



Gateshead local safeguarding children board

Gateshead Local Safeguarding Children Board

**Annual Report
2008 – 2009
&
Business Plan
2009 - 2010**

Annual Report 2008 – 2009 and Business Plan 2009 - 2010

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1. INTRODUCTIONS

1.1 Introduction

By Councillor Catherine Donovan, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.



I am pleased to introduce the third Gateshead LSCB Business Plan for 2009-2010.

The last year has been a busy and stressful one for those concerned with the safeguarding of children. Our ability to effectively safeguard children is heavily dependent on the quality and strength of the partnership arrangements in place to achieve this. We are rightly proud in Gateshead of the level of commitment and the contribution of all our partners in delivering services to children and their families all of which promotes safe and healthy environments for children to learn, develop and grow. Where children and their families need additional support or direction to ensure their children are safe this is provided through strong inter agency arrangements.

There are some tough challenges ahead in the coming year. We have seen referral rates to children's services increase in the past six months and yet we are facing the financial effects of the economic downturn and the impact on public services. We will face these challenges with determination and through the Children and Young People Partnership and the LSCB will continue to prioritise the safeguarding of all children in Gateshead.



1.2 Welcome - Alison Walton, Chair of Gateshead LSCB



The past year has been both a difficult and interesting one in child protection. The nation was shocked and saddened to hear about the circumstances of Baby Peter's death in Haringey, London when they came to light in November 2008. This was a reminder of both the terrible circumstances in which some children live and their level of suffering and also of the devastating consequences for them and for staff at all levels when arrangements to protect children fail.

The burden on front line staff to always do the right thing can sometimes appear unremitting but the consequences when they do not are difficult to consider. The extensive success of our safeguarding services both in Gateshead and across the country could easily be forgotten amongst the fallout of this case. I am therefore pleased to be introducing this third Business Plan that both reports on the performance and the work of the LSCB during the year 2008-2009 and also lays out the work plan for this coming year.

The work plan for 2009-2010 is heavily influenced by: -

Lord Laming's report, The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report, published in March 2009.

The Government's Response to the report published in May 2009

Our own audit of the progress of Gateshead LSCB using the LSCB Challenge and Improvement Tool developed by the DCSF.

Safeguarding Children. The third joint inspectors report on arrangements to safeguard children, published in July 2008

Safeguarding the young and vulnerable. The Government's response to the third joint inspectors report on arrangements to safeguard children, published in Dec 2008

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“Keeping Our Schools Safe” Review of Safeguarding Arrangements in Independent Schools, Non Maintained Special Schools and Boarding Schools in England Sir Roger Singleton published in March 2009

The challenges for the coming year will be to develop the governance and accountability of the Board in the light of the increasing need for independence in those arrangements, developing the links with the new and emerging Children’s Trust Board including considering how we commission safeguarding services and building on the membership of the Board to include the ever widening group of people for whom safeguarding is a priority. We also need to ensure that children at greater risk of harm or abuse are at the centre of the work of all key partners including children who go missing from home, care or education, children educated at home, children at risk of trafficking or other sexual exploitation, children in custody and children living away from home.

As always the success of all of our services and interventions lies with the dedication and hard work of front line staff supported by strong leadership from all agencies, well-resourced teams and services and a robust and relevant child protection framework. The LSCB would like to extend thanks to everyone who has contributed to the safeguarding of children in Gateshead as we face the challenges of the coming year.



2. Strategic Vision and Terms of Reference

2.1 Strategic Vision

The vision for Gateshead LSCB continues to embrace the direction given by Gateshead's 'Towards 2030' vision, that is:

“For all children to be empowered and supported to develop their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play an active part in society. 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.”

The aim of the Gateshead LSCB is to build on and strengthen existing partnerships, and, to engage with the community in furthering this vision and fulfil the LSCBs core objectives and functions focused on safeguarding children and young people as set out in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2006'.

The LSCB framework allows great opportunities for promoting the safeguarding of children and young people in a positive and interactive way with partner agencies, private sector bodies and members of the community. Safeguarding is a multi-dimensional and fluid interactive process and as such the LSCB formulates its strategies in such a way that as wide an audience as possible has a voice in promoting a safer environment for the children and young people of Gateshead.

The Gateshead LSCB Business Plan and Annual Report 2009 - 2010 is located within the framework described by the Gateshead Children and Young People's Plan 2006 - 2009 (CYPP 06-09).

Gateshead Children and Young People's Plan was produced on 1 April 2006 and sets the priorities up to 2009 for the improvement and development of children's services across all statutory, voluntary and community sector groups working with children and young people. The plan is broad in scope covering issues from housing to play, education to road safety and healthy lifestyles to bullying. The plan covers all of the Every Child Matters outcomes with a clear view that staying safe involves child protection but also wider safeguarding and safety in the home, school and community.

There are a range of priorities around staying safe in the plan, including safety for children and young people from bullying, harassment and discrimination, promoting positive parenting and providing broader safeguarding initiatives in local communities.

The scope of Gateshead LSCB's role includes safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in three broad areas of activity:

- i) Activity that affects all children and aims to prevent maltreatment, or impairment of health or development, and ensure children are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care.
- ii) Proactive work that aims to prevent maltreatment, or impairment of health or development, and ensure children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- iii) Reactive work to protect children from maltreatment or abuse of all kinds and in all settings.

2.2 Participation in Planning and Commissioning

Gateshead LSCB continues to participate in the local planning and commissioning of children's services to ensure all members implement their duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the delivery of all their services (Children Act 2004, Section 11 and Education Act 2002, Sections 157 and 175).

Gateshead LSCB also contributes to the Children and Young People's Plan.

2.3 Terms of Reference

To discharge, within Gateshead, the duties contained in section 14(1) of the Children Act 2004

- To co-ordinate what is done by each person or body represented on the Board for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the area of Gateshead Council.
- To ensure the effectiveness of what is done by each such person or body for that purpose.
- To protect children from maltreatment.
- To prevent impairment of children's health or development.
- To ensure that children are growing up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care.
- To enable children to have optimum life chances and enter adulthood successfully.

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- To discharge its work in all respects in such a way as to improve all outcomes which are of importance to children.
- To protect children from harm.
- To ensure that work to protect children is properly co-ordinated and effective.
- To ensure that work is co-ordinated in such a way as to improve preventative work to avoid harm to children from occurring in the first place.
- To establish mechanisms to identify abuse and neglect wherever they may occur.
- To increase understanding of safeguarding children issues in the professional and wider community.
- To ensure that organisations working or in contact with children operate recruitment and human resources practices that take account of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- To monitor the effectiveness of Gateshead Council and other prescribed organisations in the implementation of their duties under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 having regard to the requirement to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- To ensure children know whom they can contact when they have concerns about their own safety and welfare.
- To develop and evaluate thresholds and procedures for work with families whose child has been identified as 'in need' under the Children Act 1989, but where the child is not suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm.
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of groups of children who are potentially more vulnerable than the general population.
- To protect children who are suffering or at risk of suffering maltreatment including:
 - a) Children abused and neglected within families, including those harmed in the context of domestic violence;
 - b) Children abused outside families by adults known to them;
 - c) Children abused and neglected by professional carers, within an institutional setting, or anywhere else where children are cared for away from home;

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- d) Children abused by strangers
 - e) Children abused by other young people;
 - f) Young perpetrators of abuse, and
 - g) Children abused through prostitution.
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- To develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Gateshead.
 - To communicate to persons and bodies in Gateshead the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, raising their awareness of how this can best be done and encouraging them to do so.
 - To advise Gateshead Council and its Board partners on ways to improve, both individually and collectively, the effectiveness of their activities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
 - To participate in the local planning and commissioning of children's services to ensure that they take safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children into account.
 - To undertake reviews of cases where a child has died or has been seriously harmed in circumstances where abuse or neglect is known or suspected and to advise on lessons that can be learned.
 - To have in place procedures for ensuring that there is a co-ordinated response by Gateshead Council, its Board partners and other relevant persons to an unexpected child death and the collection and analysis of information about each such death with a view to identifying:
 - a) Any matters of concern affecting the safety and welfare of children in Gateshead
 - b) Any general public health or safety concern.
 - To engage in any activity that facilitates, or is conducive to the achievement of, the Boards objectives.
 - To act as the 'Responsible Authority' with regard to the 'protection of children from harm' being one of the objectives of the Licensing Act 2003.

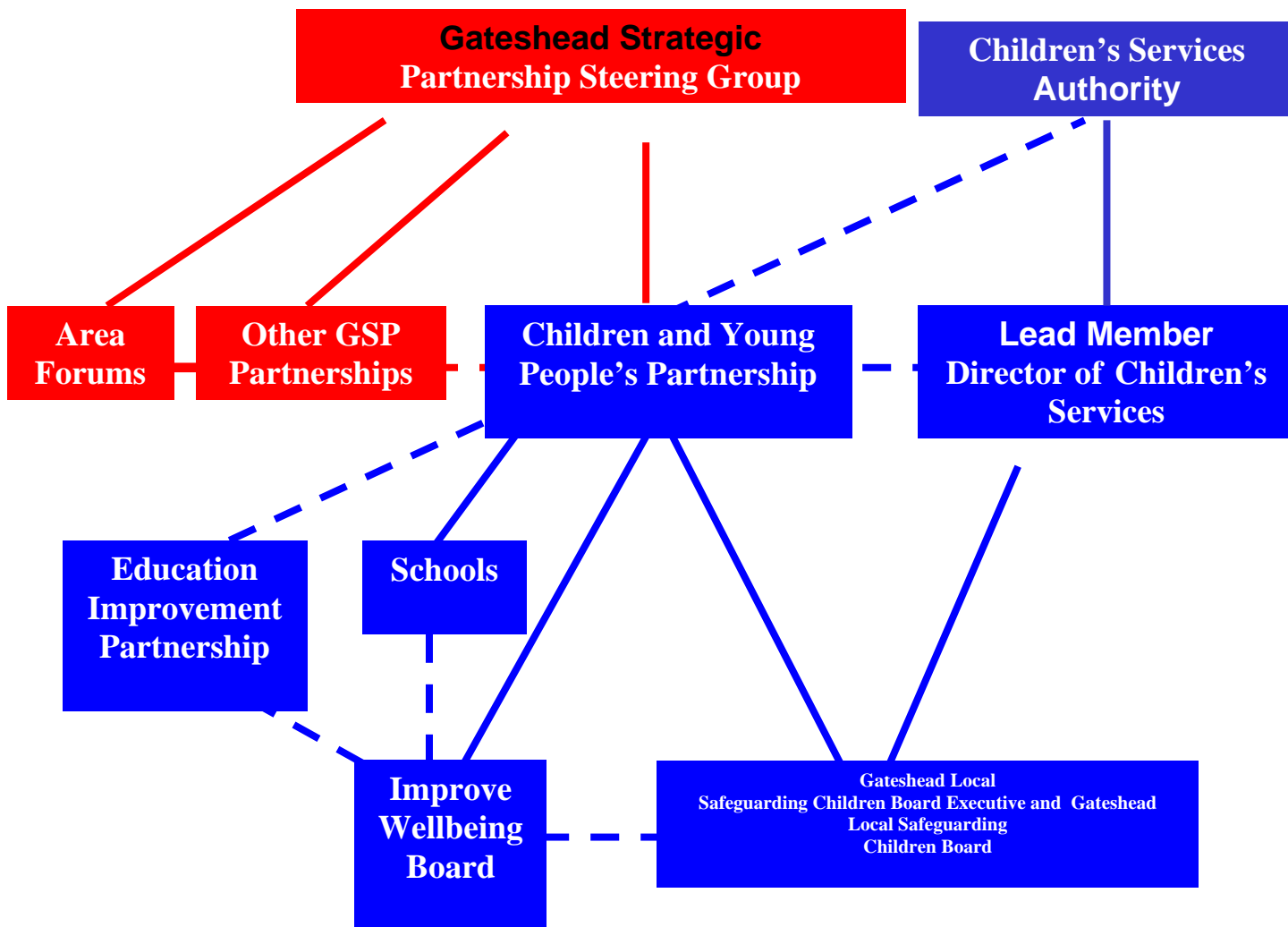
3. Structure and Accountability

The Gateshead LSCB chair has continued to report on a quarterly basis to The Children and Young Peoples partnership (CYPP) and provided updates to the Improve Well-being Board.

The first Gateshead LSCB Business plan and Annual Report 2006 - 2007 Business Plan 2007 - 2008 Update and Business Plan 2007-2009 were presented to the Children and Young Peoples Overview and Scrutiny Committee and also to Gateshead's Cabinet and Full Council.

The Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children and Young People have been provided with regular updates on the work of the board.

The following diagram outlines the revised governance arrangements:



Notes:

A solid line indicates an accountable relationship

A dotted line indicates an information sharing relationship

Membership

In Gateshead it has been determined that the Gateshead LSCB structure will be based on:

- A Gateshead LSCB Executive made up of the following statutory partners as defined in *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006), which will meet 6 times per year.

Director – Children & Young People (Chair)	Gateshead Council
Chair Workforce Development Sub Group	Gateshead Council
Designated Nurse - Child Protection	Gateshead Primary Care Trust
Designated Doctor - Child Protection	Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Detective Inspector - Public Protection Unit	Northumbria Police
Director of Public Health	Gateshead Primary Care Trust
District Manager	Northumbria Probation Service
Head of Litigation	Legal & Corporate Services, Gateshead Council
Head of Service - Children & Families	Gateshead Council
LSCB Business Manager	Gateshead Council
Service Manager - Safeguarding, Quality & Improvement	Gateshead Council

- A Gateshead LSCB made up of the following statutory partners as defined in *Working Together*, which will meet 3 times per year.

Director - Children & Young People (Chair)	Gateshead Council
Director of Public Health (Vice Chair)	Gateshead Primary Care Trust
Chair Workforce Development Sub Group	Gateshead Council
Clinical Development Manager	North East Ambulance Service

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Designated Nurse - Child Protection	Gateshead Primary Care Trust
Designated Doctor - Child Protection	Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Detective Inspector - Public Protection Unit	Northumbria Police
Associate Director - Service Improvement	Northumberland Tyne & Wear NHS Trust
Director of Adult Care	Gateshead Council
District Manager	Northumbria Probation Service
Divisional Director - Women's Services	Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust
Head of Access & Inclusion	Gateshead Council
Head of Housing Services	Gateshead Council
Head of Litigation	Legal & Corporate Services, Gateshead Council
Head of Service - Children & Families	Gateshead Council
Head of Sports and Leisure	Gateshead Council
Housing Manager	Gateshead Council
LSCB Business Manager	Gateshead Council
Portfolio Manager	Strategic Health Authority
Representative	Gateshead Schools
Service Manager	CAFCASS
Superintendent	Northumbria Police
Service Manager - Community Safety	Gateshead Council
Service Manager - Safeguarding, Quality & Improvement	Gateshead Council
Youth Issues Officer	Tyne & Wear Fire and Rescue Service

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In line with the recommendations made by Lord Laming in March 2009 in “The protection of children in England: a progress report” and the subsequent Government response, Gateshead LSCB meetings will be chaired independently from January 2010. Membership of the LSCB is also likely to change in early 2010 to reflect the revised *Working together to safeguard children*, which is due to be published in late 2009.

LSCB meetings are quorate if there are at least five members present at the start of the meeting representing different partner organisations. If a quorum is not present within 15 minutes of the notified time, the meeting will be adjourned.

The following presentations were made to the Gateshead LSCB in 2008-2009.

Date of presentation	Title	Presented by
14 May 2008	Public Law Outline	Angela Simmons, Solicitor, Gateshead Council
	MAPPA	Maureen Gavin, District Manager, Northumbria Probation Service & Wynne McLean, MAPPA Unit, Northumbria Probation
	Staying Safe Action Plan	Nicholas Leon, Independent Reviewing Officer, Gateshead Council.
8 July 2008	Children missing from Education	Margaret McQuillan, Area Manager, Education Welfare Service & Jane Robinson, Senior Education Welfare Officer
17 September 2008	Foetal Problems in Pregnancy	Sonia Bailey, Specialist Midwife
17 December 2008	Safe Recruitment	Pauline Purvis, Staffing Support Manager, Gateshead Council
	Private Fostering	Maurice Woodward, Service Manager, Gateshead Council
28 January 2009	Volunteers in Child Protection	Jean Pardey, Development Consultant, CSV
	Sexual Exploitation	Richard Haigh, Programme Manager, SCARPA
	Safeguarding in the Strategic Health Authority	Sam Crammond, NHS North East

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25 February 2009	Update on Serious Case Reviews from MAPPA Cases	Maureen Gavin, District Manager, Northumbria Probation Service
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The Gateshead LSCB has a framework, which is consistent with meeting its terms of reference, in that 8 sub-groups have now been developed:

- Practice Review (formerly Serious Case Review Sub Group)
- Performance Management
- Workforce Development
- Policy and Procedures
- Gateshead Local Child Death Review Sub Group (which reports to the Practice Review Sub Group)
- Chairs and Deputy Chairs Group
- Hidden Harm
- Licensing

Each sub-group has its own terms of reference and business priorities.

