



Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board

Annual Report 2018-19

Foreword by the Independent Chair

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board annual report to you and may I also thank you for taking the time to read it. This year the Board continued to build on its success in ensuring agencies and partners work together to keep our children and young people as safe as possible and therefore also help them reach their full potential.

It is particularly fitting that I write the same introduction as the Independent Chair for both the Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Children Boards. Over the last two years both Boards have adopted a co-ordinated way of working in ensuring challenge, co-ordination and enabling learning thereby maximising positive outcomes for children, carers and professionals. The alignment in the priorities of the Boards has achieved a more cost effective and efficient way of addressing issues across all partner members and has facilitated a smooth transition to the new Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership, which went live in April 2019, six months ahead of the Government's deadline for establishing the new children safeguarding partnerships.

A significant amount of both Board's time and energy was invested in helping to design, test and challenge the new Partnership arrangement led by Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Borough Councils, Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Clinical Commissioning Group and Cleveland Police. The Boards acting as a 'critical friend' have successfully ensured, that as they came to an end in March 2019, there was effective business continuity. This took into account the strengths of both Boards and a renewed and necessary focus on active learning into the new safeguarding children partnership. Details of the new partnership can be found in this report. At a time of significant organisational change in the arrangements for safeguarding children, running alongside ever-increasing demand for service and challenging resource, I would like to congratulate all those for making the early adoption of the new arrangements a smooth process. The newly created Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership will be the subject of an interim review in November 2019 and will involve previous Board members to ensure it is fulfilling its objectives.

In addition to the work carried out above I would also like to highlight some further areas of impact for the Boards that are included in the report:

- The joint Neglect Statement of Intent, already identified by Ofsted as good practice, is being successfully embedded into operational practice by the delivery of some excellent neglect active learning.
- The work undertaken with frontline practitioners to better understand the barriers to addressing mental health and substance misuse identification, prevention and early intervention.
- An improved multi-agency audit process identifying key learning themes.

I would like to conclude by expressing my thanks to all those who work to protect and help our children and young people. Frequently safeguarding children is a complex and very challenging task and, in my experience, the overwhelming majority of practitioners in this field do so with humility, passion, commitment and professionalism. This too applies to all the Board members and staff I have had the honour and privilege to work with. Thank you for the positive difference you have made to the quality and effectiveness of safeguarding Children.



Dave Pickard
SLSCB Independent



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About The Board

SLSCB Responsibility, Aims and Vision

‘Safeguarding children and protecting them from harm is everyone’s responsibility. Everyone who comes into contact with children and families has a role to play.’

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018



Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board (SLSCB) is the key statutory body that is responsible for the oversight of multi-agency child safeguarding arrangements across Stockton-on-Tees. Established in April 2005, this partnership of local agencies works together to safeguard children and promote their welfare; by co-ordinating the safeguarding work of agencies and ensuring the effectiveness of services, in accordance with the [Children Act 1989](#), [Children Act 2004](#), [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2018\)](#) and the [LSCB Safeguarding Children Board Regulations 2006](#).

The aim of SLSCB is to make sure those who work with children and their families co-operate and work together and provide challenge to ensure that this work is effective. The Board is attended by professionals from the local authority, health services, police, probation services, Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS), schools and academies, the voluntary sector and others.

Stockton-on-Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board’s vision is:

**Keeping Children Safe is Your Business, My Business,
It’s Everyone’s Business**

The functions of the board in order to meet its statutory responsibilities and realise its vision are:

- Ensuring co-ordination
- Effective challenge
- Enabling learning



- These functions are achieved by:
- Assessing and evaluating the effectiveness of help being provided to children and families by Board partners, individually and collectively, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and advise them on ways to improve;
 - Quality assuring practice through joint case audits and identifying lessons to be learned;
 - Delivering training;
 - Monitoring and evaluating effectiveness of training provided by the SLSCB to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child;
 - Participating in planning of services;
 - Undertaking reviews of serious cases and advising board partners on lessons to be learned;
 - Carrying out thematic reviews at board meetings;
 - Analysing and examining data provided by the Teeswide Performance Management Framework;
 - Producing an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area;
 - Developing a business plan; identifying the priorities for action by SLSCB for the year ahead.
 - Assessing whether SLSCB partners are fulfilling their statutory obligations;

SLSCB Roles and Relationships

Key Roles:

Independent Chair:

The role of the Independent Chair is to provide an external perspective by which impartial challenge, support and co-ordination can be brought to any of the Board's member agencies. Dave Pickard has been the Independent Chair for SLSCB since 2014. He is tasked with leading Board activity and ensuring it fulfils its statutory objectives and functions. The SLSCB Chair facilitates scrutiny and challenge, enabling agencies to hold each other to account for their role in safeguarding.

Key relationships

Relationships with other Boards

SLSCB is a highly influential strategic arrangement that directly influences and improves performance in the care and protection of children. This is achieved through robust arrangements being sustained with key strategic bodies across the partnership.

During 2018/19, engagement continued with the Tees Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB), the Health and Wellbeing Board and other key Partnerships across Stockton-on-Tees.

Child Death Overview Panel:

The Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP) is a Teeswide group that monitors, scrutinises and analyses all child deaths and reports their findings to the Board on a bi-annual basis.

The CDOP annual report 2018-19 can be found [here](#).



Agencies:

SLSCB comprises of a range of partners, all of whom have a statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. A number of partners have a statutory responsibility to be a member of the SLSCB while others have been invited to be part of the partnership due to the significance of their work in Stockton-on-Tees. All partner agencies across Stockton-on-Tees are committed to ensuring the effective operation of SLSCB. Members of the Board hold a strategic role within their organisations and are able to speak with authority, commit to matters of policy and hold their organisation to account.

Lay members

It is a statutory requirement that local safeguarding children boards take steps to appoint two lay members to make links with community groups, offer independent challenge and support stronger public engagement. SLSCB has two committed lay members who add significant value to the Board and compliment the independence of the Chair.

The Children and Young People's Partnership:

The Children and Young People's Partnership has responsibility for the oversight and improvement for all children's services across the Borough. Their vision mirrors that of the SLSCB.

A number of members of the SLSCB also attend the Partnership. This ensures that work is coherent across all strategies and plans and reduces duplication.

Safer Stockton Partnership:

The Safer Stockton Partnership is a statutory board to prevent and reduce crime. It shares a number of priorities with the SLSCB which includes: Domestic Abuse and Substance Misuse.

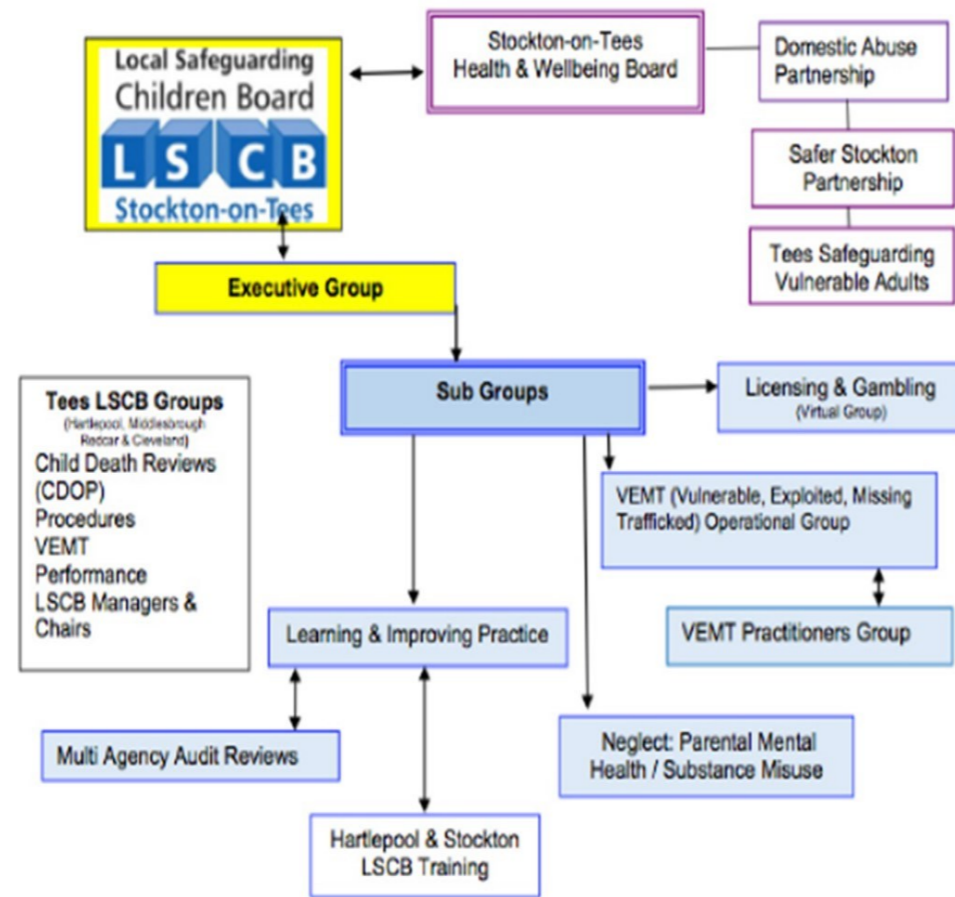
Health and Well-Being Board:

The Health and Well-Being Board brings together a range of agencies for the joint ambition of supporting people to make healthier choices, maximise opportunities for wellbeing and ensure a healthy standard of living for all. A number of SLSCB members are also members of this Board which aids in consistency of approach and reduced duplication.

Tees Safeguarding Adults Board (TSAB):

Stronger links have been developed with TSAB with the chairs meeting on a regular basis.

SLSCB Structure



Chairs of LSCB Groups:

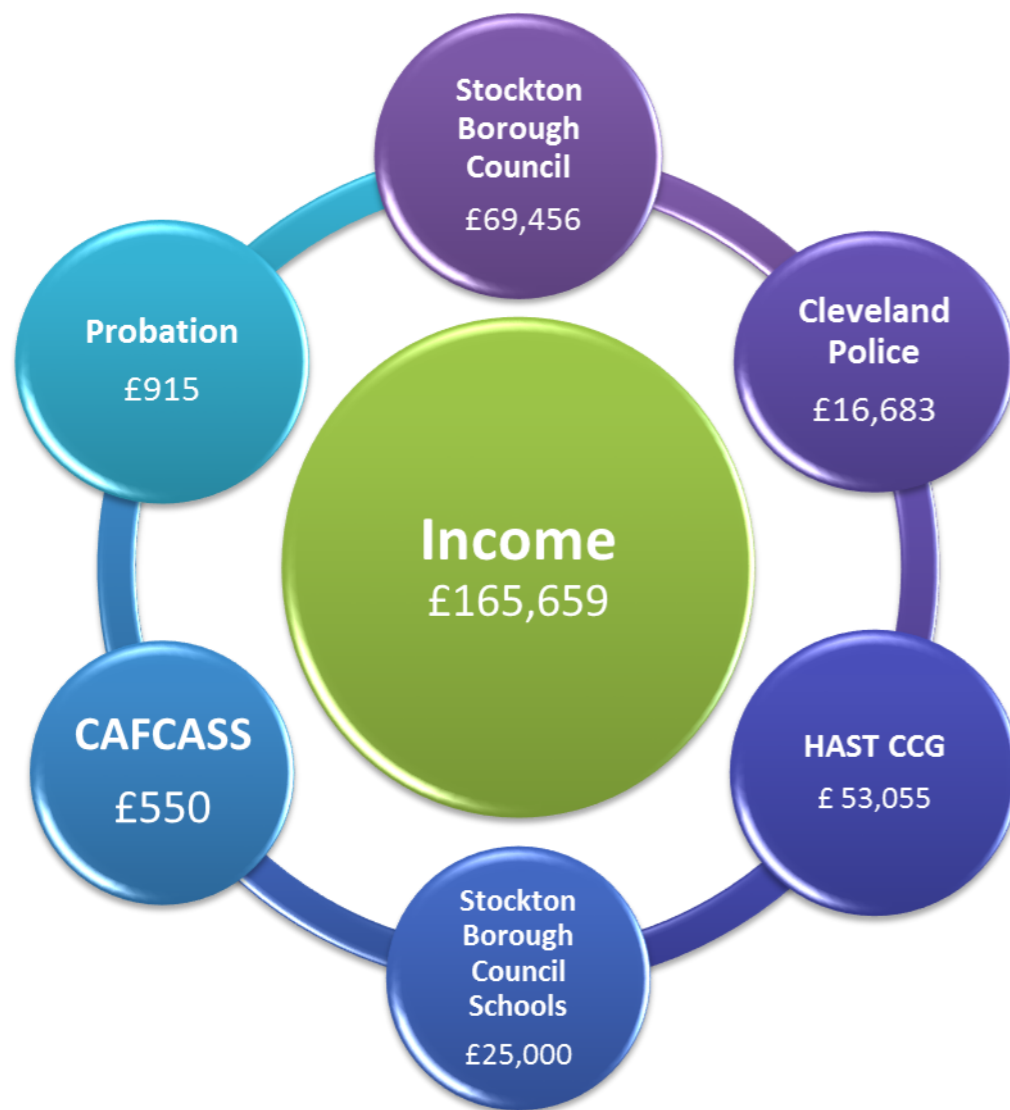
- SLSB & Executive: **Dave Pickard**
- Learning & Improving Practice Sub Group: **Anne-Marie Salwey**
- Multi Agency Audit Reviews: **Kim Staff**
- Neglect: **Rhona Bollands**
- Parental Mental Health: **Trina Holcroft**
- Substance Misuse: **Sarah Abouna-Bowman**
- VEMT: **Rhona Bollands**
- VEMT PG: **Mel Douglas**

- Hartlepool & Stockton Training: **Lindsey Robertson**
- Tees CDOP: **Edward Kunonga**
- Tees Procedures: **Danielle Swainston**
- Tees Strategic VEMT: **Anne-Marie Salwey**
- Tees Performance: **Jean Golightly**



FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Partner agencies continued to contribute to SLSCB's budget for 2018/19. This income ensured that the overall cost of running SLSCB was met; with a total carry forward of £27,997 into the new Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Partnership Arrangements for 2019-20.



Finance 2018-19	
Income	(165,659)
Expenditure	259,556
SLSCB carry forward from 2017-18	121,897
Use of reserves	93,897
Total reserves carried forward into 2019-20 (new Partnership Arrangements with Hartlepool)	27,997

The closing balance for Stockton's Local Safeguarding Children Board in 2018/19 was £28,000. This was transferred across to the new joint Hartlepool and Stockton Safeguarding Partnership in April 2019, making a total opening balance in reserves across the two Local Authority areas of £69,686.

