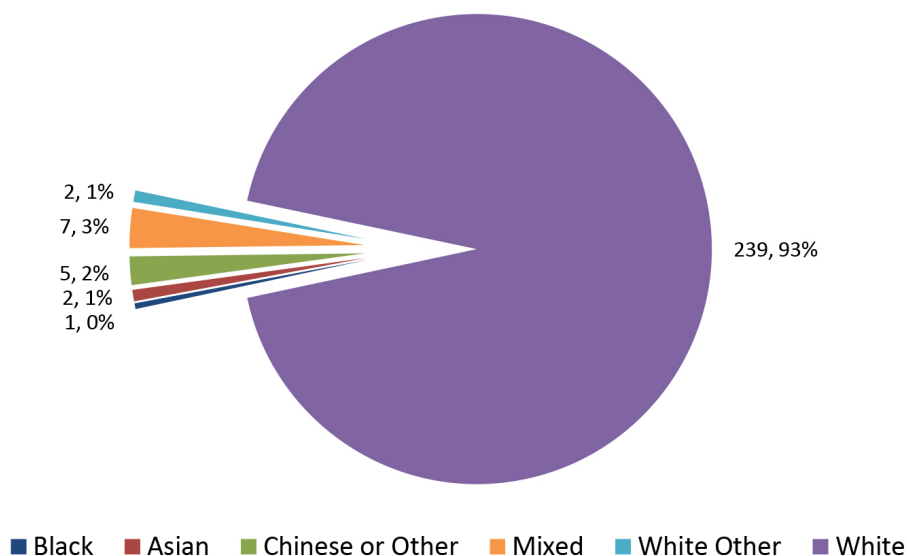
Children on Child Protection Plans as at 31/03 by age group



The charts above show that in the last 2 years there has been a change in the gender split with a greater proportion of males becoming subject to child protection plans in the last 2 years compared with the previous 2 years. It is the younger age children who typically account for the largest proportion of child protection cases specifically in 0-1 age bracket which includes unborns.

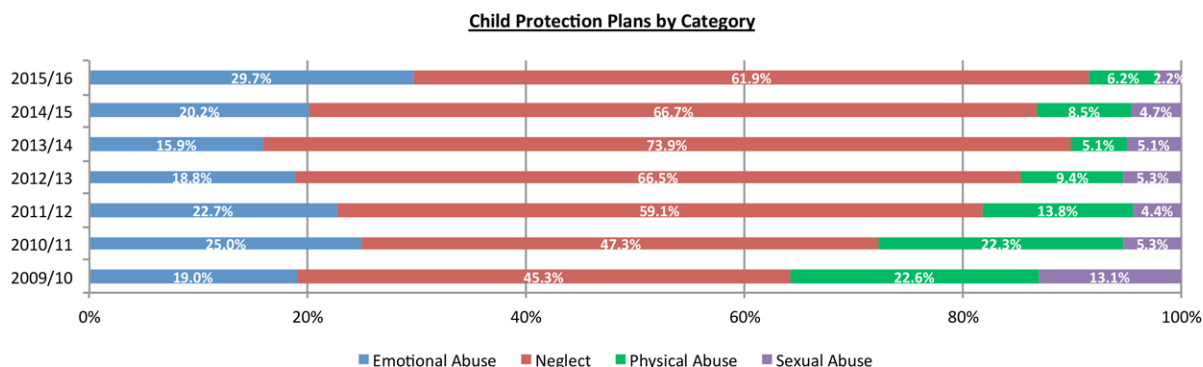
Gateshead has the highest rate of unborn children subject to child protection plans, which is regarded as good practice as it supports early planning and support for mother-to-be to ensure the safety of their baby once born. However, in the last 3 years children aged 5-10 have accounted for an increasing and similar proportion to 0-1s.

**Children on Child Protection Plans as at 31/03/2016 by ethnicity
(excludes unborn)**



In total, of born children on protection plans at the end of March 2016 (256), 239 were identified as White British (93%). The 2011 census tells us that 93% of the 0-17 population in Gateshead were identified as White British.

Of the 0-17 population in Gateshead, 38,276 children were white, 2000 were from a BME background and more specifically, 819 children were Asian. There do not appear to be communities that are over-represented within the cohort.



