

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board - Children and Young People held on Friday, 14 September 2018 at 10.30 am at Committee Room 1 - County Offices, Kendal, LA9 4RQ

PRESENT:

Mrs V Tarbitt (Chair)

Mr B Shirley (Vice-Chair)	Mr P Dew
Mrs C Bowditch	Mr AW Wonnacott
Mrs S Evans	Mr N Hughes
Mrs EA Mallinson	Mr LN Fisher
Mrs EL Williamson	

Also in Attendance:-

Mr B Eaton	-	Parent Governor Representative
Mr J Macilwraith	-	Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive)
Ms L Berryman	-	Assistant Director - Children and Young People
Mr J Rasbash	-	Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor
Mr D Barton	-	Assistant Director - Education and Skills

PART 1 – ITEMS CONSIDERED IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr W Clark, Mr G Cook, Mrs C Driver, Mr W McEwan, Mr M Mill and Mr P Turner.

12 MEMBERSHIP

Mr C Cook and Mr P Turner had tendered their apologies with Mr Hughes and Mr Fisher respectively, substituting for them for this meeting only.

13 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No Interests were declared at this point of the meeting, however Mr N Hughes declared later on in the meeting that he had been appointed to the Church of England's Diocesan Board of Education for Carlisle diocese.

14 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, the press and public not be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any items of business on the agenda.

15 MINUTES

The following corrections be made to the minutes:

Minute 6 Deep Dive on Apprenticeships. Insert the word 'After' on the second last line of paragraph 2.

Minute 7 Portfolio Holder Update. 3rd line, change party to parties.

RESOLVED that, the minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

16 SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

Members received a presentation about Exclusions from School in Cumbria, as requested by members at an earlier meeting of the Board.

Members were guided through the presentation which gave the following information:

- Context for exclusions
- Key changes
- National Data (for 2014-15, 2015-16 and 2016-17)
- Exclusions in Cumbria
- The response to exclusions
- The impact on the need for Alternative Provision

Members had also received the statutory DfE guidance regarding Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England for those with legal responsibilities in relation to exclusion.

Members were advised that local authorities had less power than in previous years for challenging exclusions. Important changes were that the voice of the child was now less well heard and School Appeals Panels could no longer reinstate a child in school, instead they could only make recommendations to reinstate them.

Members were advised of the national data for public exclusions and the placing of Cumbria in relation to its statistical neighbours and England. For 2016-17, Cumbria's exclusion rate increased greater than the rest of the North West of England and was higher than its statistical neighbours. Members were advised of the rate of exclusions across all key stages, with the differences in changes for each stage identified. Comparisons with the national picture were reported. It was noted that over the course of three years, the number of exclusions had doubled, which was mirrored nationally. Geographical differences in the period 2015-18 in the county were identified.

Actions undertaken to address the number of exclusions were reported. This including training for Governors, benchmarking and the Fair Access Protocol. To conclude, the impact on the need for Alternative Provision (AP) was outlined. Members were apprised of the reasons why AP was clearly needed.

Given the importance of the issue of school exclusions, the Chair requested that a Deep Dive investigation be undertaken by the Board. A member requested that the names of the schools from which children and young people had been excluded be circulated. However, it was noted that discussion of this matter in the public meeting was not appropriate but members were reassured that the schools in question were fully supported by the County Council.

It was queried whether officers were in contact with other local authorities with similar trends to ascertain best practice and lessons learned. Members were advised by the Assistant Director - Education and Skills that other local authorities' trends would need to be ascertained. In terms of the response to exclusions and training for Governors, it was questioned what work the council was undertaking to address the shortage of School Governors in the county. The Assistant Director - Education and Skills reported on the Governor Support Team's challenging workload and the actions being undertaken to appoint more Governors. Members requested the Governor training programme.

It was queried whether the number of exclusions differed between Local Authority, Faith and Academy schools and if a gap in school leadership impacted on the number of exclusions. Members were informed that the County Council's influence on schools was important but this was not possible at Academy schools. Also that where work with schools had taken place, the number of exclusions had reduced (particularly in north Cumbria).

The statistics were queried for permanent exclusions; they were higher in the west but did the population figure skew the data. It was also queried whether the school population had remained static in the past three years and could this have had an impact on the statistics. Members were advised of how the figures were compiled; if the total population was static in the west and there was an increase in the number of exclusions then the percentage figure would increase. It was also queried that in the National Data 2016-17, Cumbria's Exclusion figure for FEX was 11.78% but did this mean that 1 in 9 children were excluded or was it the same child. The Assistant Director - Education and Skills would ascertain the information and advise members accordingly.

