

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT 7.00PM ON  
MONDAY 4 MARCH 2021  
VIRTUAL MEETING: PETERBOROUGH CITY COUNCIL'S YOUTUBE PAGE**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors D Over (Chair), K Aitken, G Casey, A Coles, (Vice Chair), N Day, A Dowson, T Haynes, S Lane, L Robinson, B Rush, H Skibsted

Co-opted Members: Peter Cantley, Flavio Vettese, Clare Watchorn, Al Kingsley, and Rizwan Rahemtulla

**Officers Present:** Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities  
Belinda Evans, Customer Services Manager  
Joanne Procter, Head of Service- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough  
Safeguarding Boards  
Dee Glover, Headteacher Peterborough Virtual School for Children in  
Care  
Jonathan Lewis – Service Director (Education)  
Paulina Ford, Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Also Present:** Councillor L Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and  
Education, Skills and University

**31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Parish Councillors Susie Lucas and Dr Sridhar.

**32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

**33. MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2021**

The minutes of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 21 January 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

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

There were not call-ins received.

**35. ANNUAL CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE STATUTORY COMPLAINTS REPORT 2019-20**

The Customer Services Manager introduced the report. The report is brought to the Committee on an annual basis to allow the Committee to scrutinise complaints received

under the Children's (Social Care) Services statutory complaints process.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members referred to Appendix B – Service Improvements and Actions Taken Following Complaints 2019/20 and sought assurance that there would be a more systematic and integrated approach to the listed actions and improvements. Members also referred to Appendix C - CSC Compliment Examples 2019/20. Clarification was sought as to how the good practice listed was disseminated amongst staff and used in training to develop best practice and further strengthen the quality of the service. Members were informed that normally there would be quarterly performance meetings which were attended by the Quality Assurance Lead and the Customer Services Manager. The programme of improvements was discussed and implemented at this meeting. However due to the pandemic the meetings had not taken place over the last year and therefore the improvements and actions had not been monitored in the same way.
- Figure 3, page 20 - Stage 1 Complaint Outcomes by team. Members referred to the Children in Care/Leaving Care figures and noted that the number of complaints were high at 30, and that the partially upheld number of 11 and upheld number of 7 was more than half of the number of complaints. Members sought an explanation of the figures. The Officer informed Members that the process was designed to be used by children and young people and it was therefore good that children in care felt comfortable in being able to make a complaint rather than the adults and parents. The upheld rate of 7 was an indication of an open and learning organisation so that the faults could be acknowledged, learnt from and improvements made.
- Most of the time the complaints were about not receiving enough information in a timely matter e.g., reports or minutes of meetings. It could also be about young children not wanting to leave the placement that they were due to leave or an argument between young people at a foster placement. The complaints were for a variety of reasons.
- Accessibility. Figure 4 Who is making complaints. Members noted that the total figure for 2019/20 was 80 and that this differed from the total number of complaints in Figure 3 which was 75. Members were informed that the figure of 75 in table 3 was the number of stage one complaints that received a response. The number of complaints accepted was 80, the difference was that 4 were withdrawn and 1 complaint came in at stage 2.
- The weightings on the complaint's categories had remained fairly consistent year on year with the delayed/failed service always being the highest across all service areas. There were very few improvements or actions that have had to be carried over from the previous year which indicates that learning and improvements had taken place.
- Members referred to Service Improvements and Actions Taken Following Complaints 2019/20 and wanted to know what impact these had had in terms of those complaints. Members were informed that the training to provide service improvements was provided by the Quality Assurance team who also picked items from the audits. There was a comprehensive audit programme in place where there was also Peer audits from the Quality Assurance unit. The findings from the audits, complaints and other feedback were used to develop the training programmes and were then rolled out to the team managers and staff. The Executive Director advised Members that further information on training could be provided within the next Service Director: Children's & Safeguarding update report.
- Members queried why the categories delayed and failed service were grouped together and were advised that this was a national category and tended to cover things that were not specifically identified elsewhere.
- Members referred to the complaint's category titled *staff attitude/conduct* and sought clarification on how serious the complaint would need to be in this category. Who would be making these complaints and were staff supported through these types of complaints. Members were informed that when a complaint was received from a

parent or young person about social care it could be about many things. The complaint would only be marked as staff attitude/conduct it that was the main element of the complaint. It might be that they claim to not have a good relationship with their social worker and therefore claim that their attitude is not good. There were not many complaints in this category, and this was because of how well the service was managed and having more permanent staff.