Categories given as the reason for the CP plan are an 'on the day' count and thus provide a snapshot picture. Those children subject to a plan as a result of neglect continue to remain the highest proportion at 61.9% although this only shows a slight decrease since the end of March 2015 when it was 66.7%. Emotional abuse as a category has also shown some movement, increasing from 20.2% at March 2015, compared to 29.7% at March 2016.

Case example

Young mother who was previously a looked after child herself and her new born baby. The initial conference had resulted in "mum" 'storming out' as she found it difficult to hear concerns raised by professionals and was convinced that as an ex child in care her baby would be removed at birth.

Concerns raised had involved male visitors to her flat which had resulted in violence and drug taking. The police had been called by neighbours on a frequent basis, with the concerns raised being around domestically violent partners, including the father of the baby. "Mum" was also finding it difficult to manage her finances and maintain her flat to an acceptable level of cleanliness. A child protection plan was developed, including high levels of support from the Social Worker, the Family Nurse Partnership (FNP) practitioner and the core team.

As a result, mum has been helped to parent her new born baby and the risks to the baby's welfare and safety have been dramatically reduced since the Initial Child Protection Conference. "Mum" has moved and is now presenting as a loving and caring mother who is prioritising baby's needs.

The baby was subject to a plan for 10 months and following the discontinuation of the plan "mum" thanked all involved at the conference for the good outcome for her baby and having benefited from the CP process.

Annual Work Programme for 2016/17

Key priorities

Effectiveness of Chair's role

- Develop quality assurance role of chairs.
- Continue to challenge practice and embed processes with external agencies to ensure timely provision in submission of reports for conference, to ensure appropriate preparation and to enable clear risk analysis to be undertaken.
- Use performance information effectively to highlight evidence of shortfalls within procedural requirements internally and with partner agencies.
- Consider what qualitative information is collated in addition to quantitative data.
- Regular reports to be produced setting out practice issues and where improvements have been made.
- Ensure the chair maintains oversight of the case in between meetings and raises any issues if there is delay in progressing plans.
- Further use of technology to improve communication regarding conference processes.

Ensuring children's voices influence planning and their future

- Ensure that children and young people contribute to meetings in the most appropriate way and the child's views are evidenced.
- Develop processes to ensure children's voices are captured and used to inform decision making.
- Strengthen service user feedback – particularly in relation to the experience and views of children and young people, with a view to capturing and applying more qualitative feedback to complement the quantitative data.

Training and development and Learning

- Ensuring Chairs continuously improve and develop, and use an evidenced based approach to their work.
- Ensuring the Chairs' work informs and is informed by strategic plans and relevant operational groups and processes – enabling chairs to contribute and respond to the wider agenda.
- Ensuring that Chairs play an active role in the development of the new planning frameworks for LAC and CP plans and are represented at all workshop events.



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education**Gateshead**

Yearly Report Service and School Performance



Raising achievement for all

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1. Introduction

A key target for educationGateshead is to ensure that all schools are performing well and providing Gateshead children and young people with the best start to life and preparing them for further learning, training or employment. Schools that perform well place children and young people at the centre of all their activity.

Each term the Council's school inspection team assesses the performance of each school against the criteria identified in the School Intervention and Support Policy (SISP).

The purpose of "SISP" is to identify issues early in schools and to take appropriate action to improve the situation. This process is well established in the service and with schools.

There are three main sources of information that feed into the SISP process when judging the performance of school.

- i. **The latest Ofsted Inspection:** the relevance of the inspection findings are highly dependent on the time that has passed since the inspection.
- ii. **Pupil Performance Data:** our young people are assessed or tested regularly throughout their school careers. All of this data is captured and analysed. This assessment data is extremely important in identifying whether pupils are making good progress but needs to be balanced with an understanding of the context of each school and sometimes with the specific "story" for each child or young person.
- iii. **First Hand Experience:** each school buys into an advice and support SLA that entitles the school to visits from a link inspector. It is the link inspector's role to work alongside the school staff to identify any areas of underperformance and then support the school to take appropriate action.

Performance of educationGateshead

Although the Service consists of a number of teams, all of them contribute, to a greater or lesser degree, to the effectiveness of our schools. This report looks at two "proxy" indicators that provide external objective evidence on the performance of educationGateshead in working alongside schools to give pupils the best possible education.

