

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board - Children and Young People held on Monday, 23 September 2019 at 10.30 am at Committee Room 1, County Offices, Kendal

PRESENT:

Mrs V Tarbitt (Chair)

Mrs S Evans
Mr CP Turner
Mr P Dew

Mr AW Wonnacott
Mr W Clark
Mr GD Cook

Also in Attendance:-

Mr D Hamilton	-	Democratic Services Officer
Mr J Rasbash	-	Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor
Mr D Barton	-	Assistant Director - Education and Skills
Mr N Jarman	-	Interim Executive Director - People
Mrs F Musgrave	-	Assistant Director - Integration and Partnerships
Ms L Sanczuk	-	Senior Manager - Allerdale and Copeland (Neglect)

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

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mrs E Mallinson, Mrs C Bowditch and Dr K Lockney.

12 MEMBERSHIP

Members noted the retirement of Mr M Mill from the position of Director of Education for the Carlisle Diocese. As it is statutory to have two church representatives on the Board, Mr M Mill's retirement will necessitate a review of the membership so as to fill the vacancy.

13 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

There were no disclosures of interest made on this occasion.

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

RESOLVED that, the minutes of the meeting held on the 30 May 2019 be confirmed as an accurate and complete record with the following amendments:-

- Minute 6 - SEND Local Area Inspection - In relation to the findings reflected in the report that the phrase 'contradictory' be changed to read 'contested'.
- Minute 6 - SEND Local Area Inspection – That the word 'responsible' be added to the sentence that read "The Executive Director – People explained to members that the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Children's Trust Board will be primarily".

16 SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION

Members had before them a paper by the Interim Executive Director – People the purpose of which was to update the Board on the progress since the local area SEND inspection in March 2019.

The Assistant Director - Education and Skills explained to members the significant steps towards improvement already put in place by the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) which was published in August 2019 by Cumbria County Council and its partners.

Members were reminded of the key areas of concern, these were as follows:-

- Understanding of Need
- Leaders understanding of strengths and weaknesses
- Limited joint working including planning and commissioning
- Lack of trust and faith from parents and carers
- Limited co-production of services
- Weaknesses in approach to supporting emotional health and wellbeing
- Inconsistencies in approach to SEN Support
- Transition
- Inequities in access to and performance of services

The Assistant Director – Education and Skills then discussed the points of progress made since the inspection. These were as follows:-

- Appointment of Independent Chair for the SEND Improvement Board – Linda Clegg
- Formalised working group arrangements

- Developed and delivered the WSoA to the agreed deadline
- Published a page on the local offer for all information relating to SEND improvement
- Published first SEND e-bulletin

It was **AGREED** that a link to SEND improvement page of the local offer and the SEND e-bulletin be circulated to members of the board.

It was explained to members that the partners and the Council were aware that regaining the trust and confidence of the parent/carer community would be difficult and should not be underestimated.

Members enquired into Ofsted's response to the WSoA and discussed some of the feedback from the response. Ofsted had noted the content but stated that the timescales were not satisfactory as they were not ambitious enough, and that the timescales for implementing some of the actions in the plan will need to be revised. It was expected that a further update would arise from the first quarterly monitoring visit due to take place on 3 October 2019. As a result of the WSoA there will be a requirement to submit progress updates against each priority area of action.

Members raised concerns over a perceived lack of Alternative Provision in the east of the county and asked officers how this and Resourced Provision would fit into the plan to improve outcomes. The Assistant Director – Education and Skills stated Alternative Provision plans have had cabinet approval and that it seems likely that there will be discussions regarding Alternative Provision in the east in the near future. The Interim Executive Director – People spoke regarding the responsibilities of schools to recognise need from Young People's EHCP's and clarified what he stated was the Local Authorities responsibility to hold those schools to account.

Members discussed concerns regarding equitable service delivery and highlighted one particular area of the report which suggested that consistent ante natal visits carried out by the Healthy Child programme would take until January 2020 to implement. Officers told members that assurance would be sought from the relevant Working Group and it was **AGREED** that Scrutiny would receive a written update on the progress of improvements in health service inequalities before the next board.

Members requested an on-going report to Scrutiny and it was **AGREED** that a timeline for updating members be discussed with the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor.

The Assistant Director – Education and Skills was asked if there was any new challenges facing SEND this academic year and members were told that over recent years there has seen a 68% rise in EHCP's against the backdrop of falling budgets and reduced staff as a result of this the major challenges facing the service is management of expectation.

It was **RESOLVED** that,

- 1) Members note the contents of the report

- 2) Members seek further assurances that timescales are reflecting ambition, and in specific that the timescales for the Ante-Natal visits and the Healthy Child Programme are reviewed by Working Group 2: Commissioning and access to provision
- 3) The Chair of Scrutiny makes contact with the CEO of People First who is chairing Working Group 3: Engagement and co-production, to discuss how the Board can support the work of this group and access the views of families and users directly.

17 NEW SAFEGUARDING ARRANGEMENTS

Members considered a report from the Interim Executive Director – People outlining new Safeguarding Children’s Partnership (CSCP) arrangements.

The Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships explained to members that the implementation of The Children and Social Work Act 2017 has meant that LSCBs must now be replaced with new local safeguarding arrangements, led by three named statutory safeguarding partners (local authorities, chief officers of police, and NHS clinical commissioning groups).

In line with regulation Local Authorities and CCGs would share responsibility for child death reviews - these arrangements would continue to be delivered through the Child Death Overview Panel. The Serious Case Review arrangements replaced by Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews.

Members heard how arrangements at both a strategic and a local level were being used as an opportunity to strengthen governance and introduce Locality Safeguarding Groups to provide a greater connection and focus to front line practice and better oversight of the children and young people in the area. Members praised the focus on local areas and looked forward to seeing how the voice of young people would feed into the locality groups.