It was raised by one member that it would be unlikely for a Governing Body to overrule a Head Teacher's decision to exclude a child and an exclusion may occur in order for there to be a positive impact on exam results or to improve the learning environment. The Assistant Director - Education and Skills stressed the importance of effective support for School Governors and that almost half exclusions were a result of persistent disruptive behaviour which was a significant problem.

The Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) stressed the commitment in Cumbria for inclusive education. The strategy was to think collectively and identify the reasons why children were excluded and what could be done to keep them in

school. The Assistant Director Children & Young People commented on the work undertaken to keep children in school.

Members were informed about pathways to the future; children could be taken out of school and given a different kind of education, such as home schooling which would help the child and reduce the number of exclusions as the child would be taught at the level they wanted.

It was questioned if the accommodation of young people from out of county and educated in Cumbria was exacerbating the problem of rising school exclusions. The Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive) outlined the inclusion policy for all children and young people. He advised that good schools were needed, provision should meet need and that there was recourse with the local authority where the child came from if the child was excluded. The Assistant Director Children and Young People stated that in terms of private residential care, this was being reviewed as it was expensive.

It was queried what happened when there was a disruptive child at an Academy as the County Council had no jurisdiction in the matter. How many children were excluded from Academies, what type of education they then received and the number of children then opting for home schooling would be circulated to members. The Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive) advised on the limited powers of intervention but that there were avenues that could be pursued in these cases.

RESOLVED that,

- 1 A Deep Dive on School Exclusions be programmed into the work of the Board.
- 2 The School Governor training programme be circulated to members.
- 3 In the National Data 2016-17 the Cumbria Exclusion figure for FEX was 11.78%. Was this 1 in 9 children excluded or was it the same child. This information be circulated to members
- 4 How many children were excluded from Academies, what type of education they then received and how many children were then home schooled would be circulated to members.

17 CHILDREN'S IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Members considered a report from the Chair of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Advisory Board on the Children's Improvement Plan. The report provided the Board with an overview of how Scrutiny would be involved in reviewing the Plan.

Members were guided through the Plan and made observations on the content. It was queried whether the Joint Safeguarding Oversight Board would perform the same functions as the Children and Young People Scrutiny Advisory Board. The Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive) reported on the terms of reference for the Joint Safeguarding Oversight Board and gave the context for the Plan's development. He informed members about the quarterly telephone call he

had with the DfE, the administration involved in the work of improvement in the service area and the membership and work of the Joint Chairs' Group. The Terms of Reference for the Joint Safeguarding Oversight Board would be shared with members.

In reviewing the Plan, it was raised that two new indicators had been added which were both red (Number of cases open for 12 months plus where a reassessment has been initiated and CIN plans over 12 months plus (excluding SEND teams)). Further narrative was required on the indicators and the importance of monitoring the indicators was emphasised. The Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive) welcomed the challenging indicator as it helped with the direction of travel towards a 'Good' Ofsted inspection outcome.

In welcoming the Plan, a member questioned why it was anticipated that Child Sexual Exploitation would increase and why CLA with 3 or more placements in a year was expected to be maintained. The Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive) explained that the indicators had been set in the context of rising numbers of Children Looked After. He was aiming for a sufficient number of in house foster carers which may help in the reduction of placements. The Assistant Director Children and Young People commented that in terms of placement stability figures, Cumbria was below national and statistical neighbours figures. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services stated that nationally, the figures of CLA continued to increase but their needs still must to be met. In terms of CSE, a member highlighted that it was a new area of work. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services responded that partnership working was underway, for example, with the Cumbria Police and Crime Commissioner to address the growing issue of CSE.

A number of members mentioned the lack of diversity of the people in the pictures in the Plan. Officers would review this. It was queried why the number of Early Help Audits stepped up to Children's Services were anticipated to increase rather than decrease and in the three new KPIs relating to Social Workers, all the indicators identified that the figures would increase, which worried one member. The Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive) explained that Ofsted had identified that some children should have been placed higher in Early Help, therefore it was important that the right child was placed correctly. He highlighted that some Social Workers' targets had not been attained due to recording issues and was not related to people. This target was being addressed by Team Managers. Members were reassured that plans were in place that children were getting their needs met and that the council's priority was children and young people.

