



WESTERN AREA CHILD PROTECTION COMMITTEE

ELEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT

1st APRIL 2001 – 31st MARCH 2001

SECTION 2

PROTECTION

2.0 OVERVIEW

The ACPC and the Child Protection Panels have continued to accord high priority to effective protection despite considerable pressures and challenges. All registered children in the Western area have a Case Co-Ordinator who is a Social Worker, an identified Core Group and A Child Protection Plan.

Taking into consideration the need to produce reliable information in a format which facilitates planning and enables comparisons to be made with other Trusts a number of meetings were held involving members of the ACPC and the Child Protection Panels as well as Soscare Managers. Efforts have been made to extract the relevant data but it is, of course, recognised that the present system has its limitation. In view of the work being undertaken by the Collaborative Community Procurement Project in terms of examining the requirements for a Person-Centred Community Information System (PCIS) the ACPC and Child Protection Panels have decided, that in the interim period and pending developments in the child protection facility of PCIS, to continue to operate the present system. The new Information System when it is introduced will, as far as child protection information is concerned, focus on the requirements as laid down in "Co-Operating to Protect/Safeguard Children". This will be a most helpful development.

Notwithstanding the limitations of the current system the statistical analysis that follows begins at the point of referral and moves on to present information for each stage of the child protection process. It includes:

- The volume of child care referrals made to the Family & Child Care Programme in each Trust.
- The volume of referrals related to child protection.
- The number of child protection investigations in accordance with Article 66 of the Children Order.
- Children considered at Initial Child Protection Case Conferences.
- Children whose names have been placed on the Child Protection Register during the year.
- Children whose names are on the Child Protection Register at 31 March 2001.
- Children removed from the Child Protection Register during the year.

2.1 Child Protection

In order that the significance of the figures become readily apparent it was decided to include a synopsis of the 'under 18' population for the Western area which according to the 1999 Mid-Year Estimates was 86,009. A breakdown of the child population by age and Trust is provided in Table 1.

Table 1 : Child Population of WHSSB's Area by Age and Trust

Age Range	Foyle Health & Social Services Trust (FHSST)	Sperrin Lakeland Health & Social Care Trust (SLT)	Western Area Total
0-4			
5-9			
10-14			
15-17			
Total	51211	34798	86009

2.2 Referrals

The referrals to the Family & Child Care Programme in Foyle and Sperrin Lakeland Trusts are outlined in Table 2.

Table 2 : Referrals to Social Services; 1 April 2000 - 21 March 2001

Referrals	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Total
Potential At Risk	602	126	728
Other Child Care	1883	2308	4191
Total	2485	2434	4919

During the previous year there were 699 potential at risk referrals and 4405 other child care referrals amounting to a total of 5104 referrals ie over the year ended 31 March 2000. Therefore, in the year ended 31 March 2001 the Family & Child Care Teams experienced an

overall increase in potential at risk referrals but a decrease in other child care referrals. There are, however, differences between the Trusts when the volumes over the past 2 years are considered. Referrals for both years are shown in Table 3.

Table 3 : Child Care Referrals - Potential At Risk and Other Child Care

Trust	Potential At Risk Referrals 2000/01 (1999/00)	Number of Families Referred in 2000/01	Other Child Care Referrals 2000/01 (1999/00)	Child Population 0-17	Child Protection Referrals per 1000 population	Potential At Risk referrals as a % of all Child Care Referrals 2000/01 (1999/00)
FHSST	602 (585)	225	1883 (2130)	51211		... ()
SLT	126 (114)		2308 (2275)	36239		... ()
Total	728 (699)		4191 (4405)	86009		... ()

Potential at risk referrals increased by 17 in Foyle and by 12 in Sperrin Lakeland Trust. Whilst appreciating that the child population of Foyle Trust is some 15,000 greater than Sperrin Lakeland, there is nevertheless a significant difference in their respective potential at risk/child protection referrals. *(Any views from Child Protection Panel Chairs and ACPC members?)*

When compared to the figures in the year 1999/2000 Foyle had a ...% reduction in volume of other child care referrals, ie from 2130 to 1883. In contrast, Sperrin Lakeland Trust increased by 33 over the same period.