The Assistant Director – Integration and Partnerships explained to members that the Chair of the Scrutiny Advisory Board – Children and Young People was to remain a member of the Joints Chair Oversight Group and then highlighted the importance of working strategically with all partners to safeguard children. It was **AGREED** that an Annual Report from the CSCP be brought to the Scrutiny Advisory Board – Children and Young People. It was clarified that the report would be fed through from officers and the Chair but it was **AGREED** that the Board meet with the chairs of the newly formed locality groups.

A concern was raised regarding the safeguarding of out of county young people and the connection this may have to ‘county lines’ issue. The Interim Executive Director – People responded that it is likely that the prevalence of County Lines is greater than we think, and recommended we learn from a review into the issue that Dorset has carried out. It was **AGREED** that the Board receives a copy of this review. The Interim Executive Director – People was asked specifically about externally placing children in unregulated homes. He acknowledged members’ concerns regarding

this but explained that Cumbria does not have any young people placed in unregulated out of county homes. Officers assured members that when provision is available in Cumbria that special attention is paid to securing that provision for in county children and young people.

It was **RESOLVED** that,

- 1) Members note the report
- 2) Members to receive an update on their concerns about externally placed children and risk of exposure to County Lines as part of the Child Exploitation update due at the next Board.

18 OFSTED - 'HUB FOCUSED VISIT'

Members had before them a report from the Interim Executive Director – People which summarised the findings of Ofsted's two day focused visit of Cumbria's children's services. The Senior Manager – Children and Young People (CYP) Social Care explained to members that Ofsted Inspectors looked at arrangements for the single point of contact for families and professionals seeking advice and support. They also considered the effectiveness of strategy discussions and child protection enquiries, the quality of assessments and early help plans, thresholds for the transfer of work to early help services and the response to 16-17-year-olds who present as homeless.

The last full Ofsted inspection took place in 2017 when the overall judgement was raised from inadequate to requires improvement (with good for leadership & management and adoption). Members acknowledged that the new framework for inspection means that two 'short focused visits' take place between full inspections and that these visits would not result in an overall 'grading'.

Members heard the Inspectors major findings which were as follows: -

- No priority areas for action were raised as a result of this visit.
- Many areas of strength were highlighted which demonstrated continuing improvement.
- Some areas requiring continued focus were identified including the response to CYP who present as homeless and the addressing of capacity issues in certain areas.

The Senior Manager continued by highlighting the strengths in the areas of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, the Safeguarding practice, the model of practice, management oversight as well as performance, management and quality assurance.

Members sought assurance that the service will continue to build upon these strengths, they then asked for further detail regarding the areas for improvement. These areas were as follows:-

- Capacity and stability of workforce leading, in some cases, to inconsistent practice
- Children's identity need in assessment in need of more exploration
- Improvement needed in the assessment of the needs of young people who present as homeless
- Ensuring audit actions are completed in a timely way.

Members asked for clarification regarding the meaning of a 'child's identity need', especially in regard to questions of gender and ethnicity. It was explained that the implication of this was that the service needed to explore the impact of a CYP's economic, social and emotional need further at the point of assessment. It was **AGREED** that the Corporate Parenting Board should look into how identity was being taken into account as part of needs assessment.

A discussion then took place about staffing and the incentives that been put in place so as to attract and retain staff. The Senior Manager stressed that financial incentives were not the most important factor for Social Workers. She explained that this avenue would continue to be explored in conjunction with promotion of travel incentives and improved levels of support to staff.

Members raised concerns about whether absence and sickness was a large part of the issue regarding work force stability. It was **AGREED** that a full breakdown of staff absence be circulated to the Board.

An in depth discussion about Externally Provided Workers (EPWs) took place and it was acknowledged that the service had taken steps towards investment in its permanent workforce through the social workers academy.

After concerns were raised regarding CYP presenting as homeless it was **AGREED** that a detailed report be brought to a future meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that,

- 1) Members note the report
- 2) Members to receive information on staff absence, turnover and vacancies
- 3) Corporate Parenting Board to look into how identity is being taken into account, and to review housing provision
- 4) The Board to review the new contracts for homelessness and housing provision for 16-25 year olds once they have been let.

19 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Members heard verbal updates from portfolio holders - the Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning Cabinet Member and Children's Services respectively.

Topics covered were:-

- SEND Written Statement of Action
- National Funding Formula
- Schools Forum
- Alternative Provision consultation
- Executive Director Interim Appointment and transition
- Regional Adoption Agency
- Corporate Parenting meeting dates
- The role of Local Committee C&YP Champions
- The opening of new residential accommodation.

It was **AGREED** that the Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor report to the Board with the timetable of a national review on SEND improvement Working Groups.

It was **AGREED** that that a site visit of a new residential accommodation site take place prior to residents moving in.

Members thanked the portfolio holders.

20 BOARD BRIEFING

Members considered a report from the Executive Director – Corporate, Customer and Community Service with the purpose of updating the Board on the relevant items in the Cabinet Forward Plan.

The Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor talked members through the report and highlighted that the next Board meeting will take place in December and the following items are currently on the agenda:-

- Mental Health
- Child Exploitation
- Disadvantage in Schools
- 2019 GCSE and A-Level Attainment

Members **AGREED** the following items be added to the Board's Forward Plan:-

- Autism
- Preparation for adulthood
- Young person presentation regarding climate change
- Youth parliament led discussion

It was **RESOLVED** that, Members note the report.

21 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board – Children and Young People will take place on 20 December 2019 in Conference Room A/B, Cumbria House, Carlisle.

The meeting ended at 12:30pm