About

Stockton-on-Tees

STOCKTON-ON-TEES DEMOGRAPHICS



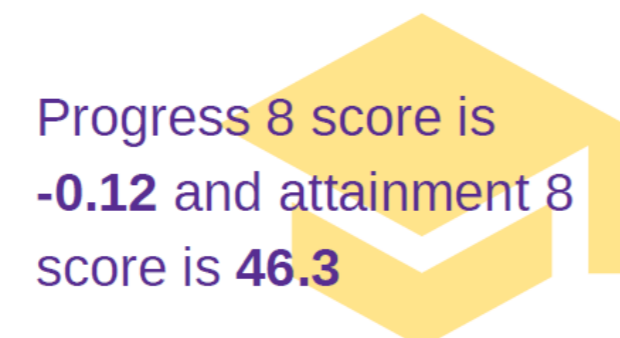
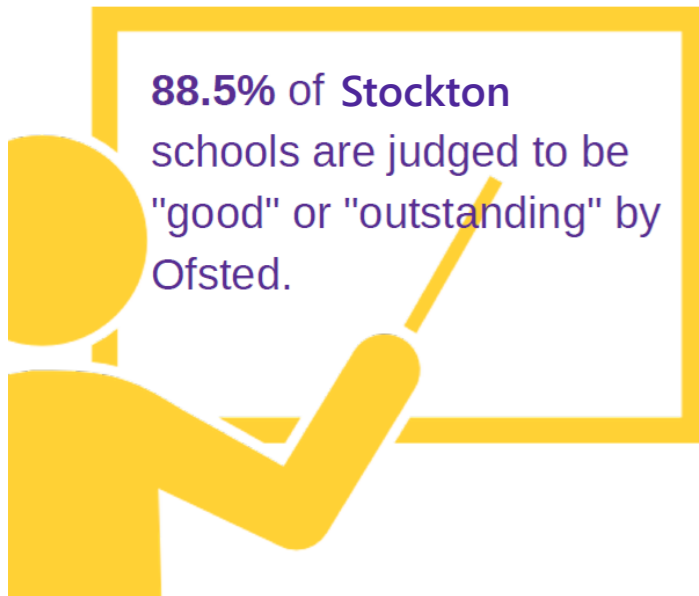
Stockton has a population of **197,213** living in,,,



With...



37.4% children in poverty



Stockton Context

There are **78 schools** in Stockton with 60 mainstream primary, 13 mainstream secondary, 4 special schools (one primary, three secondary) and 1 Pupil Referral Unit. With 88.5% of Stockton schools judged to be good or better by Ofsted, the potential for children achieving positive outcomes is high. The **number of children who are home educated is 174** (as of March 2019) which, although small when compared to all children accessing school provision, is monitored and reviewed by the Board annually to ensure oversight of this cohort of children and young people. Based on the January 2019 school spring census **3.1% of the school population were SEND** (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). This figure includes those that had an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) /Statement and those that have SEN support. The number of children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plans or statements of SEN in Stockton-on-Tees is 1206 (489 primary age children, 496 secondary, 221 post-16) .

In 2019 the End Child Poverty data classified Stockton-on-Tees as being **within the top 10% of the most deprived areas in the country**. The proportion of **children living in poverty being 37.9% in Stockton South and 30% in Stockton North** compared to 29% across Teesside and 28% nationally. Living in an area of high deprivation, the children and young people of Stockton-on-Tees, their families and the professionals who work to support them, therefore face many challenges. There is a large body of evidence and research to show that children who live in poverty are exposed to a range of risks that can have a serious impact on their mental health; including debt, poor housing, and low income (Child Welfare Inequalities Project 2019 and ASE Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion, November 2017). A further report by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2016) revealed there to be a **strong association between family poverty and a child's chance of suffering neglect**. This in turn was said to have adverse effects upon adult economic circumstances in later life. It is therefore important for the Safeguarding Board to be fully aware of this cohort of children and young people and ensure that these are considered within aspects of the boards work programme as a priority group.



NB: National Progress 8 score is 0, meaning Stockton sits just below the national average for progress. National Attainment 8 score is 46.5, meaning Stockton is just below the national average for GCSE attainment.

STOCKTON SAFEGUARDING SNAPSHOT



Throughout 2018-19 there were approximately:

43,521 children & young people under 18

22% of the total population

37.4% of children living in poverty

19.5% primary school children in receipt of free school meals (the national average is 13.7%)

612 average contacts to the Children's Hub per month

2510 referrals to children's social care



24.5% were re-referrals

386 Early Help Episodes were opened.

35 Early Help cases escalated to Social Care.

** NB: The Children's Hub is the multi-agency front door for referrals into Children's Social Care.*

1883 open Child in Need cases

250 children subject to a Child Protection Plan

3792 children and young people receiving services through Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support

24 children and young people identified as being at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation

1301 missing episodes by 388 young people

242 missing episodes by 42 Stockton looked after young people

502 children and young people looked after



526 children witnessing a domestic abuse incident

60 domestic abuse incidents witnessed by children within 12 months of a similar incident

233 cases discussed in MARAC (Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference)

261 children involved in MARAC

136 referrals in relation to allegations against staff working with children and young people