It is interesting to note that in Foyle Trust the number of child protection referrals amounted to 27.1% of the total referrals whereas in Sperrin Lakeland Trust the potential at risk referrals represented 5% of the total referrals. The Child Protection Panel's Annual Report of Sperrin Lakeland Trust suggests that this demonstrates diligence is being applied in taking forward the "Refocusing Debate" with the result that as far as possible children's needs are being attended to without them going through the formal child protection process unnecessarily.

Table 4 demonstrates how far children progressed through the process once a child protection referral was received.

Trust/Board	Child Protection Referrals	Article 66 Investigation	Initial Child Protection Case Conferences	Children having Initial Child Protection Case Conferences	Registrations
FHSST	602	602	88	457	96
SL	126	68	25	51	48
Total	728	670	113	508	144

The activity at different stages of the child protection process in each Trust is interesting. There is wide variation in terms of the number of child protection referrals, Article 66 investigations and registrations as reflected in the chart below.

Stages of the Child Protection Process by Trust

The number of child protection referrals where the child was known to Social Services at the time of referral and where the child had no previous contact with Social Services is outlined in Table 5. It is significant to note that in Foyle Trust just over one quarter of the referrals were new cases and in Sperrin Lakeland Trust almost one third of the children referred were new cases.

Table 5 : Child Protection Referrals; Previous/No Previous Contact with Social Services

	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Total
Known Previously	444	87	531
Not Known	158	39	197
Total	602	126	728

The religious affiliation of the children referred for child protection reasons is outlined in Table 6. Given the sensitive nature of child protection referrals, it is not always appropriate to ask what the child's religion is and consequently religion details were not completed in respect of certain children.

Table 6 : Child Protection Referrals by Religion and Trust; 1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001

Religion	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area Total
Church of Ireland	3	13	16
Not Known	300	58	358
Presbyterian	7	2	9
Methodist	0	1	1
Roman Catholic	114	19	133
Muslim	0	1	1
None	0	1	1
Not Completed	118	31	149
Other	28	0	28
OC????	2	0	2
Total	572*	126	698

** Tom, should this not add up?*

The ethnicity of the children referred for child protection is detailed in Table 7. The details were not recorded in respect of a substantial number of children in Sperrin Lakeland Trust given what the Panel's Annual Report described as the sensitivities involved.

Table 7 : Child Protection Referrals by Ethnicity and Trust; 1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001

Ethnicity	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area Total
White	344	44	388
Unknown	117	36	153
Not Completed	140	46	186
Other	1	0	1

Total	602	126	728
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Table 8 highlights the different sources of potential at risk referrals.

Table 8 : Source of Child Protection Referrals by Trust

Source	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area Total
Anonymous	47	2	49
Teacher	31	10	41
Education Welfare Officer	18	1	19
Friend/Neighbour	25	10	35
General Practitioner	5	5	10
Health Visitor	19	2	21
Police	76	31	107
Relate	113	21	134
Social Worker	144	36	180
Hospital Nurse	2	2	4
Hospital Doctor	2	0	2
Self	22	2	24
Other	98	4	102
Total	602	126	728

Whilst Social Workers are credited as having referred 180 child protection cases, a percentage of this number may have been originally referred by other sources. Following initial assessment by social work staff, some referrals may have been re-categorised - perhaps changed to child protection in which case the social worker has been identified as the source of referral instead of the initial referrer. Clearly there remains an incompatibility in terms of sources of referral which was identified in previous years but regrettably it has not been possible, to date, to address this matter. It is anticipated that the proposed new PCIS System will enable more accurate and specific child protection information to be made available.

As indicated in Table 8, relatives and police are important sources of referral.

2.3 Child Protection Investigations

There were 602 children including 7 with a disability investigated within Foyle Trust. Of the 126 child protection referrals in Sperrin Lakeland Trust, 68 children, 3 of whom had a learning disability, were subject to child protection investigations with 1 child being investigated twice. Sperrin Lakeland Panel's Annual Report has highlighted the discrepancy between the number of potential at risk referrals and the number of investigations and indicated that it may be accounted for by a number of reasons. Examples given included:

- the fact that referrals received before the end of March 2001 may not be completed until after 31 March 2001;
- some may have been inappropriate referrals; (*Check with Carmel*)
- others may not have been updated on Soscare;
- some incomplete investigation records relate to staff on sick leave.

Table 9 provides information in relation to the type of Investigations.

Table 9 : Type of Investigations by Trust; 1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001

Type	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area Total
By Social Services Only	347	48	395
By Policy Only	2	3	5
Joint Police/Social Worker	34	18	52
Total	393 (?)	69	452 (?)

In Foyle Trust 41 children were also interviewed. (*Is it possible to have this figure for SLT?*) A total of 164 child protection investigations (145 in Foyle and 16 in Sperrin Lakeland Trust) did not proceed to Case Conference. Of the 164 that did proceed to Case Conference, 76 (71 in Foyle and 5 in Sperrin Lakeland) were provided with family support and 15 (12 in Foyle and 3 in Sperrin Lakeland) were referred to other Agencies.

2.4 Case Conferences

During the period 1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001 there were 245 Case Conferences in Foyle Trust; 88 Initial Case Conferences (ICCs) and 157 Review Case Conferences(RCCs). The figures for Sperrin Lakeland Trust were 25 ICCs and 93 RCCs giving a total of 118. Table 10 provides a breakdown of the Conferences by Trust, Families and Children and Type.

**Table 10 : Case Conferences by Trust, Families and Children and Type
1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001**

Trust	Number of Families and Children considered at Case Conference	Number of Case Conferences

	Families	Children	Initial	Review	Total
FHSST	245	574	88	157	245
SLT	66	140	25	93	118
Total	311	714	113	250	363

The trends in Case Conference activity over the past 5 years are reflected in Table 11. Generally, a significant downward trend in Case Conference activity is evident with the exception of the past year which saw a substantial rise in the number of RCCs held in Sperrin Lakeland Trust. (*Carmel, any particular reason(s)?*)

Table 11 : Comparison of Case Conferences by Trust, Type and Year

Trust	Conference Type	1996/97	1997/98	1998/99	1999/00	2000/01
Foyle Trust	Initial	112	98	78	77	88
	Review	235	216	187	190	157
	Total	347	314	265	267	245
Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Initial	52	48	41	36	25
	Review	103	98	85	72	93
	Total	155	146	126	108	118
Western Area	Initial	164	146	119	113	113
	Review	338	314	272	262	250
	Total	502	460	391	375	363

Working in partnership with parents and children and involving them is a fundamental principle of The Children (NI) Order 1995. Table 12 indicates the extent of parental and child participation in Case Conferences. Of particular significance is the low level of participation by children and young people. It is accepted that there are reasons why attendance by children at Conferences may not be appropriate, one of which may simply be the age of the child.

**Table 12 : Parental and Child Participation in Case Conferences
1 April 2001 - 31 March 2001**

Level of Participation	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust

	Mother	Father	Both Parents	Child/ Young Person	Mother	Father	Both Parents	Child/ Young Person
Full Participation	156	49	41	20	65	28	25	10
Part Participation	4	9	2	7	2	1	1	0
Non Participation	84	80	69	218	51	89	48	108

2.5 The Child Protection Register

Purpose of the Child Protection Register

The principal purpose of the Register is to make Agencies and professionals aware of those children who are judged to be at continuing risk of significant harm and in need of actual safeguarding through an Inter-Agency Child Protection Plan. The custodian(s) of the Register in each Trust ensures that protection plans are formally revised/reviewed, initially after 3 months and subsequently every 6 months.

The Register provides a confidential central point of speedy enquiry (Out-of-Office hours this is directly to the relevant Children's Home by those who have authority to access the Register and via the Co-Ordinator on Stand-By Duty for staff who are not so designated). This facility enables staff concerned about a child to ascertain whether the child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan.

Children may be harmed by physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect which may take place in a variety of settings. A child's name can only be placed on the Child Protection Register by the decision of a Case Conference. The category of registration reflects the concerns relating to the particular child.

