



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
HELD IN THE  
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH  
ON**

**3 AUGUST 2010**

**Present:** Councillors Thacker MBE (Chairman), Saltmarsh, S Day, Jamil

**Also present** Chantelle Jackson Youth Inspector  
Madiha Qaisar Youth Inspector

**Officers in Attendance:** John Richards Executive Director of Children's Services  
Sue Mitchell Associate Director, Health Improvement  
Andrew Brunt Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Families and Communities  
Paulina Ford Performance Scrutiny and Research Officer  
Elaine Lewis Lawyer

**1. Apologies for absence**

Apologies had been received from Councillor Wilkinson, Councillor Lowndes and Alistair Kingsley, Parent Governor Representative.

**2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations**

There were no declarations of interest.

**3. Minutes of meeting held on 21 June 2010**

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2010 were approved as an accurate record.

**4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions**

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

**5. Children's Trust - Be Healthy Partnership**

The Executive Director of Children's Services introduced the Associate Director for Health Improvement and advised the Committee that her role was important in integrating Health Services and Children's Services. She had a key responsibility for ensuring health outcomes for young people.

The report provided the Committee with detail on the Be Healthy Partnership element of the Children's Trust. Included in the report was a list of the National Indicators which showed the current performance for the Be Healthy outcome. The key areas of focus for 2010/11 were:

- Emotional wellbeing of children and young people (including child and adolescent mental health services)
- Reduction of teenage conceptions and Sexual Health
- Healthy weight

- Drug and alcohol misuse

As part of the presentation two Youth Inspectors talked to the Committee about the Youth Inspector Programme and their recent inspection of the NHS Walk in Centre. The Youth Inspector Programme aimed to give young people the chance to look at services available in their area and feedback their views from a young person's perspective. The Youth Inspectors remit for the inspection was to answer five questions:

1. Was the service accessible?
2. Was the service welcoming?
3. Was it clear what the service did?
4. How satisfied were young people with the service?
5. How were young people involved in the service?

Based on their findings from the inspection recommendations were made to the service provider.

The Committee asked the Youth Inspectors questions about their recent inspection.

- Why was an inspection of the Walk-in Service undertaken? They responded that it was because some of their friends had used it but a lot of young people had not and they were hoping to find out why.
- Why was one of the recommendations that there should be more services for males? They responded that the services offered seemed to be mainly targeted at women and they felt that there should be similar services offered to men e.g. advice on Chlamydia.
- What research methods were used during the inspection? They responded that it was mainly by talking to the people who ran the services and the service users.
- Did the inspectors feel that the recommendations will make a difference? They responded that they had given the service a six month target to take action on their recommendations. They would then go back to in six months to see what impact the recommendations had made.
- How were people advised about the Youth Inspection Programme? They responded that they had produced a newsletter called 'Inspectorated' which went out to young people and service areas. The Children's Trust sponsored the Youth Inspection programme and ensured that the work being done was communicated across the services.
- What other services had been inspected and what services would the inspectors like investigate? They responded that they had inspected the Central Library and would like to inspect Peterborough Time Stop, the Police and housing services.

The Committee thanked the Youth Inspectors for their excellent presentation and wished them success with the Youth Inspectors Programme. The Chair invited them to come back to the Committee at a date in the future to report on other inspections that may be relevant to the Committee.

Observations and questions regarding the report were raised and discussed including:

- The Committee felt that the information on the National Indicators was unclear and difficult to understand. They requested that all future statistical information should be presented in an easier format with a definition of the indicator, an indication of what 'good' looks like and figures presented in numbers rather than percentages where possible. The Associate Director for Health Improvement advised that she would ensure this information was provided after the meeting and when reporting in the future.
- The performance of NI 50 - emotional health of children was declining. What actions were being taken to address this and what did the percentages mean? Members were informed that the information came from the Tell Us Survey which was a nationally run survey of young people in years 6, 8 and 10. In Peterborough there was over 1100 young people surveyed every year. The survey asked a number of questions like:

- How many friends do you have?
- Do you know who to talk to when you have an issue?
- Do you have an adult to confide in?

Once the answers were pulled together they were then converted into a percentage. The indicator was very volatile as it looked at a different cohort of young people every year which therefore produced variations each year. The performance was currently declining and this was being looked into. Funding of over £200k had been provided for a pilot project in one of the schools to support young people with particular needs. This would be monitored to see what effect it had and then possibly used in other schools.