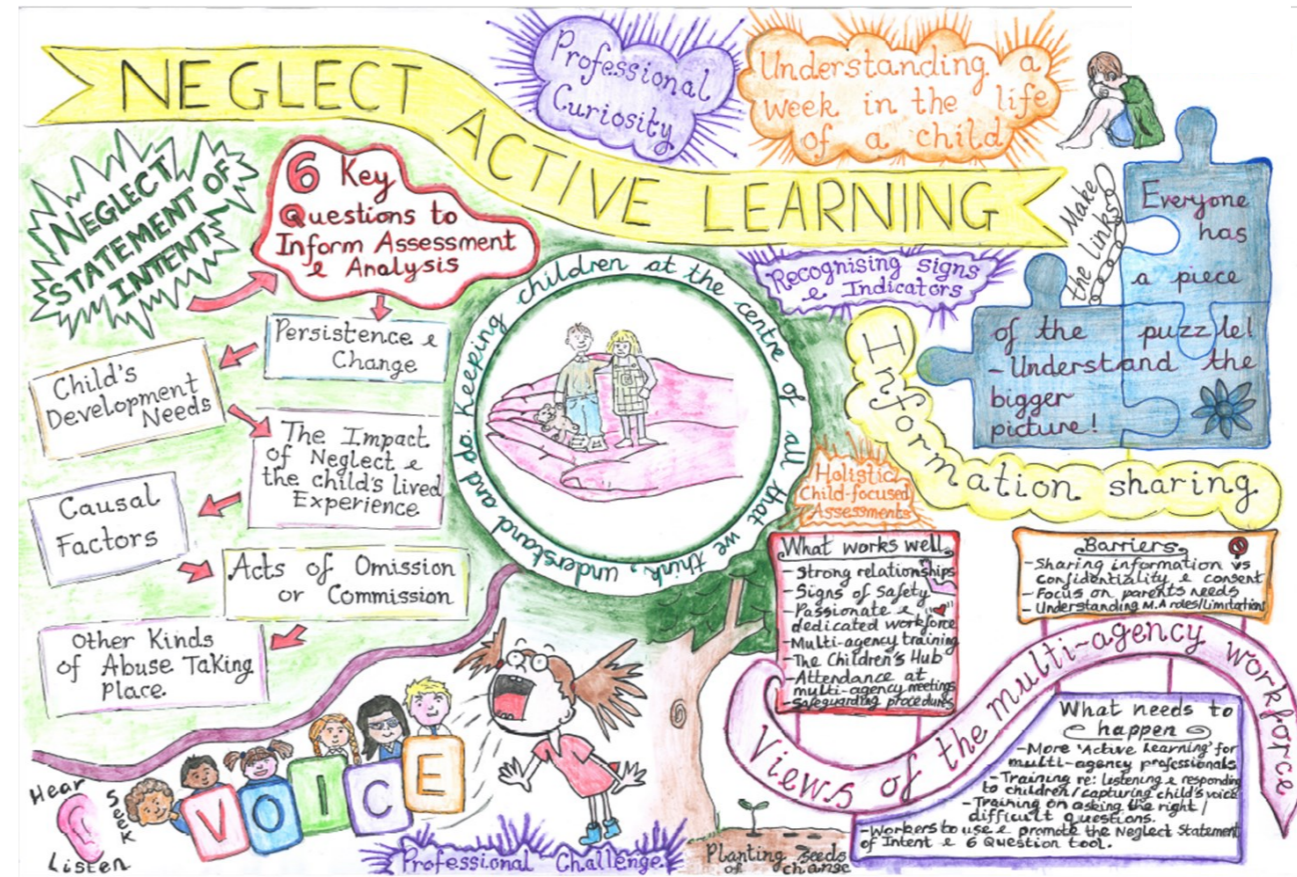
7 new Private Fostering arrangements reported

Key Successes and Achievements

PRIORITY 1: ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF NEGLECT

Children experiencing and living with neglect in Stockton-on-Tees are affected in many ways. Some examples of the impact of neglect and the child's lived experience can be found in Section 4 of the [Neglect Statement of Intent](#); which received positive praise in the 2017 Neglect Joint Targeted Area Inspection. Across Stockton-on-Tees in 2018-19 the impact of neglect led to:

- ➔ **65%** of Child Protection Plans, active in March 2019, were under the category of neglect; higher than the national average of approximately 50%.
- ➔ **76%** of children becoming looked after were under the category of neglect.



To address the impact of Neglect, 2018-19 saw the formal launch of the Neglect Statement of Intent. The Hartlepool and Stockton Joint Training Group planned and delivered Neglect Active Learning Days to promote the Statement of Intent, with a focus on the key priorities it identified. The aim of the Active Learning was to develop:

- **professional curiosity** across the multi-agency workforce;
- confidence in **identifying children experiencing neglect**;
- understanding of what life is like for a child living with neglect and the **impact of neglect**; and
- confidence in undertaking thorough assessments.

The implementation of the Statement of Intent, along with the 'Six Questions to Inform Assessment and Analysis' tool contained within, aims to ensure early identification of neglect leading to early intervention and a reduction in the long-term impacts that can result.

- ➔ **99%** of attendees said that the Neglect Active Learning Day made them think differently or refocus their thinking in relation to neglect.
- ➔ **81%** of attendees said that they would change their practice after attending the event.
- ➔ **76%** of attendees said that they had shared key learning points from the event with colleagues in their organisations.

Neglect Active Learning Day feedback from Practitioners was positive:

A fantastic course! It gave me a deeper understanding of neglect and how this is defined, of the factors that cause neglect and also of how neglect impacts on a child.