- Members sought further information regarding the timeliness in responding to complaints. Members were informed that the complaints were answered by the team manager of the service area that the complaint was about. The Customer Service team would acknowledge receipt of the complaint via email within three working days. The service area would then respond to the complaint within 10 working days. If the complaint was complex, then it may take longer to respond. The 15-day average for a response would include a full written response.

The Chair thanked the Customer Services Manager for providing a comprehensive report.

### **AGREED ACTIONS**

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to consider the report and make recommendations for further scrutiny if deemed appropriate.
2. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee requested that the Service Director: Children's & Safeguarding include information on how training and service improvements were put in place following complaints when presenting his next service update report.

### **36. CAMBRIDGESHIRE & PETERBOROUGH SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2019-20**

The Head of Service, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Boards introduced the report. The report provided the committee with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Partnership Board Annual Report 2019-2020 published in November 2020. There was a statutory requirement under the Children & Social Work Act 2017 that Safeguarding partners publish an annual report detailing the work of the Board and this report is presented to the Committee on an annual basis.

From 2019 the four areas of focus had been neglect, child sexual abuse, child criminal exploitation and learning from serious case reviews. The term serious case review was no longer used and had been replaced with the term child safeguarding practice reviews.

Assurance was given to the Committee that training had continued even though face to face training could not take place during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members noted that the report highlighted lots of positive things that had been done over the year, but it was difficult to measure the impact or compare with the previous year. Members requested that appropriate metrics be put in the next annual report to show the impact and comparison with previous years. The officer advised that the comparative information and impact would be included in the next annual report. Members were also informed that there was a Quality and Effectiveness Group which was the metrics and quality impact group which looked at the impact of the work that had been done. The officer provided examples of the work done by the Quality and Effectiveness Group.
- Members commented and were pleased to note that the report gave a sense that the service was continually striving to improve further.

- Members noted that in a sample case review within the report that Housing Associations 'front facing' staff may not routinely receive safeguarding training and sought clarification as to how this was being addressed. Members were advised that housing had not necessarily in the past been recognised as an important partner. Following the case mentioned in the report specific guidance had now been written to support housing officers on what to look for and what to do. There was also specific safeguarding training now in place for housing officers. The Chief Executive of Cross Keys Homes also sat on the Safeguarding Board and housing representatives were now in place on all subcommittee groups below the Safeguarding Board so that there was a direct link to housing associations.
- Members asked if a briefing could be provided to councillors on child exploitation and county lines and the difference between youth crime and county lines. Members were informed that a briefing could be provided. During COVID there had been quite a change with county lines which had had an impact. One bonus was that a multi-agency mapping process had been developed which allowed information to go down to granular detail into localised areas which allowed a local multi-agency response including local policing, education, health, social care and the voluntary sector. The mapping area was developed and led by the schools who identified individual young people that may be at risk, associated adults and the community response. The process was far more imbedded in Peterborough than Cambridgeshire and the Home Office wanted to implement the model elsewhere.
- Members wanted to know how prevalent the practice of Female genital mutilation (FGM) was in Peterborough and if it was a growing problem and if so how it was being tackled. Members were informed that the designated Safeguarding Board Doctor sat on the national FGM Group and was therefore very well informed on the subject. The Head of Service, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Boards also advised that she was a representative on the FGM Group as well. There was a population in Peterborough that would suggest support for FGM, but the numbers were not particularly high in Peterborough in comparison to the national average. Staff attend FGM training and there was an FGM protocol in place with clear flow charts on what to do if someone suspected that FGM was taking place. There were leaflets in 102 different languages that could be handed out to people. Training was also available on having difficult conversations to support practitioners. FGM numbers were checked twice yearly through the Quality and Effectiveness Group and were reported to the Government.
- Members referred to page 40 of the report and the Executive Safeguarding Partnership Board partnership structure and sought clarification as to why there were dotted lines to the Health Safeguarding Board and Education/Child Protection Safeguarding Group. Members were informed that the partnerships depicted in bold colours were the ones that the Head of Service, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Boards were responsible for, the Education/Child Protection Safeguarding Group were both led by education. The Health Safeguarding Board was led by health. Both fed into the main Safeguarding Partnership Board but were not part of the main safeguarding meeting.
- Members referred to the new Rapid Review Referral Form and the Guidance on Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews in line with new statutory guidance. and wanted to know how this was progressing and developing. Members were informed that if someone thinks a child meets the criteria for a serious case review agencies had 10 days to collate the evidence to bring to a Rapid Review Panel meeting, it was then assessed to see if it meets the criteria. The information was then submitted to a National Panel, and they would decide if it warranted a serious case review. The 10-working day turnaround for the Rapid Reviews had at times been challenging. The process had evolved and developed through learning and best practice.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the annual report.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee also requested:

1. That the next Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report include metrics and comparative information and details on what impact there had been from the learning and development.
2. That a briefing could be provided to councillors on child exploitation and county lines and the difference between youth crime and county lines.