- Members noted that NI 52 - take up of school lunches was not performing as well as the National Average and wanted to know if this was due to menu changes and healthy options on school menus. Members were informed that some of this was associated with free school meals and the stigma attached to them. Some schools were now introducing a Cashless Catering System (based on fingerprint recognition) which meant that there was no differentiation between paying students and those entitled to free school meals. It had been proven that schools that used this system had a noticeable increase in the up take of free school meals.
- In diverse schools the menu might not be what some children were used to eating. How was this being monitored? The Executive Director of Children's Services was not aware of how this was done but would find out and report back to the Committee.
- What had been the impact of the targeted mental health in the schools programme? What was the measure for these statistics and how was it calculated and what was the scope of the variables included? Members were advised that this was a fairly new programme and that a report could be brought back to the Committee on the project at a later date. It had only recently got started and was a partnership programme with the school.
- The performance of NI57 - participation in PE and Sport in schools. Was there any follow up work undertaken to encourage those children who regularly did not participate in PE as there could be a link between non participation in PE and childhood obesity. Members were informed that staff were using innovative ways of promoting physical activity in schools and extra curricular activities. Persistent deferrers from physical activity were monitored and looked at on a personalised individual basis. The National Child Measurement Programme which required the measurement of children in reception and year 6 now also required staff to contact parents to let them know the measurement of their child and to give advice for those children who were obese. They would then be connected to a programme to support healthy eating and various activities as a family as part of the personalised programme. This year 108 children had been classed as obese in reception and 265 in year 6 and final figures would be produced in December. The aim of the programmes that had been developed was to target children as they were coming through primary school and to work with their families.
- How did officers encourage families to start on the programmes? Programmes were advertised through schools, children's centres and other professionals who worked with children. Individuals were either referred to the programme or they joined the programme through their own initiative. Recruitment was currently taking place for three programmes for children aged 2 to 4, 5 to 10 and 11 to 17. There was less take up with older children as there tended to be less parental involvement at that age. There was also a programme called the Health Steps Programme which was delivered to young people in disadvantaged communities and particularly targeted young people within the Pakistani community. This programme had been commissioned by the Princes Trust and funded by the Islamic Development Bank. The Peterborough Primary Care Trust was the first to pilot the project.
- How was the target for NI112 – Under 18 conception rates set? Members were advised that the target was based on the 1998 figures. A target had been set by the health authority to reduce teenage conception rates by 55% by 2010. This was a challenge and was unlikely to be reached as 140 young women had become pregnant in the last year

which was a reduction of 50 from the previous year. Health colleagues were now starting to target young men to ensure that they were also taking responsibility.

- Could more detail on the statistics for drug and alcohol misuse be given? Members were informed that the measurement was based on the number of young people who came for treatment and how successful they were at moving through their journey to eventually be successfully discharged. The National Treatment Agency who had completed an inspection had stated that performance was good as 80% of the young people who started treatment had completed their programmes, which was an improvement from last year.

### **ACTION AGREED**

That the Executive Director of Children's Services and the Associate Director for Health Improvement:

- i. Ensure that future performance reporting on the National Indicators includes background information to explain the definition, method for measurement, data source and what good performance looks like for each indicator. Where performance is listed as a percentage, the number that the percentage represents should also be provided.
- ii. Provide a briefing note incorporating detailed background information on the National Indicators for the Be Healthy outcome of the Children's Trust.
- iii. To report back to the Committee in six months time on the progress of actions being taken to improve the Be Healthy outcome.
- iv. To report to the committee at a future meeting on the impact of the implementation in schools of the Cashless Catering System.
- v. To provide a briefing note on how diverse schools are monitoring what children are choosing to eat for school dinners and whether the menu options are suitable for diverse schools.
- vi. To report back to the Committee at a future meeting on the impact of the targeted Mental Health in the Schools Programme.

## **6. Safeguarding and Children in Care Services - Progress Report on the Children's Service Development Plan**

The Executive Director of Children's Services introduced Andrew Brunt the new permanent Assistant Director for Safeguarding, Families and Communities who had joined the Council in July. The Committee were advised that the report format had changed since the last report and showed the current performance and direction of travel of each of the Ofsted notices to improve.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members noted that the Social Care vacancy rate was still high and wanted to know what the challenges were in recruiting social workers. Members were informed that there was a national shortage of social workers but it was hoped that in time Peterborough would become the local authority of choice. Most of the vacant posts were being covered by agency staff and there was also a rolling programme in place which helped with succession planning. Peterborough had already started to build a good reputation with the grow your own bursary and trainee schemes and there were currently 19 newly qualified social workers. The recruitment programme was highly structured and would be moving to an assessment centre model to ensure ongoing recruitment activity.