Members asked for an update on the target of 30 September 2018 for Improvement of Consistency in the Quality of Social Work Practice for Disabled Children as it would end before the next Children and Young People Scrutiny Advisory Board meeting. The Executive Director - People (Deputy Chief Executive) reported that he had been reassured that the targets were on track. In terms of the Improving Transition target (relating to the recent council restructure), the officer structure was under review and changes would take place by the end of the year. Members requested a written update on progress on the 30 September targets.

RESOLVED that,

- 1 The Terms of Reference for the Joint Safeguarding Oversight Board would be circulated to the Board
- 2 The Children's Improvement Plan be a standing item on each Children and Young People Scrutiny Advisory Board meeting
- 3 The Improvement Plan be received.
- 4 The diversity of the people in the Plan to be reviewed
- 5 A written response be provided to members regarding the targets for Improving Consistency in the Quality of Social Work Practice for Disabled Children.

18 YOUTH SERVICE PROVISION

A report was considered from the Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) regarding Youth Service Provision. The report provided a brief history of the Youth Service in Cumbria and summarised current provision.

The Assistant Director Children and Young People guided members through the key points of the report, including the elements of the service and a brief history and timeline of the service. Current provision was reported. This included the responsibility of Local Committees for universal youth provision. Cumbria Youth Alliance and its Service Delivery Plan and membership were reported and the in house Targeted Youth Support service and its role in early help work was outlined for members.

A member of Eden Local Committee who is also a member of the Local Committee's Children and Young People Working Group commented that he had not been made aware of the engagement issues in Eden. He was keen to support better engagement in the area. With regard to targeted youth support, he was not aware of which groups were operating in his community and felt that there needed to be better communication. An offer was made for the Cumbria Youth Alliance to attend a meeting of Eden Local Committee's Children and Young People Working Group. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services explained the mechanism for Local Committees' Children and Young People Working Group's to have Targeted Youth Support on their Agenda.

A member was keen to review the mapping exercise of youth provision in Eden and South Lakeland which would be undertaken by Cumbria Youth Alliance and Young Cumbria.

The Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) advised that he would be attending the Cumbria Youth Alliance AGM in September 2018 and offered to report back to members.

A member raised her concern about whether Targeted Youth Support was duplicating work undertaken by other Government initiatives such as that for troubled families and queried whether the staff who had returned to the County Council had been TUPE transferred. The Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) provided members with the history of the staff transfer and youth service

contractual change. He did not feel that the service duplicated the service provided by Government but would review and if so, would report back to members.

A member commented that not all children wanted to engage, even when a package such as youth clubs were offered and much effort is invested in putting the offer together.

RESOLVED that,

- 1 The current position and planned future of Youth Services in Cumbria be noted
- 2 The Board receive the information regarding the mapping of youth provision in Eden and South Lakeland by Cumbria Youth Alliance and Young Cumbria, when available
- 3 The Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive) to review whether Targeted Youth Support was duplicating work undertaken by other Government initiatives and report back as necessary

19 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

The portfolio update to the Board would be circulated by the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Officer after the meeting.

20 BOARD BRIEFING

Members considered the Board Briefing report from the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor. This provided an update of Board activity and notified the Board of items for the next Board meeting and any children related Cabinet decisions on the Forward Plan.

Members were guided through the report and noted the work that continued in the service area, led by the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor.

The Chair thanked Mr Brian Eaton who was no longer eligible to be a Parent Governor on the Board, for his invaluable input into the work of the Board. His knowledge and participation was welcomed. Mr Eaton commented that support for new Parent Governor Representatives was essential, in particular training on what would be expected of the person in the role. He considered that all political parties had respected each other and the respect for children and young people had also been good. He considered the work undertaken to support children and young people to be exemplary.

RESOLVED that,

- 1 The report be noted
- 2 The recommendations arising from the private meeting on the Youth Justice Strategy be agreed.
- 3 The Board be provided with a Youth Justice Strategy update in Spring 2019.
- 4 The recommendations for the private meeting on School's Admissions consultation be included in the Board Briefing in December 2018

- 5 A private meeting be convened to review the content of the Self Assessment for the SEND Local Inspection.

21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Board would be held on 7 December 2018 at 10.30am, Cumbria House, Carlisle.

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm