

SCRUTINY ADVISORY BOARD - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of a Meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board - Children and Young People held on Tuesday, 12 February 2019 at 10.30 am at Committee Room 1 - County Offices, Kendal, LA9 4RQ

PRESENT:

Mrs V Tarbitt (Chair)

Mrs C Bowditch
Mr W Clark
Mr GD Cook
Mr P Dew
Ms C Driver

Mrs S Evans
Mrs C Johnston
Mrs EA Mallinson
Mr CP Turner

Also in Attendance:-

Mr D Barton	-	Assistant Director - Education and Skills
Ms S Curran	-	Senior Manager- Workforce Professional Development
Ms E Curtis	-	Senior Manager - Children Looked After Provider Services
Ms J Fletcher	-	Barnado's – Children's Services Manager
Mr D Hamilton	-	Democratic Services Officer
Ms L McKie	-	Audit and Practice Development Manager
Mr J Rasbash	-	Strategic Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

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

33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Mr B Shirley (Vice-Chair).

34 MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes in membership made on this occasion.

35 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Mrs E Mallinson declared that her son worked for Barnado's who were delivering a presentation as Item 8 of the agenda.

36 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that, the press and public be admitted to the meeting for all items of business.

37 MINUTES

It was **RESOLVED** that, the minutes of the meeting held on 7 December 2018 be confirmed as a correct record with the following amendments: -

- Mrs C Johnson and Mr L N Fisher be added to the attendees of that meeting.
- Minute 28 – Resolved Item 2 should read – The Director of Public Health provide the Board with a briefing on breastfeeding and the rationale for increasing as a policy goal, as well as progress in delivery of the alcohol strategy.

38 SOCIAL WORK ACADEMY AND SOCIAL WORK RECRUITMENT

The Board was provided with an update on Social Work Recruitment and the progress of the Social Work Academy. The report provided an update on both experienced Social Work recruitment and entry level Academy intake for Child and Young People's Social Work.

The Social Work Academy strategy began in 2015 and has worked alongside the recruitment of experienced social workers and the conversion of EPW's to full time staff. The Senior Manager described the recent success in the application for Department of Education funding and ongoing work with University of Cumbria and the Continuing Personal Development initiative with Lancaster University.

Referring to the career progression of candidates enrolled in the Academy, it was highlighted that a fifth of the intake do not go on to become Social Workers for Cumbria. The response of the Workforce Professional Development Manager was that the assessment process was thorough and staff worked closely with the university and were present on the intake panels. In their time with the Academy, learners would undergo formal interviews, training frameworks and emotional assessments.

She said the Academy aimed to create resilient Social Workers and so it was likely that a small proportion would not complete the course or would not go on to become Social Workers. However, some of the intake move into similar fields such as Fostering and Adoption.

Members asked for clarification regarding the average profile of an applicant and whether there was any incentive for staff working through an Agency as opposed to the Local Authority.

The WPD Manager told members that over the last 2 intakes there was a gender balance, the team and the Universities had been working together and would continue to work together to encourage males in to the profession. There was a balance too, she said, between younger Bachelor Degree graduates and more experienced Master's Degree level and both were provided with the support they need. In relation to External Provided Workers, the WPD Manager confirmed that it does pay more to work for an Agency but she highlighted to members that for a lot of those staff members it is lifestyle choice. She went on to say that 12 EPW's had been converted to a full time contract (from the period 1 March 2017 – 31 December 2018) due to the offer of incentives which secure their employment for 3 years.

Members asked whether more incentives need to be offered to increase the volume of experienced staff recruitments. It is explained that the Executive Director had been discussing this with Service Managers and is currently under review as they would like more research to be done.

The Board discussed the National Apprenticeship in Social Work which soon will be offered and discussed further possibilities involving Care Leaver recruitment to roles through the Apprenticeship Scheme.

The report was **NOTED** and the Chair thanked the Workforce Professional Development Manager for the informative report.

It was **RESOLVED** that,

- 1) Members receive a 6 monthly update from the Executive Director – People (Deputy Chief Executive)
- 2) The Workforce Professional Development Manager be invited to update in Spring 2020.

39 CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION UPDATE

The Board received a presentation from the Service Manager – Children and Families which provided an update on work to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation in Cumbria and highlighted the following areas:-

- What did Ofsted say – 2017
- Recent Actions taken/progress to date
- What does CSE in Cumbria look like today?
- Current Plans and Priorities

A range of actions have been taken since the last Ofsted Inspection, including the introduction of specific CSE mandatory training and themed audits. This has led to improved levels of awareness across the partnership and an increase in the

numbers of children being identified as being at risk of exploitation. There is also greater and improved use of risk assessments to routinely identify and review levels of risk for children.