In addition, there are key work priorities identified by the LSCB that can emerge from, for instance, new legislation/guidance or serious case reviews and as a consequence the following working groups have been formed:

- E Safety
- Missing and Exploited Group (MEG)

4. FINANCE 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, either 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

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Gateshead Council, Gateshead PCT, Gateshead Health Foundation NHS Trust, Northumbria Police, National Probation Service and CAFCASS have committed financial contributions for 2009/2010.

Contributions to Gateshead LSCB for 2009-2010 from partner agencies are shown below.

CAFCASS	£550
Gateshead Council	£65, 229
Gateshead PCT	£40,000
Northumbria Police	£5000
Northumbria Probation	£500

The finance and resource profile will be reviewed annually as part of the review of the Business Plan including the work priorities and principle objectives.

5. SUB GROUP AND WORKING GROUP ACTIVITY

Gateshead LSCB Sub Groups and Working Groups consist of representatives working at strategic and operational levels in organisations in Gateshead working with children, young people and their families. Agencies represented include Aquila Way, Gateshead Council, Gateshead Primary Care Trust, Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, Northumbria Police, Northumbria Probation Service, SMART and 24/7

POLICY AND PROCEDURES SUB GROUP – CHAIR SHAUN TUMELTY

The function of this sub group is to develop policies and procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in the Gateshead area.

The group's key challenge this year remains the production of new and the updating of current procedures. The sub group has been empowered by the Board to ratify required changes in the forthcoming year. This work is undertaken on a bi monthly basis with any amendments shown within the electronic procedures (accessed via the Gateshead Children's Trust Website) in red for users to quickly identify any changes. When significant changes are made to the document a memo is also sent to all agencies to inform of this.

Within the past 12 months the group has updated the procedures in respect of:

- Fabricated and induced illness
- The electronic transmission of Notification of Child Concerns by Northumbria Police to Children, Families and Young Offenders service
- Changes in the threshold for section 47 enquiries in response to a MAPPA Serious Case Review in a neighbouring authority

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- Domestic violence and Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC)

Within the next 12 months the group will look to update the procedures in respect of:

- Children who run away and go missing from home and care.
- The revised “*Working together to safeguard children*”
- Serious case reviews
- Children, family and community involvement
- Any other significant change in legislation

PRACTICE REVIEW SUB GROUP - CHAIR FRANCES POWELL

The Serious Case Review process is described in depth in Chapter 8 of “*Working together to safeguard children*”. An LSCB should undertake a review of cases where a child has died or been seriously injured in circumstances where abuse or neglect is known or suspected.

The role of the Serious Case Review Sub Group was to undertake those reviews and to advise on lessons that could be learned. The sub group also developed a reflective practice model to be used in situations that did not meet the criteria for a Serious Case Review, but where agencies still felt that there were lessons to be learnt or good practice could be celebrated.

In January 2009 the Serious Case Review Sub Group was disbanded and the Practice Review Sub Group was formed. Laming’s recommendations and the subsequent Government response are clear that a Serious Case Review Panel should be chaired by an individual who is independent of the LSCB and all agencies represented on the board. Gateshead LSCB felt that there was still a need for a standing Sub Group to meet to consider issues previously covered by the sub group and also a wider remit. Following discussion it was agreed that the new sub group should consider practice issues and lessons to be learnt from serious case reviews, however an independently chaired Serious Case Review Panel would be formed whenever the LSCB has a Serious Case Review in progress.

The Sub Group has met regularly throughout the year, with a high level of commitment from all agencies attending the meetings. The work programme for the year has all been achieved and includes:

- Developing practice guidance for professionals and information leaflets on the serious case review process, with clarification of roles and

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responsibilities.

- An information leaflet for families on serious case reviews has been developed.
- A system for monitoring and implementing action plans arising from serious case reviews is in place.
- Staff who undertake the role of compiling single agency serious case review reports have participated in regional training in May and June 2009. The Workforce Development Sub-Group of the LSCB is developing further training for identified staff.
- Members of the sub group have undertaken a procurement process to commission both an independent chair for the panel and independent overview authors from Barristers' Chambers.

The independent chair of the panel is now in place and an independent overview author identified for the current serious case review.

- A Practice Review Group has been established to consider cases that do not meet the criteria for a serious case review, but where lessons can be learnt and improvements in multi-agency practice can be implemented. The panel has considered two cases to date and key messages from these reviews have been disseminated to staff.
- The Practice Review Group has considered a national study of Serious Case Reviews 2001-2003 and the Biennial Analysis of Serious Case Reviews 2003-2005 and the implications for local safeguarding practice disseminated to the LSCB and staff groups.

The consultation on the revised Chapter 8, Serious Case Reviews of Working Together to Safeguard Children has been launched. The Practice Review Group will consider the revisions and respond by the closing date of 23 October 2009, on behalf of the LSCB.

In 2008 – 2009 there were no Serious Case Reviews initiated by Gateshead LSCB.

Serious case reviews are now evaluated by OfSTED based on a series of judgements. This evaluation feeds into the safeguarding element of the inspection framework of the Council as well as the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the annual rating of the Council's Children's Services.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SUB GROUP- CHAIR JOANNA WHITE

The function of this sub group is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of what is done by the Local Authority and Board partners collectively and individually to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

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The role and remit of the group has changed over the past 12 months. Previously the group alternated between business meetings and practical meetings where file audits would be conducted. Following extensive discussions in the group and with the chair of the LSCB the group now has a monthly business meeting. The role of the group is now to monitor specific indicators relating to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, not to audit case files. When the group note a particular trend in an indicator they will report back to the LSCB who will then task another group of professionals to conduct work around this.

The group monitor and analyse trends in some indicators on a monthly basis, some on a quarterly basis and some on an annual basis.

The Performance Management Sub Group considers the core data, listed below, on a monthly basis

- Child protection plans (total numbers, breakdown of categories, gender, age, length of plans etc.)
- Child protection conferences (numbers, attendance, reports, timescales etc.)
- Child deaths (numbers and basic details, monitored in more depth by Child Death Review group)
- Register checks
- Assessments (numbers, timescales etc.)
- Northumbria Police Notifications of Child Concern

The indicators listed below are considered by the sub group on a quarterly basis, throughout the year

- Children missing from home or care (National Indicator 71)- only basic information monitored, as Missing & Exploited Children Group monitor this in more detail
- Numbers of children evicted & living in B&B accommodation
- Care proceedings statistics
- Number of referrals to Safer Families
- 'Cause for Concern' forms completed in Queen Elizabeth Hospital (numbers and breakdown of reasons etc).

The indicators listed below are considered by the sub group on an annual basis

- Numbers of children educated at home
- Numbers of children referred to substance misuse services
- Gun crime & knife crime rates
- Domestic violence homicides
- Numbers of children killed in road traffic accidents
- Numbers of children killed in fires
- Numbers of children in custody

The sub group is made up of senior operational and strategic level staff from key agencies involved in safeguarding in Gateshead, including Gateshead

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Council, Gateshead PCT (including a safeguarding rep and Child & Adolescent Mental Health rep), Gateshead Health NHS Trust, Northumbria Police and Northumbria Probation Service.

The first indicators for which the sub group noticed slippage against were National Indicators 64 and 65. These indicators monitor the numbers of children subject to child protection plans for a second or subsequent time (i.e. re-registrations) and the numbers of children subject to child protection plans for longer than two years. Progress against these indicators has been fed back to the Executive board and work is underway to try and improve performance.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SUB GROUP- CHAIR KEN YOUNGMAN

The sub group has a key role in ensuring that each agency delivers effective child protection training of professionals and volunteers who work with children, young people and their families or services that affect the safety and welfare of children.

It is the responsibility of the LSCB to ensure that multi-agency training on safeguarding and promoting welfare that meets local needs is provided. The purpose of the training is to develop and promote shared understanding amongst safeguarding partners around the tasks, processes, principles, roles and responsibilities for safeguarding children promoting their welfare that results in better outcomes.

