



**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON MONDAY, 12 SEPTEMBER 2016**

Present: Councillors Aitken (Chairman), Peach, Rush, Bisby, Shearman, and Fower.

Cabinet Member: Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member Children's Services

Also present: Alistair Kingsley, Independent Co-opted Member
Liz Youngman, Peterborough Diocesan Board of Education

Officers in Attendance: Wendi Ogle Welbourn, Corporate Director People and Communities
Lou Williams, Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding
Ian Phillips, Senior Policy Manager
Tina Hornsby, Head of Performance and Informatics
Sheelagh Sullivan, Head of SEN and Inclusion
Russell Wate, Independent Chair of Children's Safeguarding Board
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from the Co-opted Member, Miranda Robinson, Liz Youngman was in attendance as a substitute.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of Interests or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 July 2016

The minutes of the meetings held on 18 July 2016 were approved as a true and accurate record.

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

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

The Committee agreed to discuss agenda item six Send Reforms Update next.

5. SEND Reforms – Update (Special Education Needs & Disability)

The Head of SEN and Inclusion introduced the report to the Committee, which summarised the progress of the LA's implementation of the SEND reforms. The Head of SEN and Inclusion also advised Members that the SEND reforms CQC inspection was a new inspection regime to assess the SEND services for young people.

The Head of SEN and Inclusion responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- The EHCP of 2% was a general figure to meet the national requirement, however, the LA had measured 3% of EHCPs requests, which had demonstrated that there was an increase in requests.
- The 3% figure for EHCP requests had been steady however, new Government guidance was due and the impact would be communicated to members in future reports.
- The recourses for EHCP was provided by a Government grant source to apply for extra funding for staff and an application had been made to fund the resources to the end of financial year.
- The transfer review arrangements had been an additional staff resource, however, once the transfer review had been completed there would be no requirement for additional staff.
- The waiting time for a child to be assessed by an educational phycologist could take up to five weeks, however, an initial assessment would be undertaken by the school and the phycology service to discuss the needs of the child within a two week period in order to recommend interim action whilst awaiting a phycologist interview.
- The SEND reforms consultation, which had been recently carried out through the Family Voice group, included certain professionals such as schools, as well as parents.
- There had been clear guidance provided to schools over whether an application should be made for a child to receive an EHCP assessment, which had helped to ease tension for schools. There was an appeal process in place for schools should they disagree with the LA's decision over an EHCP assessment outcome.
- The LA was experiencing resource issues for Educational Phycologists, which had been due to the difficulty in recruitment to the vacant posts, however, the LA was providing three visits to schools per year.
- The aim was for the LA to provide EP visits to schools once a term totalling 6 visits per school each year.
- The review of specialist provisions such as for the dyslexia services had been reduced as the schools were well practiced in conducting a diagnoses. The LA would increase resources to other areas that schools required such as dedicated SEND advisory support rather than a centralised service through the LA.
- The LAs completion of EHCPs on time was 76% which was a national average, however, the LA had aimed to raise this to 90%.
- An Assistant Educational Phycologist (AEP) post was a doctorate level and the LA aimed to employ graduates with a first and second qualification. The LA usually received around 50 applicants to apply for the EP course. The graduates would be supervised by EPs to gain the necessary EP skills and undertake some duties on behalf of the EPs. The LA would sponsor the AEP graduates throughout the three year course and would aim to appoint them once fully qualified. The LA hoped to retain fully qualified EPs by offering an attractive retention package as well as provision of development in areas of the AEPs specialist interests.
- The comments raised by Members over the use of acronyms would be taken on board when producing future reports.

AGREED ACTION

The Committee noted the contents of the report and agreed to schedule for any further updates.

The Committee also requested that the Head of SEN would include information in regards to whether the figures for completion of EHCPs assessments increased or decreased following the implementation of new Government guidance in a future report.

6. Service Director And Portfolio Overview Report: Children & Safeguarding, Including An Update On The Ofsted Action Plan

The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding introduced the report to Members, which provided an overview of the key activities within the portfolio of the Service Director for Children and Safeguarding, as well as a summary of key performance information in respect of Children's Social Care as of the end of July 2016, the most recent available performance data. Members were also advised by the Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding that there had been an additional resource impact for the First Response team through the summer due the LA's work with the police on operation Dunholt.

The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- The Targeted Youth Support Service would work to identify vulnerable young people including those who may be at risk of Child Sex Exploitation (CSE) in order to prevent them being drawn into a network of abusive adults. CSE was an issue that affected all communities, and focused on particular communities either as likely victims or perpetrators would make it more likely that indications of CSE may be missed in other communities.
- Contacts and referrals into Children's Social Care remains quite high, and many of these do not proceed to an assessment or intervention by a social worker. New guidance about when to refer children to Children's Social Care had been developed through the Safeguarding Children Board, in consultation with a wide range of partner agencies, and these were due to be launched later in September 2016. These revised guidelines it had been hoped would help to reduce the numbers of contacts and referrals being made to Children's Social Care unnecessarily.
- The reduction of children in care statement that had been outlined in 6.3 of the report was in relation to the application of the Family Safeguarding bid to the DfE in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council and three other authorities in order to identify children that were at significant risk of harm, which was hoped to reduce the number of children coming into care. The unaccompanied asylum seekers coming into care was a separate figure and the Government was drafting policy to state that no authority look after more unaccompanied asylum seeking young people than 0.07% of the total local child population aged between 0-71. It had been anticipated that since Peterborough was currently looking after about this number of unaccompanied asylum seeking (AS) children and young people, the LA should not experience an increase in AS children coming into care over and above current numbers.
- The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service had been historically under resourced and there was work underway to increase resources and capacity in a sustainable way. Similar work was planned in respect of speech and language therapy services, which had also been underfunded historically.
- The Children in Care Board were exploring the reasons behind why CiC were not attending dental health checks, but in most cases this had been about older young people refusing to attend.
- The LA was working on identifying a dedicated dental practice for CiC dental health checks.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services advised Members that the provision of a dedicated dental practice for CiC was a high priority to resolve.
- The management of both adults' and children's social care quality assurance functions outlined in 4.1 of the report had been transferred to one Head of Services as part of the People and Communities department restructure in order to align services.

- The Family Safeguarding bid outlined in 6.2 for the report was for 18 months funding and the LAs would be required to demonstrate that the approach undertaken to reduce the number of child protection plans and children coming into care had been successful rather than to apply for further funding.
- Cambridge was not included in the bid for innovation funding to the DFE as only a small number of authorities would be likely to achieve funding and the indications were that a bid from an ethnically diverse and relatively deprived urban council area was more in line with what was being looked for in terms of evidencing the impact of the Family Safeguarding approach.
- The Social Worker vacancy rate had been reduced and the family safeguarding services approach had demonstrated to be successful in retention.
- There had been a high level of annual leave during the summer and extra resource implications in order to undertake operation Dunholt, which had impacted on some areas of performance.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee:

- Noted the content of this report, and in particular those areas where good performance was being sustained, while noting continuing actions being taken to address areas where performance remained inconsistent;
- Supported the bid for innovation funding to support the development of family safeguarding and motivational interviewing in children's social care services in Peterborough as a means of securing sustainable improvements in outcomes for our most vulnerable children and families; and
- Support the moves to develop a dedicated youth service to work with young people displaying a range of behaviours that may place them at risk of harm.

The Committee also requested that the Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding provide information in relation to which children in care were not attending or refusing dental checks within future reports.

7. Draft Child Poverty Strategy

The Senior Policy Manager and the Head of Performance and Informatics introduced the report to Members, which summarised the draft strategy and needs assessment.

The Senior Policy Manager and the Head of Performance and Informatics responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- The consultation on the strategy was undertaken with a range of voluntary and community organisations who represented children and parents, had reinforced the information known to the team and had particularly highlighted the issue of families that were not in poverty that had moved into poverty following a family breakdown.
- A review would be undertaken to produce meaningful performance indicators, which would be reported to the Health and Wellbeing Board and Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee in future.
- There had been an earlier draft version of the Child Poverty Strategy however, it was not officially adopted. The one presented at the meeting was a new strategy.
- Varied LA teams would contribute to oversee the work and progress of the Poverty Strategy. The LA's Senior Policy Manager would oversee and report on the performance figures of the CPS.

- There had been a previous poverty strategy developed by the former Children's Services. The new CPS would incorporate a crosscutting review from all service areas.
- Members would receive regular briefing notes on the progress and performance of the CPS.
- The Selective Licensing Policy and the Prevention and Enforcement Services would impact on housing issues that may affect children's education, with the aim to provide a better place to study.
- There were a number of groups such as schools, food banks and faith groups that were consulted over the draft CPS.
- Website development plans were underway to provide direct and appropriate support to people that were experiencing a number of situations such as debt issues.
- The use of Pupil Premium was included in the CPS in an inherent way by the work of LA departments.
- Regular meetings were being held between the LA and Regional Schools Commissioner in order to provide early alerts of schools where there had been concern about schools progress.
- The term citizenship used in the report was intended to provide a broader statement in order to develop young people to become young adults.
- Accountability for the progress of the CPS would be captured by performance indicators.

RECOMMENDATION.

To review the implementation of guidance and best practice in terms of its use for Pupil Premium and free school meals.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Committee:

1. Endorsed the Child Poverty Strategy for presentation to Cabinet for approval and;
2. Agreed the plans for further development of the strategy.

The Committee also requested that the Senior Policy Manager would:

1. Confirm whether Members were consulted in regards to the draft Poverty Strategy;
2. Provide a briefing note to demonstrate how best practice guidance for pupil premium had been utilised effectively; and
3. Provide a briefing note on the number of places currently required to accommodate parents returning to work through the 30 hour childcare entitlement scheme.

8. Annual Report Of The Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board 2015/16

The Independent Chair of Children's Safeguarding Board introduced the report to the Committee, which was an annual report published in accordance with a statutory requirement under Working Together 2015 in regards to the work undertaken by PSCB. Members were also informed that the PSCB annual report was also shared with the Leader of the Council.

The Independent Chair of Children's Safeguarding Board responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- Members congratulated the PSCB and partners for the continued investigations undertaken in relation to operation Erle in the City regarding child sexual exploitation.
- It was a Government directive that LAs had children safeguarding boards and the report would be shared with the LA's Chief Executive and Police and Crime Commissioner.
- The PSCB were exploring the option of deputy representatives at meetings for partner organisations such as NHS due to low attendance issues. The Fire Authority held a 100% attendance rate at Safer Peterborough Partnership Board meetings.
- The outcome of the priorities for 2015/16 were outlined at the end of the report.
- The data included in the report should be relevant to 2015/2016 and not 2014/15.
- The colour used for the report had been due to branding requirements.
- The PCSB worked closely with the Council over the website format. There had been recent success experienced in the use of social media in respect of the Lullaby campaign, which had received 16,236 people reached.
- Sexting awareness and guidance had been geared towards the adolescent age range.
- The care package information for CiC would be required to feed into the PSCB.
- The Child Poverty and its impact was considered by the Children and Family Commissioning Board. The PSCB would cover Child Poverty through workshops as part of the Neglect Strategy.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Committee noted the contents of the report and requested that the Independent Chair of Children's Safeguarding Board would:

1. Provide a copy of the business plan document;
2. Include figures in terms of budget expenditure within future reports instead of percentages;
3. Provide an explanation in future reports in regards to the data sets used, should they relate to previous years;
4. Update the data within the PSCB report in regards to child poverty to provide current figures; and
5. Review the format of the Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board's website and social media with a view to implement improvements.

9. Proposal To Develop A Permanency Service In Peterborough: Recommendation To Award Contract

The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding introduced the report to Members which provided an update about the proposals to develop a Permanency Service in Peterborough, and specifically recommend the commissioning of the delivery of the service by an external partner organisation.