- i. Pupil Performance Data (Exam/assessment test results) achieved by Gateshead children/young people.
- ii. Ofsted Inspection Results achieved by Gateshead schools.

2. Pupil Performance Data 2015

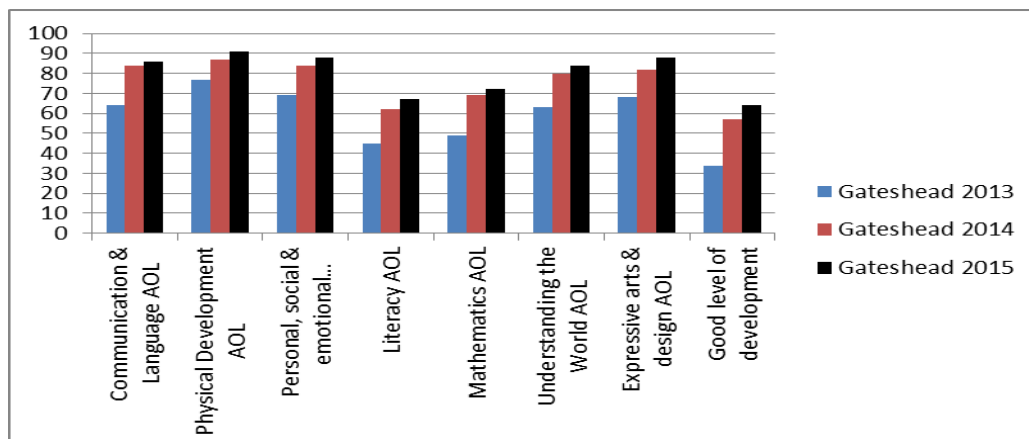
Early Years Foundation Stage

(EYFS) Statutory Assessment completed by the end of Reception.

	2013 % pupils achieving expected learning			2014 % pupils achieving expected learning			2015 % pupils achieving expected learning		
	England	North East	LA	England	North East	LA	England	North East	LA
<i>Communication & Language AOL</i>	72	66	64	77	74	84	80	78	86
<i>Physical Development AOL</i>	83	77	77	86	83	87	87	86	91
<i>Personal, social & emotional development AOL</i>	76	71	69	81	78	84	84	82	88
<i>Literacy AOL</i>	61	55	45	66	62	62	70	67	67
<i>Mathematics AOL</i>	66	58	49	72	67	69	76	72	72
<i>Understanding the World AOL</i>	75	70	63	80	76	80	82	80	84
<i>Expressive arts & design AOL</i>	78	71	68	83	78	82	85	82	88
<i>Good level of development</i>	52	45	34	60	56	57	66	63	64
<i>LA – England GLD Gap</i>			-18			-3			-2

Summary

The EYFS assessment format changed significantly in 2013 so the measures are not directly comparable with previous years. A concerted effort by schools and education Gateshead staff has seen a rise in the proportion of children achieving the expected level in every area of learning.



The percentage of pupils in Gateshead showing a good level of development at the end of the key stage is up from 57% to 64%. This is just below the national figure (66%) but is above this year's regional figure (63%). While this figure is pleasing, it is even more impressive when the children's levels of development on entry are considered.