The Workforce Development Sub Group continues to meet bi-monthly and is well attended by representatives of the majority of Gateshead LSCB's partner agencies, including Gateshead Council (including professionals from Children & Families, Youth Offending Team, Workforce Development and Early Years), Gateshead Health NHS Foundation Trust, Gateshead PCT, Northumbria Police, Northumbria Probation and a local voluntary agency.

Key priorities for 2009/2010 are:

- To respond to the Laming Report on Workforce Development matters, as appropriate
- To Review induction systems, ensuring new staff receive appropriate training on child protection/ safeguarding
- To audit training across statutory/voluntary sector agencies using a newly devised "audit" tool.
- To pilot use of the training audit tool across Area Based Teams including Connexions, Youth Service, YOT Prevention, Early Years etc.
- To hold a Senior Manager Briefing workshop for Area Based Workers regarding safeguarding systems/processes.
- To have an "evaluation" event reflecting on the work of the sub group and addressing any fundamental issues and to plan for the future (including a review of the membership and terms of reference for the group.)

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- To continuously monitor the effective implementation of the training programme for 2009/2010.
- To test new evaluation systems, using Management Information at micro and macro level for reporting on the effectiveness of training.
- To explore at sub-regional/regional level approached to CWD on safeguarding to identify and build in “what works”
- To review key themed areas in relation to workforce development.
 - Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) arrangements in respect of domestic violence- how it links to the LSCB Child Protection Programme.
 - AIM- training staff to undertake risk assessments
 - Signs of Safety linkages to Child Protection Conferences.
 - Children with Disabilities to review workforce development implications
 - Children with Disabilities to review workforce development implications

HIDDEN HARM SUB GROUP- CHAIR JOANNA WHITE

The Hidden Harm Sub Group meets regularly to consider issues around parental drug and alcohol abuse. The group has recently held a development session to plan the work for the coming year and finalise the action plan.

Work for the next 12 months includes:

- Training and awareness for staff in substance misuse services including a specific focus on how to assess and meet the needs of clients as parents of their children
- Ensuring that all substance misuse treatment agencies and children and family services record an agreed minimum consistent set of data about the children of clients presenting to them
- Ensuring that all staff working across Gateshead with adult clients in Drug and Alcohol Services know what to do if they have concerns about a child
- Awareness to be raised about policies and procedures already in place to ensure that if a child is identified to be at risk of significant harm a referral is immediately made to the Referral and Assessment Team to ensure their needs are met.

The development session in June 2009 has provided the sub group with a valuable start for the work for the remainder of 2008-2009.

LICENSING SUB GROUP- CHAIR JOANNA WHITE

The Licensing Sub Group continues to meet and consider all licensing applications received by the council and any child protection implications. The group now meets on a monthly basis, having previously met on an ad hoc basis when a number of applications had been received.

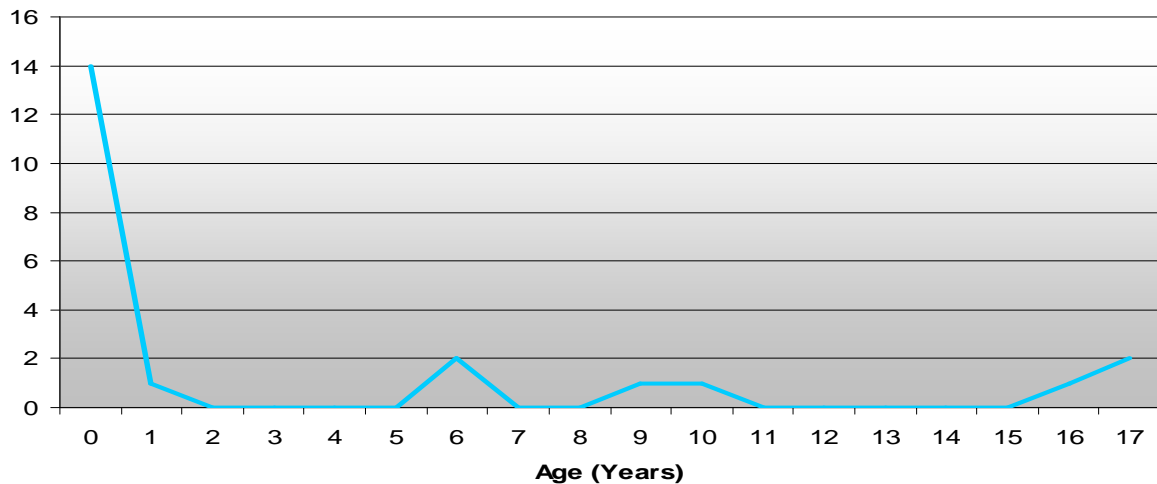
CHILD DEATH REVIEW SUB GROUP- CHAIR Dr HELEN PALMER

From 1 April 2008 Gateshead LSCB had a statutory responsibility to review all child deaths within the borough. The Gateshead Local Child Death Review Sub Group was established and Gateshead also began to work in collaboration with Sunderland and South Tyneside's safeguarding boards via the South of Tyne and Wearside Child Death Overview Panel.

The local group continues to meet bi-monthly and feed into the work of Overview Panel, which meets quarterly.

In 2008-2009 there were 22 deaths of children resident in Gateshead, five of which were classed as "unexpected deaths".

No of Reported Deaths 08-09 (Gateshead)



E SAFETY WORKING GROUP- CHAIR FRANCES EWART

The e-safety working group continues to meet on a regular basis and has aligned itself to Bryon's recommendation on e-safety as outlined in the Children's Plan, Building Better Futures.

Key milestones include:

- The endorsing of information leaflets for children, young people and parents/carers to raise awareness of e-safety using the extensive free material available via the Internet at www.thinkuknow.co.uk brought by the team at Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre.
- E-safety training: Safeguarding issues and the Internet training has again been identified as a priority and incorporated into the LSCB Annual Inter-Agency Child Protection Training Course Programme for 2009/10.

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Key priorities in 2009/10 include:

- To utilise the post of the Community Development Officer to take this work forward including the chairing role of the working group.
- To further develop the role of the Strategic Lead for e-safety in Gateshead.
- Further e-safety training to be accessed by key professionals across Gateshead. The group would recommend that staff access the CEOP Ambassador Training Course.
- To finalise the e-safety strategy for Gateshead in line in with the BECTA 'Safeguarding Children in a Digital World' document.
- To align the work of the Gateshead Ant-bullying Strategy.
- To strengthen the involvement of young people in the e-safety project and continue to use this as a catalyst for engagement of young people more broadly into safeguarding matters.

MISSING AND EXPLOITED GROUP- CHAIR SHAUN TUMELTY

This newly formed group looks to address a key and concerning area of work. The difference between unauthorised absence from care and missing remains unclear between agencies. This needs to be clarified enabling the group to focus on those most vulnerable to exploitation locally and regionally.

Within the next 12 months the group will look to:

- Update the procedures in respect of Children who run away and go missing from home and care.
- Training for staff within care settings regarding the new procedures.
- Improving performance in respect of the National Indicator (NI) 71 self-assessment return.
- Risk identification and intervention for the high risk missing children and young people.

6. LSCB ANNUAL FORUM

Gateshead LSCB aims to hold an annual event each year to raise awareness on a particular aspect of the work of professionals in the Gateshead area. The

day serves as a training event and also to raise awareness and improve engagement with the local community.

The 2009 Annual Forum was held on Monday 23 March 2009 at the Stonehills Media Centre, Gateshead in conjunction with the NSPCC. The forum focused on Safeguarding in Black, Minority and Ethnic (BME) communities and was well attended by professionals from a number of agencies and BME community members.

Actions from the day will inform the work programme of the newly appointed LSCB Community Development Officer.

Work is about to commence on planning the 2010 forum.

7. LSCB CHALLENGE AND IMPROVEMENT DEVELOPMENT SESSION

On the morning of 17 December 2008 Gateshead LSCB Executive met to work through the DCSF Challenge and Improvement tool. The tool was designed to assist LSCBs in analysing their own effectiveness through good governance. The group were asked to consider various principles of governance and to grade Gateshead LSCB's performance against them.

Overall, Gateshead LSCB compared favourably with the principles set out in the Challenge and Improvement tool. The exercise was a useful method to enable board members to scrutinise the work, structure and governance of the board, and has provided a clear focus and action plan to further improve this.