Reactivating a talent pool on the PCC website was also under consideration to enable people to register their interest in becoming a social worker. The aim was to move to the point where there were 5 permanent staff and 7 agency staff in place so that there was 12 full time staff.

- What was the gender and racial balance of the team? Members were advised that social work was traditionally a female profession with less men training to be social workers.
- Was Peterborough on target to recruit 19 newly qualified social workers by November? The social workers had already been enrolled.
- What had been done in terms of notifying people in care about the complaints policy? Members were advised that people in care were notified through their social workers and when they had their review. Advice on how to complain was also available in an information pack which was given to new children coming into care.
- Why had the figure fallen for the percentage of children with a disability allocated to a worker and was this a symptom of resource shortages? Members were advised that it was an issue that changed depending on the number of children coming into the system and the nature of their disabilities. The officer was not aware of a capacity issue within the team and therefore all children would be allocated to existing workers. In some cases there would be shared arrangements between specialist workers.
- The report indicated that performance with regard to children who were subject to a child protection plan for a second time had worsened and was this something that we should be concerned about? Members were advised that this tended to be about children who were under a child protection plan from early in their life and then came off the register but then were put back on the register later in their life. The maximum length of time for children to be on a child protection plan was no longer than two years. If they were still on a plan after that time then other ways of protection would be sought which could mean taking them out of their family and into care. If the position had not changed within a month or two then a further detailed report would be provided.
- How quick was the process for investigating a child protection concern once it had been raised? Members were informed that it would be carried out within the same working day but there were some circumstances when that would not be possible e.g. if the child was missing.
- Were officers able to confirm whether they were on track to improve the items raised as unsatisfactory by Ofsted? The Executive Director of Children's Services assured Members that work was underway and as reported to the Committee significant improvements had been made with timeliness and translation of referrals into initial assessments. Quality was being monitored really carefully however the last audit of initial assessments had showed that there were still some issues to be addressed, for example 5 out of 19 children had not been seen by a social worker. The teams had been talked to and were addressing those issues which should result in improvement at the next audit. Vigilant monitoring and training and development of the workforce continued. There would be more confidence once a permanent workforce was in place.
- The electronic reporting system was showing ongoing delays but what was the target date for implementation? It was still on target for implementation by April 2011.

## **ACTION AGREED**

That the committee continues to receive regular progress reports on the Safeguarding and Children in Care Services Development Plan.

## **7. Scrutiny Big Debate - Issues Paper**

The report provided the Committee with information regarding the outcomes of the Scrutiny Big Debate held on 4 February at the City College Peterborough.

The Scrutiny Big Debate involved an investigation by the four Scrutiny Committees in to how the economic downturn had affected the City in terms of its aspirations for growth, levels of crime, requirements to support vulnerable people and its credentials for environmental

sustainability with particular reference to transport. It was a pioneering piece of work that had been designed and delivered in consultation with the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

The scope of the review for the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee had been to look at how vulnerable adults and children were being supported in light of the economic climate and finite resources.

The event involved a panel of guest speakers from various organisations who gave their point of view on areas that had been affected by the downturn in economy. Four young people also attended who were classed as 16 to 18 year olds not in education, training or employment (NEET) to give their point of view of how they had been affected by the economic downturn. The audience were invited to challenge the panel on their points of view and this provoked lots of discussion. The Committee were now asked to delegate to the Group Representatives consideration of which items should be added to the Committee's work programme.

#### **ACTION AGREED**

- (i) To note the outcomes from the Scrutiny Big Debate.
- (ii) To delegate to the Group Representatives consideration of which items should be added to the Committee's work programme.
- (iii) To receive an update on the progress of the outcomes at a future meeting.

#### **8. Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

#### **ACTION AGREED**

The Committee noted the Forward Plan and agreed that there were no items to bring to the Committee.

#### **9. Work Programme**

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2010/2011 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

#### **ACTION AGREED**

To confirm the work programme for 2010/11 and the Scrutiny Officer to make any amendments as discussed during the meeting.

The meeting began at 7.00 and ended at 8.35pm

CHAIRMAN