

Stages 1&2 Obtaining evidence baseline / challenge

Issues	Evidence
Introduction to baseline information	Scoping paper highlighting baseline information for the Children's Placements Review together with performance and budget information and the structure for Children's Social Care Staff. The review covered a huge and extremely complex area, therefore in order to provide structure to the review it was suggested that the review be broken into five areas
Adoption and fostering	Different fostering arrangements available. Out of hours service available for emergencies. Service consistently received 'good' inspection grades. Advertising campaigns needed to recruit foster carers. Independent providers of foster carers. Adoption process takes on average 8-10 months. The average cost for the adoption process was detailed and whether any costs/processes could be shared with other providers/authorities.
Residential placements	In Stockton on Tees the numbers of children looked after have risen steadily. As at August 2009, 250 children were looked after by the authority. A viability report was requested looking at possible suitable locations for a further home, together with costs and information on capacity levels. Also requested was further information on purchased placements.
Complex needs	Child placements and residential care was a constantly changing environment. Proportionally the authority was similar to neighbouring local authorities. External placements could be difficult for families to maintain contact, the LA has placed fewer children/young people in out of borough specialist residential provision. Regional discussion to determine options for respite provision for children with continuing health care needs. Commissioning sub-regional provision should be explored.
Placements with family and friends	Allowances vary across the region set by the local authority. Stockton Council had adopted Fostering Network rates. The placement process can delay receipt of financial support. Section 17 payments have been used to support families until benefits begin to be paid. Children are placed in the Borough whenever appropriate and possible although sometimes placed elsewhere due to the location of relatives. Parental Support Advisors were a new initiative within schools to give greater support. A pressure on the service is when a number of family members identified as a possible foster carers each undergo a full suitability assessment which could be time consuming for social care staff as well as delaying the placement.

workstream

Stage 3 Identifying opportunities for EIT

Areas identified for further exploration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exploring the viability of additional residential care capacity Improved marketing of internal foster care provision Revise kinship policy Explore the viability of creating a permanence team Explore the additional complex needs provision
Outcomes UK (Benchmarking Research)	<p>Stockton, when compared with other local authorities showed that on average approximately 20% of looked after children were placed with external providers.</p> <p>The age profiles of foster carers highlighted that over 50% were over the age of 50 which could be a challenge as foster carers retire.</p> <p>Marketing and recruitment of new foster carers was a priority which could possibly be delivered jointly with other local authorities.</p>

Stage 4 Review Options / Agree way forward

Placements with family and friends	<p>The Select Committee favoured the following options for the two workstreams that were presented:</p> <p>Option 3 – Accept some responsibility - Local authority accepts a duty to support kinship arrangements. Policy is designed to offer different levels of support to different arrangements.</p> <p>Option 2 – To develop Local Authority Residential provision (Model 3 – Includes 2 three bedded homes with 1 Manager overseeing both homes and an Assistant, Team Leader in each, Education support, term time only).</p>
Residential placements	
Foster care – marketing	The Select Committee favoured the following option for the workstream that was presented:
Additional complex needs provision	The Select Committee favoured the following option for the workstream that was presented:

Final Agreement of Report

Cabinet