Gateshead has very strong and effective child protection processes and performs well at the core business of the LSCB i.e. the 'staying safe' outcome of the five Every Child Matters outcomes. By meeting the key actions identified by this exercise, the LSCB will help children in Gateshead to be as safe as possible, and also to work towards meeting their potential in the other key areas.

Areas for development included:

- The Terms of Reference of the LSCB to be updated- this is a key priority
- The Welcome Pack/ Member's Pack to be updated to reflect the new structure of the board and to clarify member's roles and responsibilities and expected values
- Engagement with children and young people to be improved- this will now be met as an LSCB Community Development Officer has recently been appointed.
- Possibility of regular LSCB newsletter to be explored- this has now been met and the first issue circulated
- LSCB website to be improved- this is a priority for the future

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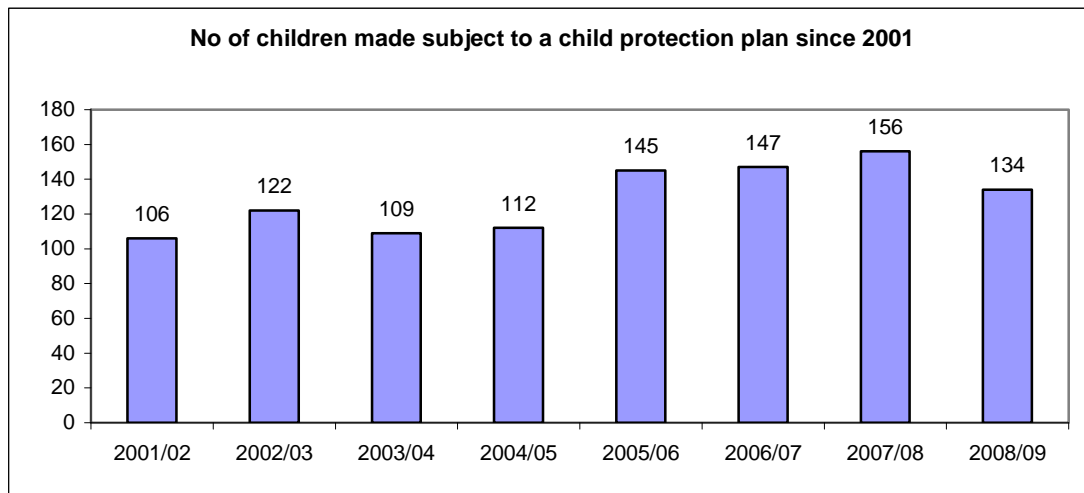
- LSCB entry on Gateshead Council Risk Register to be updated- this was actioned shortly after the session
- Member non-attendance to be followed up more robustly in future- this is being monitored at present
- Recruitment of LSCB Workforce Development Officer- this has been met with a 6 month secondment and discussions around longer term plans are underway
- Training Plan for board members and wider workforce- this is being considered by the LSCB Workforce Development Sub Group and Executive Board.
- LSCB Media Protocol (particularly around Serious Case Reviews) to be developed



8. ACTIVITY AND PERFORMANCE DATA FOR 2008 – 2009

8.1 Numbers of children made subject to child protection plans in Gateshead each year

The graph below shows the number of children made subject to child protection plans each year since 2001- formerly known as the number of registrations each year.s

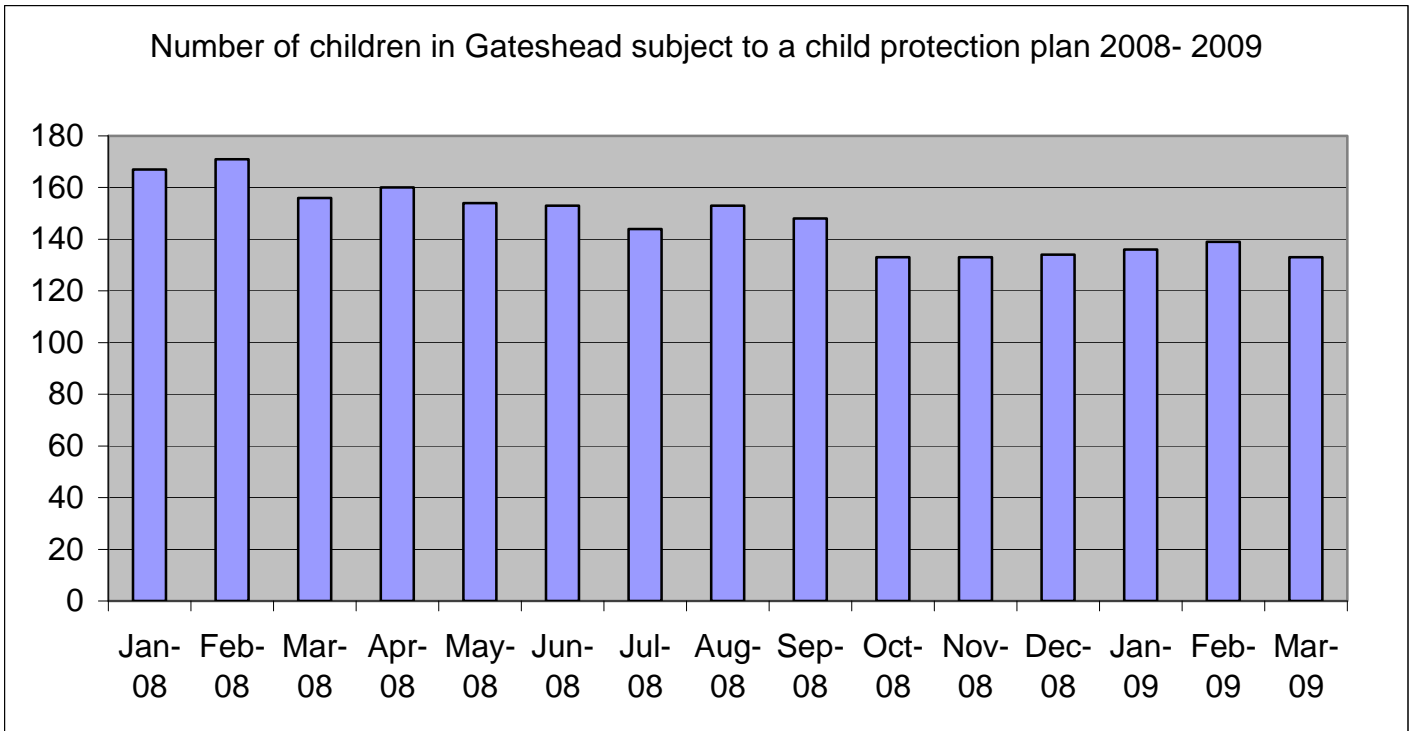


8.2 Numbers of children subject to child protection plans in Gateshead, 2008-2009.

The graph overleaf shows that the total number of children in Gateshead subject to child protection plans at any given time has fallen from the levels seen in early 2008 and has remained fairly static in the first half of 2009.

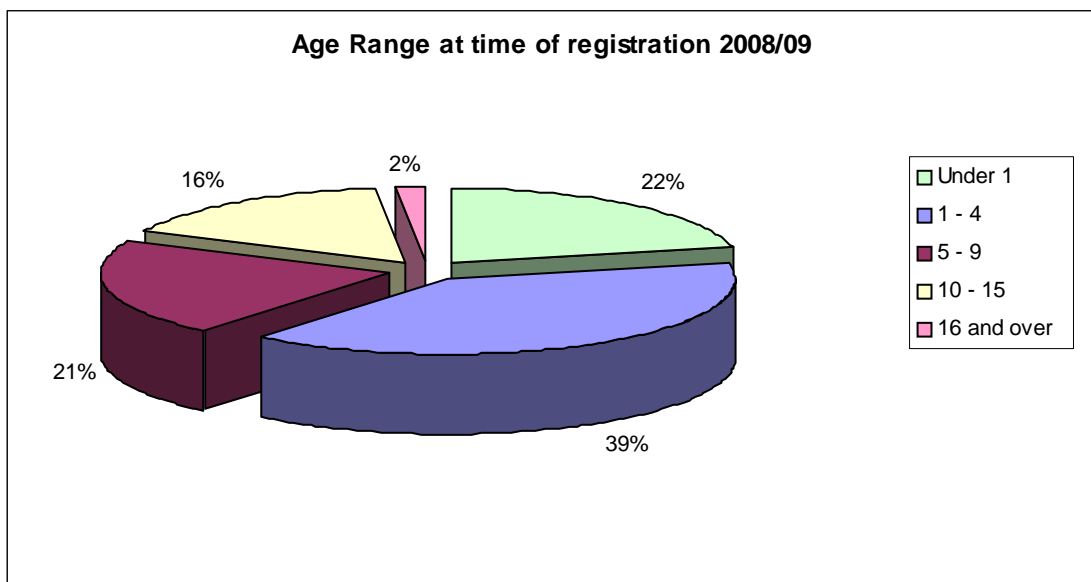
Other LSCBs have reported an increase in this figure following the announcement of the death of Baby P in November 2008, however this impact has not been seen in Gateshead by 31 March 2009. The circumstances around the tragic death of Baby P were made public in Mid-November 2008, when there were 136 children in Gateshead subject to child protection plans.