The Service Director Children's Services and Safeguarding responded to comments and questions raised by members. A summary of the responses included:

- The current provision of placing CiC through fostering agencies cost the LA £4m per year. It was envisaged that the Permanency Service would mean that more children and young people would be placed with Peterborough foster carers. This would result in significant financial savings, but had also been likely to be better for children and

young people because the LA carers were often closer to the City than agency carers, and the Authority knew these carers well, making it possible to match children to carers more effectively.

- The average cost was £850 per week to place a CiC in the independent sector. Bringing TACT in to operate the service alongside the LA meant that their expertise in supporting carers to care for more challenging children and young people would be available to the City.
- The recruitment of Foster Carers was a very competitive market, but this approach provided the best of both worlds for foster carers with improved levels of support alongside taking children from one local authority only, as opposed to taking children from across the country, as carers for independent agencies currently undertook.
- The Permanency Service would provide the best results for CiC and the carers recruited would only look after children from Peterborough.
- TACT would provide a successful adoption service and the LA did not want to separate the service from foster care provision.
- The Joint Governance Board would deal with strategic issues and Management Board would deal with performance indicators. There would be a contract officer that would deal with the day to day running arrangements of services to CiC.
- Corporate parenting and CiC service responsibilities and accountabilities would remain with the LA.
- TACT would report into the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- TACT would be expected to provide the service specifications with the budget provided by the LA, however if there was an unexpected number of children were placed in care the budget situation would require review.
- The presentation provided to the LA by TACT had demonstrated that they were successful at recruitment of foster carers.
- TACT would be responsible for CiC placement even if it was at a higher cost premium.
- Recruitment of foster carers through the TACT process would ensure that Peterborough children were placed first. This also provided the ability of ensuring that siblings would be placed together.
- The money for vacant Social Worker posts would be transferred to TACT.
- The marketing officer that was to transfer to TACT had been part of the marketing team and had worked solely on fostering and adoption tasks.
- There had been a contract break clause of four years where the LA could give termination notice.
- If TACT experienced any issue in the provision of CiC services, the LA would be alerted through the Governance Board meetings. In the event that the fostering and adoption services would transfer back to the LA, all staff TUPED would be also be transferred.
- The LA would retain the responsibility for ensuring the quality of fostering and adoption services.
- The tender process was very complex, which had presented a delay in completion, due to the number of questions received and to allow the bidders an extended amount of time for the responses.
- There were mechanisms in place that would be used to negotiate TUPE arrangements for staff.
- TACT were a very good employer and had held a good Human Resources ethos. Staff would transfer on current LA terms and conditions. The LA would become involved if it had concerns over staff treatment.
- The money saved through the Permanency care arrangements would be channelled by TACT to provide development over the provision of parenting skills to avoid children returning to care.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee:

1. Note the content of this report, and in particular the positive involvement in the process by staff, foster carers and young people.
2. Note the recommendation to award the contract for operating the new Permanency Service is awarded to The Adolescent and Children's Trust [known as TACT] – the largest dedicated fostering and adoption charity in the UK.
3. Provided comment on this scrutiny report that can be taken into consideration by Cabinet, when the recommendation to award the contract is discussed on 26th September 2016.
4. request a report on the progress of the delivery of the new service in 12 months' time.

The Committee also requested a briefing note from PCC Human Resources, which would outline the TUPE arrangements in terms of how long the arrangement would remain in place for PCC staff that transfer to TACT confirming any negotiation period applicable over any proposed change for terms and conditions of employment.

11. Forward Plan of Executive Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, 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 Forward Plan and where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED:

The Committee noted the Forward Plan.

10. Work Programme For 2016/17

The Chairman introduced the work programme for 2016/2017 to Members.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the work programme for 2016/17.

12. Date of Next Meeting

Monday, 14 November 2016.

7:00pm – 9.32pm CHAIRMAN