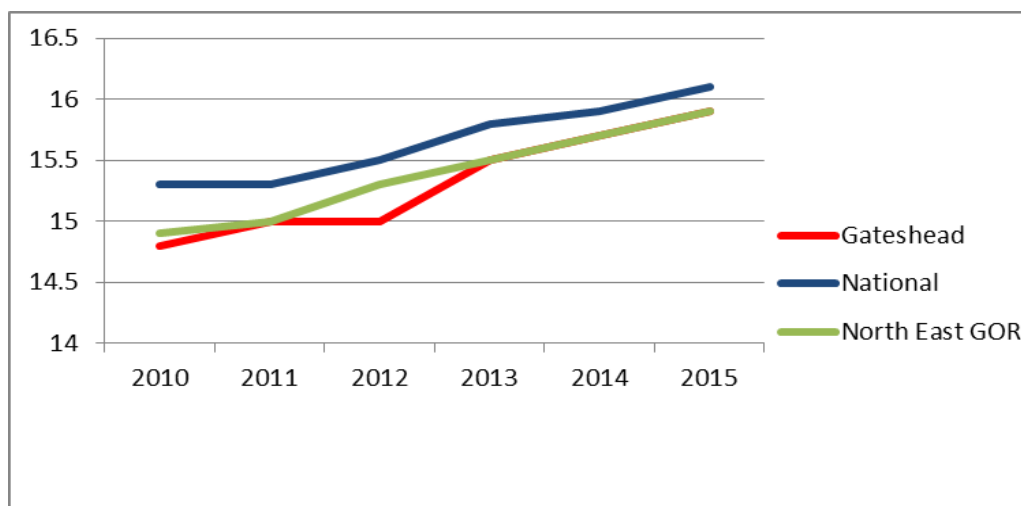
Challenges

The data show that the EYFS attainment in Gateshead is much improved and now broadly in line with national averages. Our ongoing challenge, in all schools, is to ensure that our young children are making good progress from their accurately assessed starting points and greater proportions are achieving "a good level of development". Ofsted inspections commonly judge progress in EYFS to be good. Government policy on Early Years' assessment has not been consistent and often left practitioners confused and frustrated.

Key Stage 1 SAT results

Statutory assessment taken at the end of Year 2

Key Stage 1 2010 – 2015 Average Points Trends



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	14.8	15	15	15.5	15.7	15.9
National	15.3	15.3	15.5	15.8	15.9	16.1
North East GOR	14.9	15	15.3	15.5	15.7	15.9

Key

■ = below both England & North East Average

■ = below either England or North East Average

■ = above or equal to England & North East Average

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	69	70	74	78	80	81
National	72	74	76	79	81	82
North East GOR	70	71	75	77	79	81

Key Stage 1 2010 – 2015 %Level 2B+ Writing Trends

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	56	59	62	66	70	72
National	60	61	64	67	70	72
North East GOR	57	59	63	67	69	71

Key Stage 1 2010 – 2015 %Level 2B+ Mathematics Trends

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	69	72	72	76	78	80
National	73	74	76	78	80	82
North East GOR	71	72	75	76	79	80

Summary

Key Stage 1 data indicates that attainment by the age of 7 in Gateshead is, generally, in line with the national average. Over the last few years attainment overall has increased at a greater rate in Gateshead than nationally and in neighbouring authorities. It is particularly pleasing to see that the percentage of children achieving a level 2B+ (a strong level 2) in writing is equal to the national average and higher than the regional average.

Challenges

Key Stage 1 SAT results are improving and this trajectory needs to continue. While this position is not seen in all Gateshead schools it is a common position. There are no external assessments to measure the progress that children make in Years 1 and 2 but schools carefully track the progress of all children. The key challenge is to ensure that all groups of children are genuinely making good progress in Years 1 and 2 and any barriers to learning are being removed.

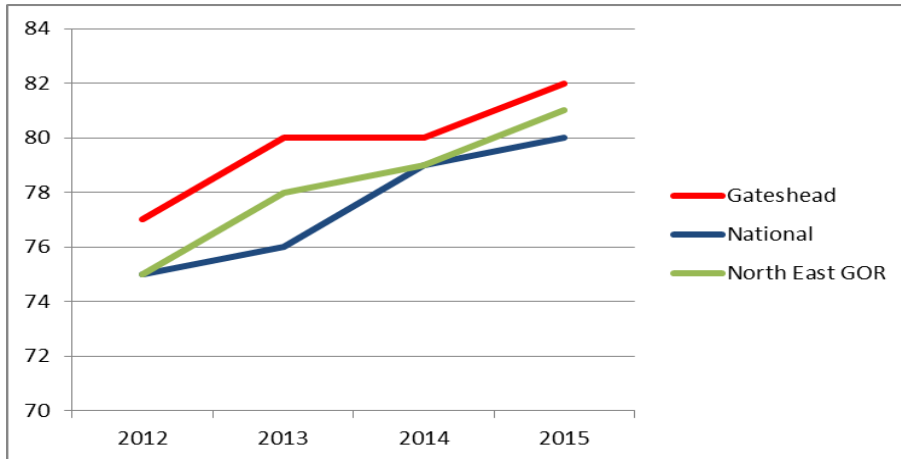
This is the final year of “level” based assessment. There is a high degree of uncertainty and concern in schools in regard to the new assessment regime.