Another purpose of the Register is to allow for the collation and analysis of information locally and regionally. As stated in 2.4 of this section of the Report, there were 113 Initial Child Protection Case Conferences convened in respect of 508 children during the year which led to the named of 144 children being entered on the Child Protection Register.

In any attempt to reconcile these figures it must be understood:

- that there may be more than one child considered in the Case Conference;
- a child may be registered in more than one category of abuse.

In Foyle Trust there were 189 children from ... families (**check with Tom**) and 77 children from 30 families in Sperrin Lakeland Trust on the Child Protection Register at 31 March

2001. Throughout the year a total of 48 children from 25 families were added to the Register by Sperrin Lakeland Trust; 3 children's names were not added to the Register following Case Conference. Three children whose names were added to the Register were included in more than one category. In Foyle Trust, 96 children from 51 families were added to the Register and there were 478 children whose names were not added to the Register following Case Conference. There were 144 de-registrations in total ie 85 in Foyle and 59 in Sperrin Lakeland.

Over the 12 months from April 2000, 144 children were newly registered and an equal number were de-registered as reflected in Table 13.

	Foyle	Rate Per 1000 Population 0-17	SLT	Rate Per 1000 Population 0-17	Western Area Total	Rate Per 1000 Population 0-17
Number on CPR at 1 April 2001	178	3.46	88	2.43	266	3.03
Number Added to Register	96		48		144	
Number De-registered	85		59		144	
Total Number on CPR at 31 March 2001	189		77		266	

The Child Protection Registrations of Children added to the Register throughout the year is reflected in Table 14.

**Table 14 : Categories in respect of Children added to the Register by Trust
1 April 2000 - 31 March 2001**

Category	Description	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area Total
A	Potential Physical Abuse	20	7	27
B	Suspected Physical Abuse	0	0	0
C	Confirmed Physical Abuse	3	3	6
D	Potential Sexual Abuse	17	0	17
E	Suspected Sexual Abuse	2	0	2
F	Confirmed Sexual Abuse	3	1	4
G	Physical Neglect	24	10	34
H	Emotional Abuse	25	3	28
I	Potential Emotional Abuse	24	3	27
J	Potential Neglect	21	19	40
K	Suspected Neglect	0	2	2

L	Suspected Emotional Abuse	11	3	14
	Total	150	51	201

There were 45 children from Foyle Trust and 3 from Sperrin Lakeland Trust whose names were added to the Register in more than one category. Of particular note is the fact that in Sperrin Lakeland Trust, there was only one registration in the sexual abuse categories.

Children on the Child Protection Register by age and gender at 31 March 2001 is portrayed in Table 15.

Table 15 : Number of Children on the Child Protection Register by Trust, age and gender at 31 March 2001

Age Range	Foyle Trust			Sperrin Lakeland Trust			Western Area		
	Gender								
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
< 1	3	9	12	2	1	3	5	10	15
1-4	18	17	35	15	12	27	33	29	62
5-11	35	36	71	21	11	32	56	47	103
12-15	21	36	57	5	8	13	26	44	70
16+	5	9	14	1	1	2	6	10	16
Total	82	107	189	44	33	77	126	140	266

Colette - Is Bar Chart possible?

Table 16 gives an analysis of the type of abuse by gender and Trust at 31 March 2001.

Table 16 : Child Protection Register Category and Gender in each Trust at 31 March 2001

Category	Foyle Trust			Sperrin Lakeland Trust			Western Area Trust		
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T
Potential Physical Abuse	13	22	35	7	5	12	20	27	47
Suspected Physical Abuse	2	1	3	0	0	0	2	1	3
Confirmed Physical Abuse	1	4	5	1	0	1	2	4	6
Potential Sexual Abuse	7	16	23	7	6	13	14	22	36
Suspected Sexual Abuse	1	2	3	1	0	1	2	2	4
Confirmed Sexual Abuse	0	5	5	1	1	2	1	6	7
Physical Neglect	27	35	62	1	1	2	28	36	64
Emotional Abuse	24	41	65	5	3	8	29	44	73
Potential Emotional Abuse	20	32	52	5	4	9	25	36	61
Potential Neglect	18	18	36	13	7	20	31	25	56
Suspected Neglect	3	2	5	15	8	23	18	10	28
Suspected Emotional Abuse	9	4	13	1	3	4	10	7	17
Total	125	182	307	57	38	95	182	220	402