(Student Social Worker)

It was great to have the opportunity to apply the 6 question tool. It provides a good assessment structure and prompts you to include relevant information and also highlights the things you don't yet know.

(Family Support Worker)

Next Steps for 2019-20:

Further Neglect Active Learning Days are planned for 2019-20. In addition, further impact testing may include:

- an audit of SAFER referrals made in relation to neglect;
- an audit of a sample of neglect cases those who have attended are working on; to understand the impact on understanding life for the child and professional curiosity;
- action planning in relation to the barriers identified by practitioners and their recommendations for change.

PRIORITY 1: ADDRESSING THE IMPACT OF NEGLECT

The Board's three Neglect Sub-Groups continued during 2018-19. These sub-groups each focus on one of the significant causal factors of a child suffering Neglect:

- > Domestic Abuse
- > Parental Mental Health
- > Substance Misuse

Each sub-group has provided update reports to Board via the Executive Group and have sought to ensure a co-ordinated and focused approach in working to minimise the impact on children and young people, reducing duplication.

Domestic Abuse

The existing multi-agency Domestic Abuse Steering Group meet regularly to ensure implementation of the Domestic Abuse Strategy. The group have continued to work collaboratively to deliver timely and responsive services to those who are impacted upon by domestic abuse. Progress made against the strategy continued to be reported to the board during 2018-19.

Mental Health and Substance Misuse

Co-ordinated work took place in 2018-19 in relation to mental health and substance misuse. Interface, a national leading expert in early intervention and prevention, were commissioned to undertake a piece of work to explore:

- the views of front-line practitioners when working together to address parental mental ill-health and/or substance misuse;
- any barriers to working together both within children's services and adult services (including substance misuse services, acute mental health trusts, other mental ill-health providers and acute trusts, primary care, etc);
- whether staff have the correct skills to ask the right and difficult questions around parental mental health and/or substance misuse.
- whether existing processes when dealing with parental mental ill-health and/or substance misuse are working.

Facilitated events were undertaken and a report was presented at a joint Hartlepool and Stockton Board meeting in January 2019. The output from the events and report are to feed into the new Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees safeguarding Partnership for further action in 2019-20.



PRIORITY 2: REDUCING THE RISK OF CHILDREN WHO ARE VULNERABLE, EXPLOITED, MISSING OR TRAFFICKED (VEMT)

A significant amount of work has been undertaken in 2018-19 to build on the existing processes for **VEMT** with a focus on an improvement in quality and consistency across the workforce.

The **Tees Strategic VEMT group** have:

- Reviewed their overarching strategic plan for all Tees areas;
- Conducted observations of each areas local VPG meeting and provided feedback to ensure consistency across Tees;
- Reviewed and refreshed the Tees Missing from Home / Care Protocol

The **VEMT Chairs group** had been established to assist in the delivery of the strategy within each locality. They have:

- Reviewed the Tees VEMT Screening Tool to include indicators of child criminal exploitation;
- Begun to add children who are criminally exploited to their respective area agendas;
- Worked closely together to ensure consistency across each of the Tees areas.

The Stockton **VEMT Practitioners Group (VPG)** that reviews the plans for children that are at risk of exploitation has:

- Begun to accept referrals from children at risk of criminal exploitation;
- Development of the E-cins system to improve the flow of information between Agencies;
- The development of a tool box of available resource to be used by practitioners to work with and better understand the research and evidence base for young people we believe are at risk of or has suffered CCE;
- A development in the use of MFH interviews to better inform the deployment of agencies and resources;
- Became a member of the Middlesbrough digital resilience group to improve information sharing, but also with the eventual outcome of developing our own system and a protocol across agencies.

88 new Stockton VPG referrals were received during 2018-19.

56 of these were added as new cases.

40 children were removed from the agenda throughout the year.

Children missing from home, care and education:

- There were **1301** missing episodes from **388** children in 2018-19 compared to **1213** for **372** the previous year.
- **60%** of those **388** children had no additional missing episodes.
- **86%** of children missing from education (CME) referrals have been tracked, located and closed.



A total of **247** multi-agency professionals attended face-to-face VEMT-related training.

A further **248** multi-agency professionals completed VEMT-related e-learning.

I feel more confident in identifying at risk young people and highlighting concerns.

(Consultant Paediatrician)

Next Steps for 2019-20:

- Review of the Tees Strategic VEMT Strategy and action plan
- Teeswide exploitation
- conference in collaboration with TEES Safeguarding Adults Board.

PRIORITY 3: ENSURING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Tees procedures

Tees procedures Group (TPG) is a multi-agency Teeswide sub group of the boards that reviews safeguarding processes and procedures. The main function of TPG is to:

- Have responsibility for coordinating the development and review of local procedures, protocols and guidance, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children on behalf of the Tees LSCBs.
- Maintain and update the Teeswide Procedures Website.
- Undertake focused pieces of work, co-opting additional professionals as required.
- Establish processes that will promote consistency by all LSCB partner member organisations in their response to, and management of, safeguarding children issues; ensuring the child is the central focus.
- Develop and recommend to LSCBs procedures and guidance that avoid confusion or duplication and ensure staff across local partners can readily understand their responsibilities.

The procedures that were reviewed and agreed during 2018/19 were:

- Blood Born Virus / HIV Procedures
- Chronologies Guidance
- CIN Cross Boundary Procedure
- Immobile Babies (Bruising in Children) Procedure
- Initial Child Protection Conference Procedure
- Investigating Complex (organised or multiple) Abuse Procedure
- Parental Mental Illness Procedure
- Professional Challenge, Escalation and Dispute Resolution Procedure
- Recording Professionals Guidance Leaflet
- SAFER Referral Form
- Strategy Discussion Procedure
- Unborn Baby Conference Procedure
- Website Review

All procedures and guidance are placed on the Tees Child Protection Procedures website: www.teescpp.org.uk

Multi-Agency Audit

SLSCB undertook 8 multi-agency audits in 2018-19 which looked at:

- Neglect under Child in Need (under 2 yrs)
- Children seen by North Tees & Hartlepool Hospital and NAI concerns were raised
- Children with a disability
- Physical Abuse

In addition, a further audit day was completed in conjunction with Stockton multi-agency professionals as part of the move towards the new partnership arrangements.

The multi-agency case auditing has identified numerous examples of positive safeguarding practice being undertaken by the partnership, as well as themes for learning.

Strengths

- Good examples of direct work to capture the child's voice
- Evidence of trusting relationships between family and professionals
- Evidence of reflection; with workers showing an understanding of the complexity of the case
- Clear and concise reports from all agencies
- Good multi-agency attendance at core groups
- Evidence of successful planned interventions around reducing risks
- Good overall multi-agency response

Key Learning Themes

Objective Setting: Some objectives were considered generic rather than SMART (Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Relevant, Timely).

This finding reminded professionals that SMART objectives generally achieved greater results and made it easier to evidence the progress made and that interventions are most effective, and achieve greater progress and outcomes, when root causes were addressed and barriers overcome.

Challenging disengagement : Where disengagement was not challenged progress in relation to plans were not as successful.

This highlighted the importance of effective strategies for challenging parental disengagement to develop parental insight of the impact of parenting; leading to meaningful engagement and effective interventions.

Trusted relationships: Where a worker was changed or inconsistent, the engagement was less successful.

This finding reminded professionals that a trusted relationship can be the difference between effective or ineffective engagement and intervention for both the child and the parents.

Assessment: Where there are missed opportunities to share and analyse historical events which would lead to a more holistic case understanding.

This highlighted the importance of multi-agency professionals having longstanding knowledge of the child / family, sharing historical events at an early stage to aid in drawing together a fully holistic analysis and assessment.

The key learning themes identified fed into the LIPSG Action Plan and will transfer into the new partnership arrangements in 2019.-20

PRIORITY 3: ENSURING CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



60 multi-agency training sessions delivered



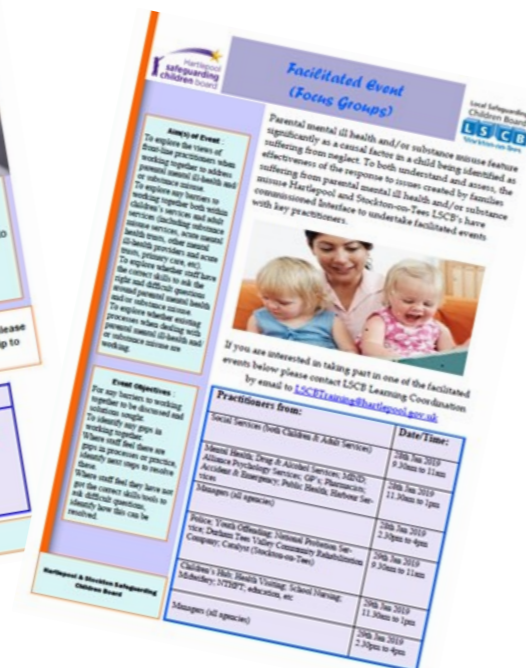
1,551 people attended multi agency training



205 people attended themed events



3,315 e-learning sessions completed



Hartlepool and Stockton Joint Training Group planned, developed, observed and quality assured the 2018-19 training programme which predominantly focused on Board priorities and training needs submitted by learning identified by audit and learning lessons.

This training has been delivered both internally by Board agencies and also commissioned from external providers with a view to develop multi-agency professional safeguarding knowledge and skills and to strengthen partnership working.

The interactive, multi-agency mixed group scenarios worked well. A really good mix of professionals' skills/perspectives made the course more interesting.

(Health Visitor)

The day of active learning with other agencies is so beneficial. Very interactive multi-agency to blend with a wide range of knowledge and experience .

(Police Officer, Child Abuse Investigation Unit)

This made me think about how previously I have accepted behaviours etc of children because they were deemed 'streetwise' or 'troublesome' when actually this should not be the case. It challenges your way of thinking, responding and working.

(Assistant Headteacher)

Practice has improved as the staff member now feels confident and able to use her intuition in monitoring and evidencing.