Key Stage 2 SAT Results

Statutory Assessment taken at the end of Year 6 (final year of primary school).

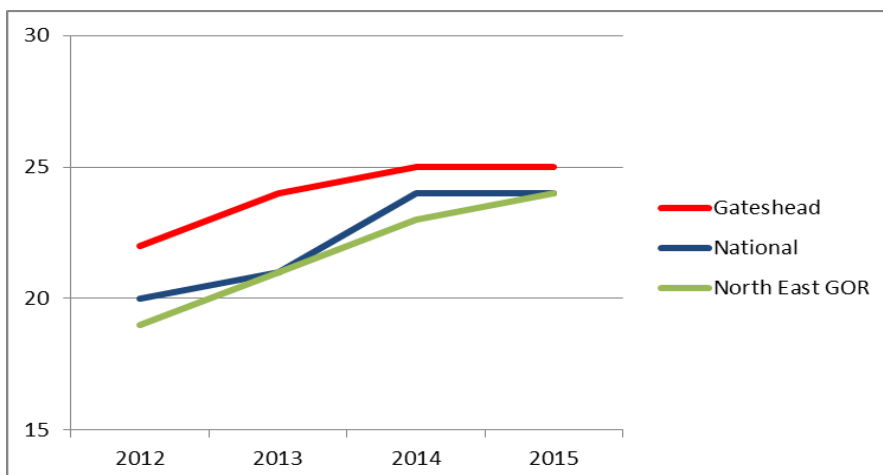
Please note that in 2012 Writing TA replaced the SAT hence comparisons with previous years are invalid for any indicator that includes writing, e.g. English, English and Maths, and that in 2013 an overall English level was not produced and separate levels in Reading and Writing were reported alongside Maths.

Key Stage 2 2012 – 2015 %Level 4+ Reading, Writing & Mathematics Trends



	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	77	80	80	82
National	75	76	79	80
North East GOR	75	78	79	81

Key Stage 2 2012 – 2015 %Level 5+ Reading, Writing & Mathematics Trends



	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	22	24	25	25
National	20	21	24	24
North East GOR	19	21	23	24

Summary

Gateshead's performance continues to be above the national and regional averages. Performance at Level 4 and level 5 is good. Gateshead is, therefore, in a strong position when compared to statistical neighbours and local authorities. This data indicates a rapid improvement in attainment from Key Stage 1 – a common story told in many Gateshead schools is: "The longer we have the pupils the greater the pace of learning and, therefore, the higher the levels of attainment." This pattern of accelerating progress made in schools is commonly noted in Ofsted inspections.

Challenges

On the majority of performance indicators Key Stage 2 attainment and progress measures are very positive. However, a key remaining challenge is to address the achievement gap between pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and their peers at Key Stage 2.

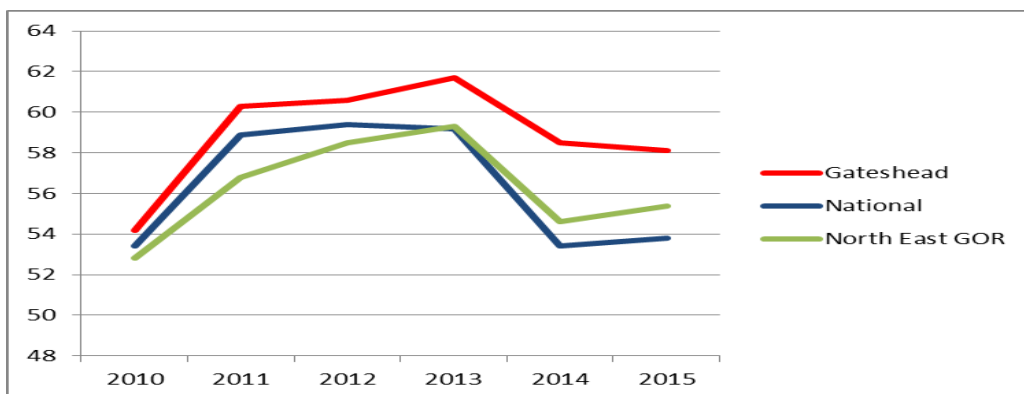
This is the final year of "level" based assessment. There is a high degree of uncertainty and concern in schools in regard to the new assessment regime. Already for the 2016 results, it has been shared by Government that only 52% of 11 year olds nationally have achieved the expected level. This compares with the previous years figure of 82%.