Key : M = Male, F = Female, T = Total

Pie Chart of Category of Abuse by Registration

Emotional abuse was the most frequently occurring registration category over the period 2000/01 followed closely by neglect. These two categories accounted for --?% of the total registration. Physical abuse was --?% and --?% of the registrations were in the sexual abuse category. **(check with Collette)**

At 31 March 2001 there were 92 children in Foyle and 20 in Sperrin Lakeland Trust in more than one category. The religious persuasion of the children on the Register at 30 March 2001 is shown in Table 17.

Table 17 : Religious Persuasion of Children on the Register at 31 March 2001

Religion	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area
Protestant	4	4	8
Roman Catholic	41	30	71
Other	14	1	15
Unknown	70	33	103
Not Confirmed	60	9	69
Total	189	77	266

Table 18 outlines the ethnicity of children on the Register at 31 March 2001.

Table 18 : Ethnicity of Children on the Register at 31 March 2001

Ethnicity	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area
White	75	40	115
Unknown	34	22	56
Not Confirmed	80	15	95
Total	189	77	266

Table 19 outlines the length of time children have been on the Child Protection Register by Trust. It highlights that the majority of children have been on the Register for 2 years or less 207/266 - --?% in fact. That 59 children could have been on the Register for more than 3 years is a matter of concern. If the level of risk still justifies registration 3 years later, it raises questions about the effectiveness of the Child Protection Plans. Sperrin Lakeland Child Protection Panel Report offered its analysis in terms of a core number of families whose difficulties have not been progressed by the child protection process or the influence of statutory intervention. For those families, care placements may either not have been available or in the best long term interests of the children. An example is the case of a family where a convicted Schedule 1 Offender returns to live in the neighbourhood and whose contact with the children in the family is assessed by the Programme for the Prevention of Sexual Abuse to be of high risk. Lack of parental co-operation in such cases is a common feature and inevitably creates a dilemma for professionals working with the family to balance the risks associated with parental contact with the need for stability and care within their own home environment.

Table 19 : Length of time on the Register at 31 March 2001

Period Registered as at 31 March 2001	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area
< 6 months	57	13	70
6-12 months	33	19	52
1-2 years	54	31	85
3-4 years	32	5	37
5+ years	13	9	22
Total	189	77	266

The age range of children at the time of registration is presented in Table 20.

Table 20 : Age range of children at the time of Registration by Gender and Trust

Age Range at time of Registration	Foyle Trust			Sperrin Lakeland Trust			Western Area			%
	M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T	
< 1 year	3	10	13	6	2	8	9	12	21	8
1-4 years	25	23	48	15	13	28	40	36	76	29
5-11 years	36	43	79	22	14	35	58	57	115	43

12-15 years	17	32	49	1	4	5	18	36	54	20
16+ years	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	81	108	189	44	33	77	125	141	266	100

Key : M = Male, F = Female, T = Total

The gender balance of children on the Register; 125 boys and 141 girls reflects 47% of registration were male and 53% female. Only 8% of the overall registration related to babies under the age of 1 year. The 5-11 year age range accounted for 43% of children on the Register.

The legal status of children on the Register is demonstrated in Table 18.% of children on the Register were not subject to any form of compulsory intervention. Of the 58 children subject to legal proceedings, 18 were accommodated.

Legal Status

Table 21 : Legal Status of Children on the Register as at 31 March 2001

Legal Status	Foyle Trust	Sperrin Lakeland Trust	Western Area Total
Emergency Protection Order	3	0	3
Accommodated under Article 21	16	2	18
Interim Care Order	11	6	127
Deemed Care Order	8	3	11
Care Order	7	0	7
Other	0	2?	2
None	144	64	208
Total	189	77	266

De-registrations between 1 April 2000 and 31 March 2001

There were 144 de-registrations in the year compared with 195 during the year 1999/2000. Of those 144 de-registrations, there were 59 children including 30 females and 29 males from 34 families in Sperrin Lakeland Trust and 85 children; 51 females and 34 males from 45 families in Foyle Trust's area.