On 31 March 2009 there were 132 children who were the subjects of child protection plans. The figure peaked at 139 on 3 February 2009 and has fallen to 131 on a number of occasions.



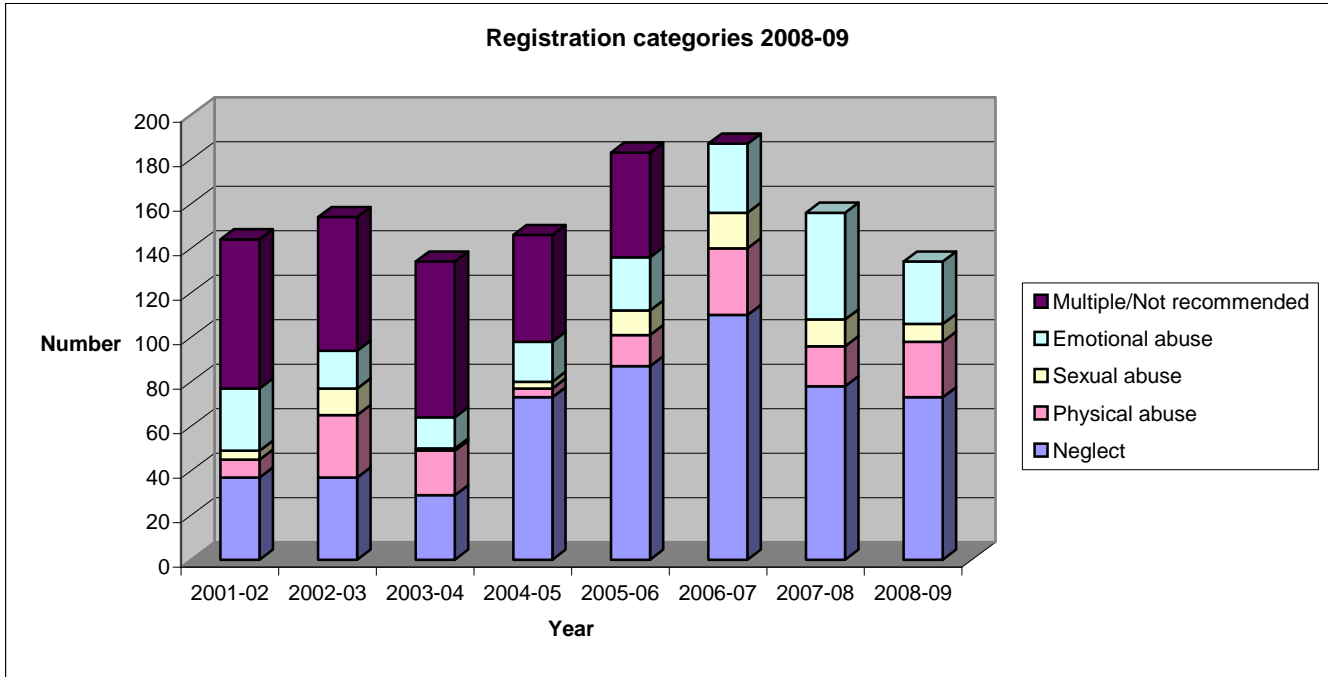
8.3 Age range of children made subject to child protection plans

In 2008-2009 the predominate age range at the time of registration was 1-4 years (39%), however there was also a large proportion of children aged under 1 (22%) including unborn children. The least common age group for registration was 16 and over, with only two children in this age group being made subject to a child protection plan in 2008-2009.



8.4 Categories of child protection plans

Of the 134 new registrations in 2008/2009, 73 (54%) of these children were made subject to child protection plans under the category of neglect. 28 children (21%) were made subject to a child protection plan under the category of emotional abuse, 25 children (19%) had plans for physical abuse and 8 children (6%) were made subject to child protection plans under the category of sexual abuse.

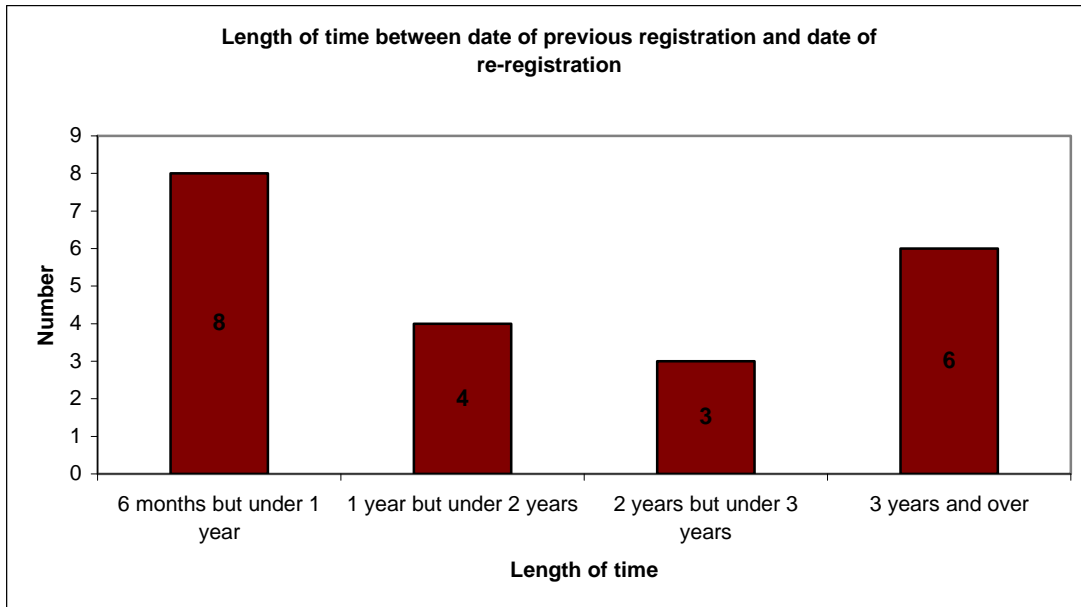


8.5 Children made subject to child protection plans for a second or subsequent time

In 2008-2009 there were 21 children made subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time- previously termed 're-registrations'.

Eight children made subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time in 2008-2009 had previously been subject to child protection plans in the last 6 months to one year.

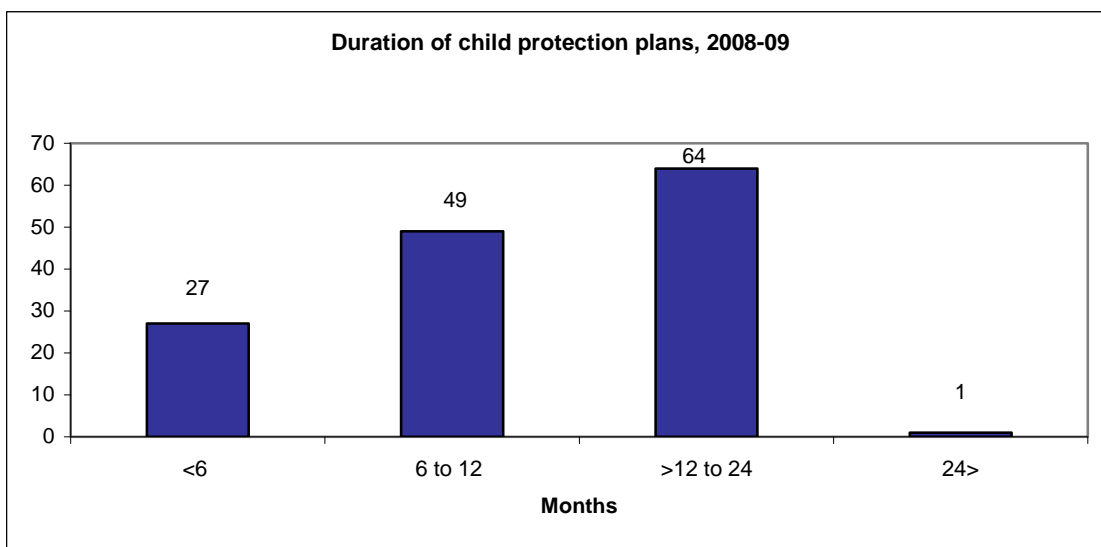
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8.6 Duration of child protection plans

A total of 141 children had their child protection plans discontinued in 2008-2009- previously termed deregistration. This is a smaller figure than in 2007-2008, however the number of children made subject to child protection plans throughout the year is also smaller.

One child was recorded as having a child protection plan for a period of greater than 2 years at the time of their plan being discontinued. 27 children had plans for less than 6 months, 49 children were subject to child protection plans for 6-12 months and 64 children were the subjects of a child protection plan for 1-2 years.



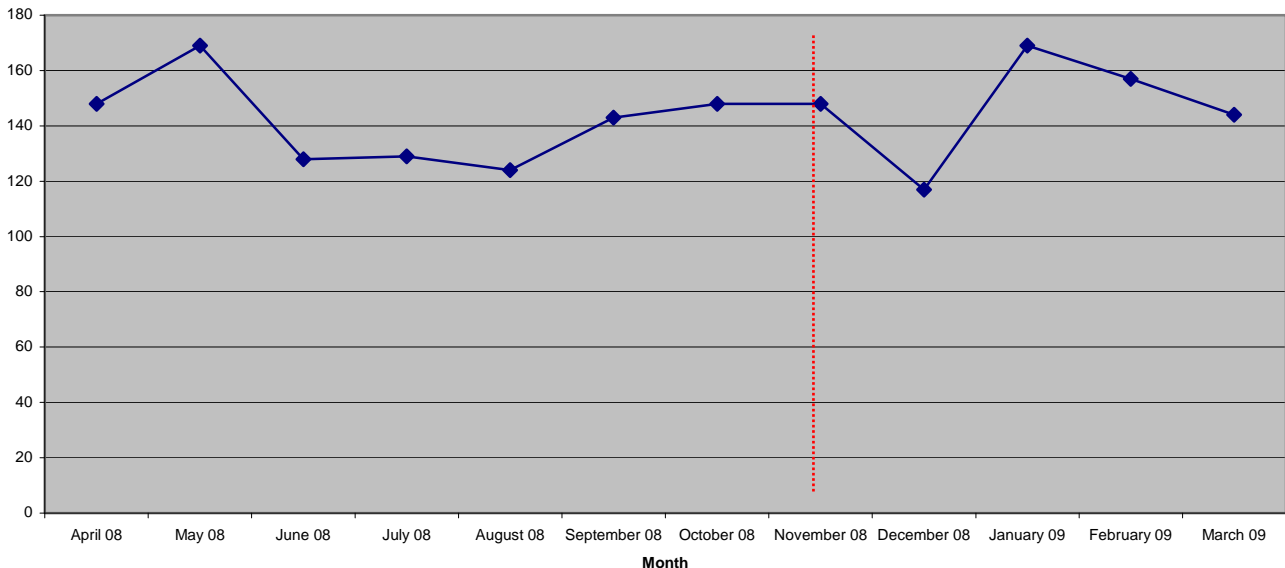
9. THE IMPACT OF THE BABY PETER CASE ON GATESHEAD LSCB AND PARTNER AGENCIES

9.1 STATISTICAL IMPACT

The tragic circumstances behind the death of Baby Peter in Haringey shocked the professionals and the public alike. The media interest in the case was almost unprecedented, and many local authorities have reported an increase in the workload of frontline services as a direct result since the details were made public in November 2008.

Gateshead Council Children, Families and Young Offenders Service Referral and Assessment Team did not see an immediate impact in terms of an increase in the number of referrals they received in November 2008. In October 2008, prior to the details of the Baby Peter case being made public, the Referral and Assessment team received 147 referrals, and this remained static at 147 in November 2008 (when the details were made public) and then fell to 117 in December 2008. There was an increase in referrals in January 2009 to 167 and 156 in February 2009 before the numbers fell back to 142. It is difficult to comment whether this spike in referrals was related to the Baby Peter case as a larger peak occurred in May 2008, which was obviously unconnected. Other local authorities and agencies such as the NSPCC reported an increase of up to a third.

Referrals received 2008/09

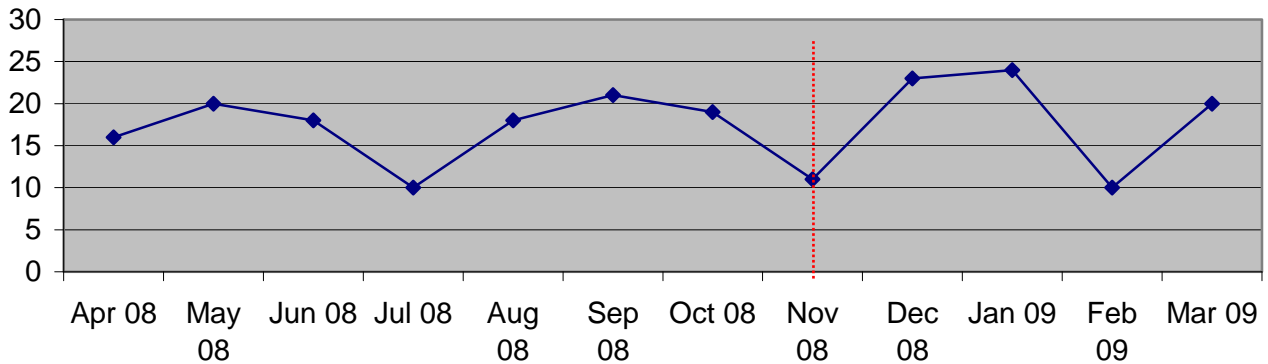


Analysis of the number of Section 47 Enquiries initiated by Children, Families and Young offenders appears to show an increase after the details of the Baby Peter case were made public. In November 2008 there were 11 Section

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47 Enquiries initiated and this increased to 23 in December 2008 and 24 in January 2009. However November 2008 was a relatively 'quiet' month in terms of Section 47s as the graph below shows, and there is significant variation over the numbers initiated throughout the course of a year.

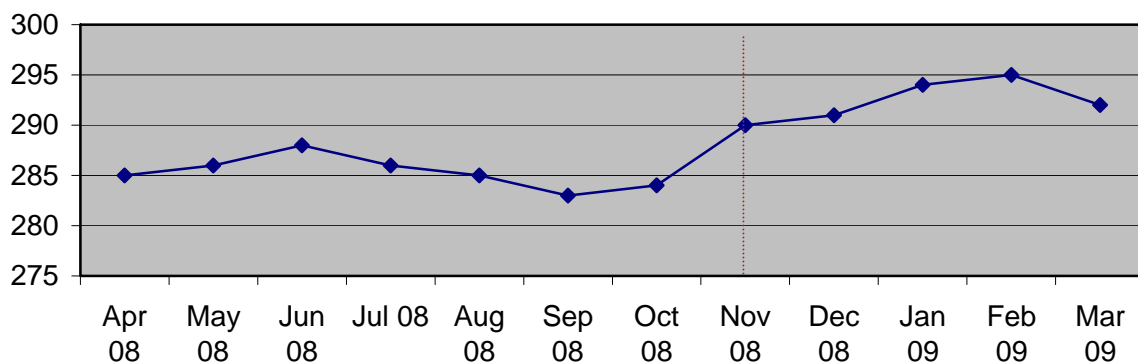
Number of s.47 enquiries initiated 2008/09



As discussed previously, the number of children subject to child protection plans has remained relatively static since November 2008 and appears to have been unaffected by the Baby Peter case. Figures have been almost static since November 2008.

The graph below shows that there has been an increase in the number of looked after children following the Baby Peter tragedy. Nationally, the numbers of looked after children have risen by approximately a quarter in the wake of the Baby Peter tragedy and some local authorities have reported an increase of 70%. Anecdotal evidence in some areas suggests a return to numbers of children in foster carers or children's homes unseen for two decades.

Number of LAC at month end (2008/09)



9.2 Other impacts of the Baby Peter case.

The Local Government Association conducted some research in March 2009 which showed that public perception of children's social workers been affected by the recent case of Baby Peter in Haringey. 42% of the people surveyed felt that their opinion has 'got worse'.

The media exposure of this case in subsequent interest in child protection has been almost unprecedented. Other high profile cases, including those in Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Doncaster, Manchester and Birmingham, have only added to the high level of scrutiny placed on those working in the safeguarding arena in social care, the police, health and other agencies.

The Government ordered an urgent report into the progress being made across the country to implement effective arrangements for safeguarding children. Lord Laming, who chaired the inquiry into the tragic death of Victoria Climbié, was asked to write a report and make recommendations. "*The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*" was published in March 2009, along with an initial response from the Government. A more detailed response from the Government, entitled "*The protection of children in England: action plan*" was published in May 2009.

Laming made 58 recommendations in his report, all of which were accepted by the Government. Few of those recommendations required an immediate response by Gateshead LSCB or partner agencies, as many related to central government or departments, such as DCSF, the Home Office, or the Department of Health. Laming has recommended that a number of statutory documents be revised, including *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. It is envisaged that there will be direct implications and prompt action required when the revised document is published at the end of 2009.

Lord Laming recommended that the same person should not chair Children's Trusts and Local Safeguarding Children Boards. Gateshead is already compliant with this recommendation, however the Government responded to this recommendation stating that LSCB chairs should be independent of all agencies represented on the board. Alison Walton, Director of Children and Young People, Gateshead Council currently chairs Gateshead LSCB. Work is now underway to appoint an independent chair of Gateshead LSCB via a reciprocal agreement with another local authority.

Lord Laming, and subsequent steer from DCSF, also recommended that Serious Case Reviews into the deaths or serious injuries of children were independently chaired. Previously the Head of Service for Children, Families and Young Offenders Service has chaired these reviews. Gateshead LSCB has now opted to appoint an experienced child-care barrister to chair Serious Case Review Panels on a case-by-case basis.

There was a great deal of focus in Lord Laming's report on the training and professional development of social workers. Most of this relates to the training

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done by workers prior to their employment with local authorities. Gateshead LSCB Workforce Development Sub Group is currently working with an independent company to develop a training session using the Baby Peter case as a case study. Previously training has been held using a fictional case entitled 'Paul: Death by neglect' however it was felt that the lessons to be learnt from Haringey could be incorporated into this as it was due to be updated.

Gateshead LSCB is also conducting work in conjunction with Gateshead Council Adult Services to ensure a joint approach between those working in safeguarding children and those with a responsibility for safeguarding adults. It is planned that there will be an increase in the level of child protection training available for staff across adult services and more joint working between the two groups. Laming recommended that adult services are represented on LSCBs, which is already the case in Gateshead, and Gateshead aims to build on this by having a children's services representative on the Adult Safeguarding Board.

9. KEY PRIORITIES FOR 2009/ 2010

The development of the business priorities for the LSCB has been steered by the work undertaken by Board members and sub groups throughout the year. The principle drivers for the priorities include national and local agendas.

National agenda in 2009 has been heavily affected by the sad death of Baby Peter in Haringey, London. The Government instructed Lord Laming to conduct an urgent review of Child Protection arrangements in England and the recommendations made in this report will shape statutory guidance for LSCBs and host agencies, including the revised *'Working together to safeguard children'* which is due for publication at the end of 2009.

The agreed business priorities for Gateshead LSCB for 2009-2010 are as follows:

9.1 DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The importance of Domestic abuse has long been recognised nationally as an issue both in terms of monetary cost to services and in terms of the far reaching and long-term harmful effects, both physical and emotional, to primary victims and their children.

On 9 March 2009 the Government launched the largest ever cross-government public consultation to tackle violence against women and girls. It includes a review into police powers for dealing with serial perpetrators of domestic violence and a review of the sexualisation of teenage girls.

Domestic abuse is therefore, high on the Government's agenda at present as it is seen as one of the root causes of so many other social problems including mental ill health, child abuse and neglect, substance misuse, homelessness, sexual exploitation, adolescents displaying violent behaviour as well as the ultimate issue of increased homicides.

Gateshead has a long history of multi-agency work around domestic violence and there is a strong commitment to tackling the issue. A great deal of work has been done around the high-risk and very high risk cases including running a Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) system since 2006, however these cases are only the top 6-7% of domestic abuse incidents. In 2008 Gateshead was the first area in the Northumbria Police force area to gain accreditation for a Domestic Violence Court.

A cross-partnership working group has recently been established to focus attentions on early intervention in the low to medium risk cases, as well as ensuring there is a range of services available for the higher risk cases. Work within the group is ongoing.

9.2 HIDDEN HARM

The term 'Hidden Harm' refers to the problem of parental substance and alcohol misuse. This is a key priority for Gateshead LSCB and an important area for development.

The Hidden Harm Sub Group has supported Gateshead LSCB for a number of years in this field and work within the sub group continues. A key challenge in this area is that many of the professionals working with substance abusing adults are very much focussed on the needs of the adult, their service user. Part of the role of the sub group is to ensure that professionals continue to be aware of the potential effects of parental drug and alcohol abuse upon a child.

Studies estimate that there are between 200,000 and 300,000 children in England and Wales where one or both parents have serious drug problems, which represents 2-3% of all children under 16. The number of children living in homes where one or both parents abuse alcohol is likely to be higher. A recent study conducted by Government Office North East into Serious Case Reviews in the region suggested that the impact of parental drug and alcohol abuse and mental health problems are more significant in the North East of England than nationally.

Agencies working with substance misusing parents should recognise that children are not at risk solely by virtue of the fact that the parent uses substances. *"Most parents who use drugs are 'good enough' parents and do not abuse or neglect their children"* (LGD/ SCODA 1997).

9.3 E SAFETY

New technologies are used by everyone within the community to provide a quick and convenient method of communication, but they also provide a major challenge for the LSCB and partner agencies.

The abuse of the new technologies to provide a means by which the exploitation of children and young people is possible across area and national boundaries is a major issue to address. For this reason, the LSCB E Safety Working Group, is developing an E Safety Strategy with links to national initiatives and combines this with a positive action at the local level.

E safety also includes the use of new technologies for the purposes of bullying and coercion.

9.4 MISSING AND EXPLOITED CHILDREN

Children who run away are unhappy, vulnerable and in danger. Children and young people who run away from home or care are often running away from something or someone, or to something or someone. Running away impacts on a number of aspects of a child's life, from the immediate risk to their safety to the longer-term outcomes associated with missing education.

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Whilst missing from home or care, children and young people are at an increased risk of exploitation, and many children and young people go missing in the first place because they are being exploited or being groomed to be exploited.

Responding to the needs of missing and exploited children has long been a priority of Gateshead LSCB and partner agencies, however there is a clearer focus for the board and partner agencies in 2009-2010 with the introduction of a new Government target (National Indicator 71) and new statutory guidance.

As previously mentioned, a new LSCB working group has been established to monitor children who go missing or at risk of exploitation. Senior strategic and operational professionals from a range of agencies meet monthly to consider individual cases and also the wider issues across Gateshead.

Meeting the requirements of National Indicator 71 is a key commitment of Gateshead LSCB and its partner agencies, however the aim of the Missing and Exploited Sub Group is wider than that. Gateshead LSCB and its partner agencies are committed to a child-centred approach to providing a range of appropriate and accessible services for all children who go missing and/or are at risk of exploitation.

9.5 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Gateshead LSCB has always been committed to engaging with the communities that partner agencies serve. Our vision is that all children and young people in Gateshead are empowered and supported to deliver their full potential and have the life skills and opportunities to play a full and active role in society.

Whilst the primary function of an LSCB is in meeting the 'staying safe' aspect of the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes, Gateshead LSCB and its partner agencies are committed in helping all children in Gateshead to meet all five outcomes. By engaging with local communities and allowing children, young people and their families to play an active role in shaping the services in place to improve their lives, it is hoped that agencies will be able to work more effectively in meeting the needs of the children of Gateshead.

Gateshead LSCB is in the process of appointing a Community Development Officer who will play a key role in engaging and consulting with children, young people, their families and the wider community. The Community Development Officer will be responsible for the board in achieving high standards in safeguarding, and promoting children and young people's welfare by widening community involvement in the work of the LSCB, including the engagement of children and young people.