It is ridiculous to claim that 48% of children have failed their primary education. While we have the challenge to continue to promote high standards, we also must make sure that a flawed assessment systems does not label our children failures or tells our teachers they are not successful.

Key Stage 4 (GCSE/Equivalent)

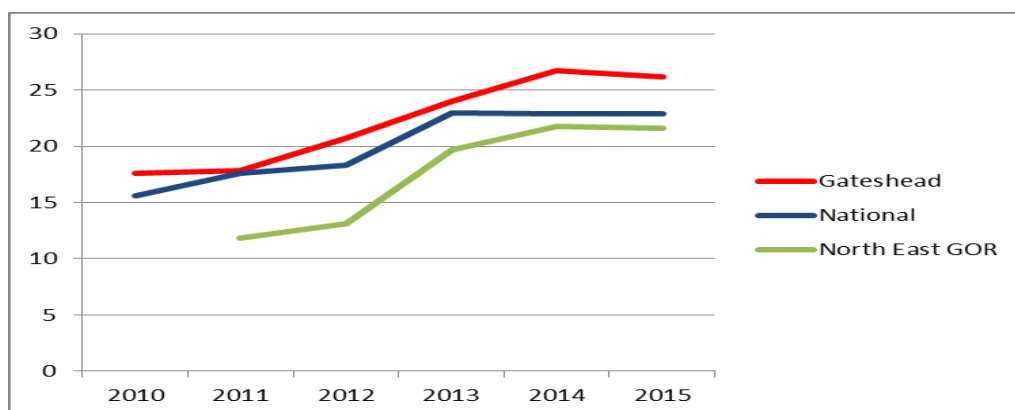
Key Stage 4 2010 – 2015 %5 A* to C incl. English & Mathematics Trends

Please note that the counting system for 5+A*-C changed considerably in 2014 so results are not directly comparable with those from previous years.



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	54.2	60.3	60.6	61.7	58.5	58.1
National	53.4	58.9	59.4	59.2	53.4	53.8
North East GOR	52.8	56.8	58.5	59.3	54.6	55.4

Key Stage 4 2010 – 2015 %English Baccalaureate Trends



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	17.6	17.8	20.7	24.0	26.7	26.2
National	15.6	17.6	18.3	23.0	22.9	22.9
North East GOR		11.8	13.1	19.7	21.8	21.6

Key Stage 4 2010 – 2015 %5+ A* to C incl. EN & MA FSM-Non FSM Gap Trends

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	-31.0	-29.0	-35.8	-30.7	-34.8	-34.7
National	-28.0	-27.0	-26.4	-26.7	27.0	-27.9
North East GOR	-31.0	-32.0	-31.3	-30.5	29.6	-30.1

Summary

With 58.1% of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 achieving 5 or more A*-C grades including English and maths, Gateshead is above the national and regional averages. Whilst this figure has fallen since 2013 – due to Government counting systems changing – it fell less than the national average. The Ebacc measure is equally positive with results well above the national and regional averages.