As well as providing a Trust breakdown of de-registrations, Table 21 shows how long children had spent on the Register prior to their names being removed from it. Whilst it is encouraging to note that 111 children were de-registered within 2 years, of concern is the fact that 27 children remained on the Register for 3-4 years and 6 children were registered for more than 5 years.

WACPC recognises the need to understand what lies behind these figures - what was it about those cases which meant that children's names could not be safely removed from the Register?

**Table 21 : De-registrations during 2000/01
Length of Time on Register prior to Discharge by Age and Trust**

Duration	Under 1		1-4 years		5-11 years		12-15 yrs		16+ years		T
	FT	SLT	FT	SLT	FT	SLT	FT	SLT	FT	SLT	
< 6 months	2	4	1	4	1	0	2	3	1	0	18
6-12 months	4	1	8	3	9	7	4	4	0	1	41
1-2 years	4	2	7	9	13	8	6	1	1	1	52
3-4 years	2	0	3	3	5	3	8	2	0	1	27
5 years & over	1	0	0	0	2	2	1	0	0	0	6
Total	13	7	19	19	30	20	21	10	2	3	144

De-Registrations 2000/01; Time Spent on the Child Protection Register

Pie Chart

2.6 Demands within the Family & Child Care Programme in both Foyle and Sperrin Lakeland Trusts

The Annual Reports prepared by the Child Protection Panels have indicated that the period under review has been another busy one for staff in child protection as they strive to work positively and in partnership with families to support them in caring for their children as well as protecting children when required. In addition to managing their caseloads, staff have contributed to the development of a range of community development initiatives which are aimed at supporting children and families. Staff have also been involved in providing training to a number of groups and, through participation in Sub-Committees, have contributed to policy development.

Within the Family & Child Care Programme in both Trusts, Senior Social Workers and Assistant Principal Social Workers continued to constantly prioritise work and, on occasions, lower priority work had to be deferred. The Foyle Child Protection Annual Reports for 1999/2000 and 2000/2001 have commented on heavy workloads and the impact with regard to the negative effect on the morale of staff as evidenced in increased sick leave

and an increase in the number of transfer requests by Social Workers to work in other Programmes. The recruitment and retention of suitably experienced social work staff is also a major issue for Sperrin Lakeland Trust.

In October 2000 Social Workers within the Family & Child Care Programme in Foyle Trust embarked on a programme of industrial action essentially because of pressure of work. The industrial action was suspended just before Christmas when the Trust took steps to employ extra staff and develop a contact service to facilitate arrangements for looked after children to meet with their families. The WHSSB commissioned an Independent Review in relation to the Family & Child Care Programme's ability within Foyle Trust to meet its statutory functions. The Report of the Review which has been issued recently will be of interest to not only the Trust and its Child Protection Panel but also this Committee.

Sperrin Lakeland Panel has also highlighted the inadequate level of resourcing. In the current year there are no additional resources for Child Protection and Family Support Services. For the Family & Child Care Programme in Sperrin Lakeland Trust this will mean the contraction and possibly withdrawal of certain preventative services. It also means that it will not be possible to strengthen the existing infrastructure or continue with certain planned service developments including the appointment of a Designated Senior Nurse with responsibility for Child Protection. In the conclusion of the Panel's Annual Report, the Chairperson stated that "the inability to devise intensive domiciliary care support packages coupled with the inability to access foster care and secure accommodation places means that staff will have to continue to manage untenable risks in the community."

As can be seen from the figures included in this section of the Report, activity has been at a high level and consequently workloads for staff working in child protection have also been high.

2.7 Case Management Reviews

There were no case management reviews.

2.8 Enquiries to the Child Protection Register

In Foyle Trust there were 12 enquiries about children on the Register and 51 enquiries about children who were not on the Register. There were no enquiries to the Register recorded on SOS-CARE in Sperrin Lakeland Trust.