(Manager Impact Evaluation of Residential Social Care Officer)

PRIORITY 3: STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

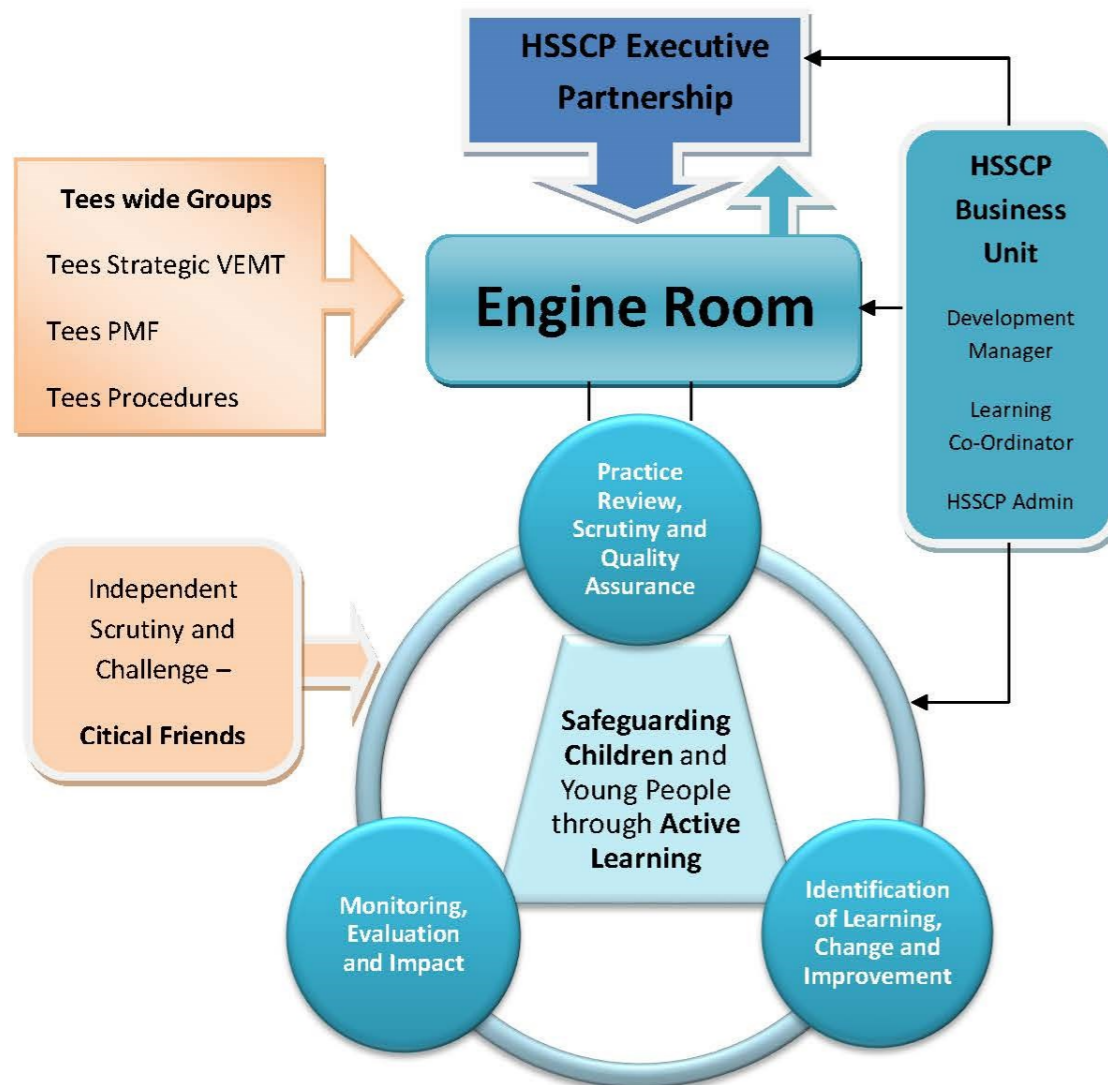
In light of the changes in Working Together 2018, outlining that Safeguarding Children Boards are to be replaced by Safeguarding Children Partnerships, 2018-19 has been a year of planning and change. Throughout 2018-19, SLSCB has completed project planning work to develop the new Safeguarding Children Partnership Arrangements that commence in April 2019. The new arrangements aim to build upon and strengthen the existing partnership working between all Board partners. The Board are excited about the new partnership model which is to be a joint Hartlepool and Stockton-On-Tees Partnership:

In addition to the SLSCB consultation processes, two joint Hartlepool and Stockton Board meetings took place in 2018-19 to consult on the development of the new partnership, as well as a joint Executive meeting.

The agreed vision for Hartlepool and Stockton-on-Tees Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSSCP) is to ensure:

“Every child in Hartlepool and Stockton feels safe, secure and is protected from harm, enabling them to reach their full potential.”

Intrinsic to the new partnership model is its ‘Active Learning’ approach (as seen in the diagram to the left). Its aim is to understand what is working well, what needs further development in our collective safeguarding practice to achieve this vision and how to address areas that do not meet the required standards.



The new arrangements can be explored in more detail on the new partnership [website](#).

Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board

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