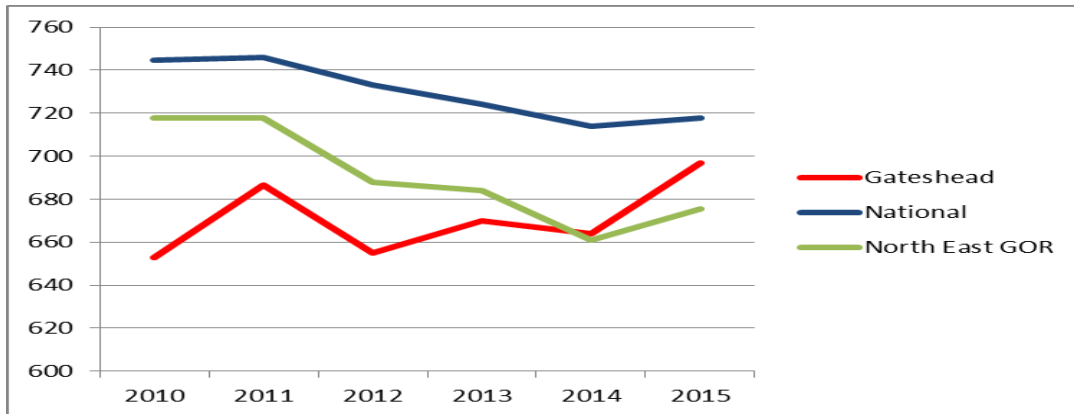
Challenges

Achievement gap between pupils eligible for free school meals and their peers at Key Stage 4 - This gap is measured using the 5 or more A*-C grades including English and maths indicator. The Gateshead gap is now at 34.7% points and is too large. While a range of strategies have been in place we have yet to see this figure significantly reducing and is a concern. The overall GCSE figures must not mask the fact that some groups of learners are underperforming.

This is the final year of using 5 A*-C as the key performance indicator at the end of key Stage 4. 2016 will see the introduction of new methods of measuring progress and attainment. In general, schools have welcomed a greater focus on “progress” measures being given higher profile.

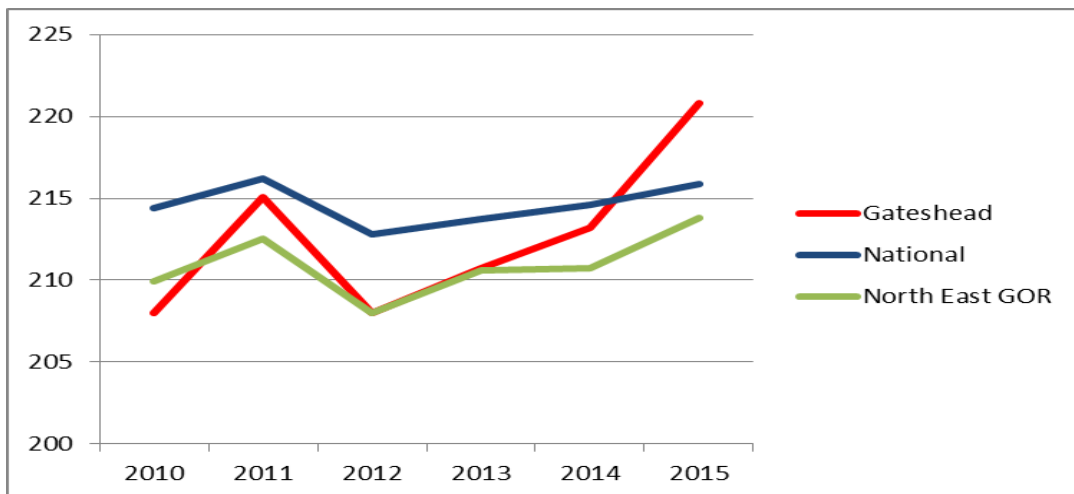
Post 16 Performance

Post 16 2010 - 2015 Average Points Score per candidate Trends (NQF awards)



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	652.8	686.4	655	670.1	663.9	696.7
National	744.8	745.9	733	724.3	714	717.8
North East GOR	717.7	717.6	688.1	683.9	661	675.5

Post 16 2010 - 2015 Average Points Score per entry Trends (NQF awards)



	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gateshead	208.0	215.1	208.0	210.7	213.2	220.8
National	214.4	216.2	212.8	213.7	214.6	215.9
North East GOR	209.9	212.5	208.0	210.6	210.7	213.8

Summary

The dip in all the above Post 16 measures in 2012 was due to an increased emphasis on academic rather than vocational qualifications in the curriculum. This affected all LAs, but particularly those where there has been a greater emphasis on vocational qualifications. 2013 data shows an effective response to these changes with Gateshead's points per candidate and points per entry both rising relative to national and regional averages. This rising trend continued in 2014, with Gateshead's 'points per candidate' figure overtaking the North East regional average.

2015 results show an overall improvement on previous years. Particularly pleasing is the points per entry score that shows Gateshead to be above the national and regional averages for the first time.

Challenges

There is the ongoing challenge to ensure that Post 16 students receive a high quality education relevant to their career aspirations and are successful. In addition, it is of particular importance that students are given high quality impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) to allow them to make informed choices about their futures. Matching the student to a curriculum pathway that fits their aspirations, ability and interests must be the priority.