The strategic plan for CSE and Missing From Home has recently been updated and the remit of Missing, Exploited and Trafficked has been widened so that the focus is not solely Sexual Exploitation and this has been reflected in the Risk Assessment Tool.

The Service Manager explains that a notable change in strategy is regarding children and young people who may previously have been moved out of county. The new strategy accounts for the fact that young people may try and go back and that this would increase their risk.

Members asked if enough was being done regarding the perpetrators who are often relocated and prone to reoffend. The Service Manager – Children and Families explained to members that they work very closely with the police and share intelligence. Together they work very hard to disrupt exploitation where it occurs. However, she said, a lot of exploitation will now happen online which is made aspects of the work more difficult for the police.

A conversation then took place about online exploitation and members and officers discuss ways to raise parental awareness of the threats. The Assistant Director - Education & Skills outlined the difficulties faced by the County Council in mitigating this problem.

The Service Manager brought to members attention the successful reduction of Child Sexual Exploitation in looked after children who had once been at highest risk. When discussing future work it was highlighted that the most important progress would be made in the improvement of training and on the cascading of that training to third sector youth providers.

It was **RESOLVED** that,

- 1) Members receive an update on progress of Protocol with Local Authorities placing children in Cumbria.
- 2) Board carry out a Deep Dive on Digital Wellbeing.

40 BEING A CHILD IN CUMBRIA

Members had before them a report from Barnado's which presented the views and experiences of 6,000 Cumbrian children aged 8-12. Barnado's published the report based on extensive questionnaires with the intention of facilitating an opportunity for young people to meet with key decision makers in the county and share with them their experiences as a child living in Cumbria.

The Barnado's Children's Services Manager explained that an event was to be held in Spring 2019 where professionals and representatives could provide a tangible

response to the children's views. The Service Manager invited members to the 'You Said: We did...' event and confirmed that it would be held on 23 March at Richard Rose Central Academy.

Members applauded Barnado's for providing such an extensive source and for promoting an aspirational vision for the children of Cumbria and discussed joint commissioning opportunities and the need for the findings to be explored in Local Committee Area Planning.

The Service Manager was asked to explain some of the most surprising findings. She told members that in the majority of the county when children were asked 'what worries them?' they gave somewhat general responses. However, this was different in Barrow and Copeland where worries were more closely linked to safeguarding issues. She went on to highlight that when children were asked 'what do you want?' they largely responded with things that they wanted for other people for example 'no poverty'.

The report highlights another view which is brought to the member's attention regarding the question 'who would you talk to about your problems?' The children's responses revealed that as a whole more guidance for children could be needed in discerning what a child should be telling an adult in certain situations. This was because a larger percentage of children answered that if they were upset they would instead speak to a friend or peer.

Members thanked the Barnado's Children's Services Manager and showed their support for the continued dialogue around the report's findings.

It was **RESOLVED** that,

- 1) Board Members to receive invitation to the You Said: We Did event at Richard Rose Central Academy on Saturday 23 March 2019.
- 2) Cabinet Member for Children's Services to take the Report to Corporate Parenting Board, the LSCB and Children's Trust Board to see how the findings should be addressed by Services.
- 3) Board to refer to Local Committees to use the report for Area Planning, and to have an opportunity to hear from Barnardo's.
- 4) Board to refer the high levels of hospital admissions for children in Cumbria to the Health Scrutiny Board.

41 PORTFOLIO HOLDER UPDATE

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

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services briefed the Board on the ongoing work of the Corporate Parenting Board which included updates on the Children Looked After and Care Leaver's Plan, the Public Health 0-19 Healthy Child Programme and the Regional Adoption Agency Full Business Case.

The Cabinet Member for Schools and Learning gave updates on recent work carried out to secure alternative provision places and promote early intervention strategies so as to reduce the number of looked after children school exclusions. She then briefed members on the progress made to assist special schools in supporting young people with social and emotional mental health needs.

Members of the board discussed the 'Increase Funding for Schools' petition and the disappointment felt by local head teachers regarding central Government funding which had not kept pace with inflation.

The Chair thanked the portfolio holders for their updates.

42 BOARD BRIEFING

It was **RESOLVED** that, the report informing members of new and updated items of significance to the Board (including relevant aspects of the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions) be **NOTED**.

43 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Advisory Board – Children and Young People will be held on 30 May 2019 in Conference Room A/B, Cumbria House, Carlisle.

The meeting ended at 12.35 pm