3. Ofsted Inspection Findings

In Gateshead (the following figures refer to the summative grade or “Overall Effectiveness” grade given to each school in its last inspection):

- 88% of all schools are either good or outstanding (85% nationally)
- 91% of primary schools are good or outstanding (86% nationally)
- 100% of special schools are good or outstanding (92% nationally)
- 63% of secondary schools are good or outstanding. (75% nationally)
- 36% of all schools are outstanding (20% nationally)
- 1 school is judged to have serious weaknesses.

**National data refers to inspections up to 31st December 2015.*

Please note that Thorp Academy and Thomas Hepburn Academy have not yet been inspected as new Academies. These two schools are “forced academies” ran by Northern Education Trust and have seen significant changes in leadership teams including the appointment of two Headteachers.

The percentage of schools in each school group by their latest Overall Effectiveness Ofsted Judgement

Overall Effectiveness Ofsted Judgements						
School Group, Type and Status :-	Inade-quate	Satis- factory / Requires Improv- ement	Good	Outst- anding	Good or better	Judgement Gauge
All Schools <i>(83 Judgements)</i>	1%	11%	52%	36%	88%	
Primary (67)	0%	9%	57%	34%	91%	
Secondary (8)	0%	38%	25%	38%	63%	
Special (6)	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%	
Other (2)	50%	0%	0%	50%	50%	

Summary

Ofsted inspection judgements, at this time, are more positive in the primary sector than the secondary. The percentage of good or outstanding secondary schools in Gateshead, at 89%, is higher than the national average of 85. The figure for good or outstanding primary schools continues to be relatively high, 91% above the national average of 85%. It should be noted that three secondary schools, assessed overall as “requires improvement” have been judged by Ofsted to have good leadership and behaviour and safety.

A “standout” figure is that 36% of all schools in Gateshead are judged to be outstanding by Ofsted inspectors. This compares to a national figure of 20%.

Challenges

The achievable ambition is that all schools are good or outstanding schools in Gateshead. Considerable focus and resource is aimed at maintained schools that are not yet identified by Ofsted to be good schools. This includes the formation of a Governors Steering Group, links facilitated with outstanding schools, increased officer input and, commonly, support from regional HMI. Where appropriate the LA works closely with the Dioceses. Schools in this situation are commonly making strong progress in improving standards of education as they move towards becoming “good” schools.

However, it should be noted that Government Policy is increasingly aggressive in forcing schools to become Academies if they are deemed to be failing or “coasting”.

4. Conclusion

The position this year tells a similar story to recent years.

Ofsted inspection results and pupil performance data largely support the same finding i.e. the education provision in Gateshead is strong but with some variation. Irrespective of the starting points of our children, they thrive in the primary sector; they make good progress and often leave with standards above the national expectations.

More primary schools are judged to be good or better in Gateshead than in the majority of Local Authorities in England. Early Years performance has continued to improve and the proportion of children achieving a “good level of development” is broadly in line with national averages.

Performance in Secondary Schools and academies is more variable than seen within the primary or special sector with a smaller proportion of schools being judged by Ofsted to be good or better and some performance data being less favourable when compared to national averages, for example, the gap between FSM and non FSM pupils. However, the proportion of young people achieving 5 good GCSEs with English and mathematics is higher in Gateshead than in any other North East Authority.

Sixth form results also showed a significant increase this year and, for the first time, some measures showing our performance to be better than that seen nationally

Therefore, if Ofsted inspection results and pupil performance data are to be seen as proxy indicators for the performance of the school improvement function of educationGateshead then the team is working effectively in Gateshead schools. However, there are clear ongoing challenges for the council and the schools.

- To ensure that we provide the children with the best start in life and continue to assess whether all groups are making at least good throughout their time in school
- To maintain the high levels of attainment recorded at the end of Year 6 and to continue to narrow the gap for those pupils entitled to pupil premium funding.
- To work more effectively with those secondary schools/academies judged by Ofsted to “require improvement” and ensure all Gateshead young people attend a good school.
- To challenge and support secondary schools and academies to accelerate progress and raise attainment for those students entitled to pupil premium funding.
- To challenge and support all schools where pupils are not making sufficient progress.
- To ensure all schools are prepared for the significant changes to national testing.
- And while we seek to raise standards to remember that our children and young people have a whole set of abilities and qualities not measured by tests.