### **37. ANNUAL REPORT OF PETERBOROUGH VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN IN CARE 2018-2019, INCLUDING A REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

The Headteacher Peterborough Virtual School for Children in Care introduced the report which informed the Committee on the activity of the Peterborough Virtual School (PVS) and the educational outcomes of Peterborough's Children in Care (CIC) for the academic year 2018/19. The report reflected on achievements and identified areas in need of development to achieve the best outcomes for this vulnerable group. Data contained in the report was for Children in Care who had been in the care of Peterborough City Council for a year or more on 31 March 2019 and was taken from the Statistical First Release published by the Department for Education (DfE) on 26th March 2020.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members commented on how thorough and well written the report was and very informative.
- The improved progress of the Key Stage 4 students was noted. Members noted that pupils were a long way behind the national average in reading, writing and maths and sought clarification as to what action was being taken to improve this. Members were informed that a monthly analysis took place of how the students were progressing and appropriate interventions were then put in place. If the team were not directly involved with the child, then the school were challenged to ensure interventions were put in place. Children in this cohort generally start off with a very low baseline and progress in slow. A training scheme for schools has recently been put in place for teaching assistants to support phonics work.
- Concern was also raised regarding the number of students not in education, employment, or training (NEETs) who had become disengaged and what was being done to prevent growing disengagement. Members were informed that there had been a pattern of disengagement nationally and across the Eastern Region. There had therefore been a big drive from Eastern Region Heads who met every term and work was being done to look for different ways to reengage young people. It had been particularly difficult over the past year and would take time to get back on track. It was hoped that with the colleges opening there would be an improvement in engagement.
- Members asked what level of training was being provided to designated teachers to assist them in devising high quality Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and to ensure they had an impact on the pupils to whom they relate. Members were advised that the designated teachers had online training available to them. A meeting was also held with each designated teacher every term and they were trained in how to complete PEP's.
- Members referred to Chart 12.3 in the report which referred to the Number of Pupil Interventions that children were assigned to. Members sought clarification as to why

the largest number of children were assigned to interventions such as Academic progress/support, One to One Tuition with a Qualified Teacher, One to One Tuition with Top Class Tutors via the School and After School Programme, and the number of children assigned to such areas like Improving Self Esteem, Social and Emotional Learning and Emotion Coaching were much less. Members were advised that most of the interventions included looking at self-esteem and was therefore covered by more than the dedicated intervention. Further interventions which helped young people to build resilience and self-esteem were being looked at.

- Members referred to NEET's and post 16 provision and sought clarification on how new providers were identified to provide good high-quality learning options. Members were informed that every provider was quality assured and a site visit was undertaken. Reviews were assessed to make sure they were providing a good quality service. A new post 16 co-ordinator had just been employed and part of their remit was to ensure that there was good quality post 16 provision and to identify new places of learning.
- Members referred to section 12.2 of the report, Administration of the Grant and noted that £13,305 had gone to the Letterbox Club which was a parcel containing a book and supporting activities sent monthly to identified children. Clarification was sought as to what it actually entailed. Members were informed that approximately 90 primary children received a high-quality book every month. This had been very successful and received very good feedback. A survey would be conducted to see what impact the Letterbox Club has had. Members requested to see the results of the survey when available.
- Members felt that the Forest School and outdoor learning was a very good idea and wanted to know if working with museums and heritage sites had also been considered. Members were informed that this had not been considered but that it was a good idea and would be investigated.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED to:**
  - a. Note the content of the Peterborough Virtual School Annual report for 2018/19 at Appendix 1
  - b. Note the COVID -19 Update report at Appendix 2, and
  - c. Raise any queries they have with the lead officer.
2. The Children and Education Committee also requested that the Headteacher Peterborough Virtual School provide the committee with the results of the Letterbox Survey when available.

## **38. SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION UPDATE REPORT**

The Service Director, Education introduced the report which outlined the latest position on Covid-19 for Education in Peterborough following the reopening and closure of schools during this academic year (20/21). The report also covered issues raised by members of the committee at the November meeting and other service-related updates relevant to this committee.

The Service Director also provided a brief update on what had happened since the report was published. The plan was to open all schools on Monday 8 March. All schools had been risked assessed, guidance had been issued and Covid testing was in place. Head Teachers had been fully briefed, whilst still in a period of close monitoring the Service Director was feeling positive that all schools would open successfully and move forward.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members sought clarification regarding future Ofsted inspections and what they would be like once they started again in Peterborough. Members were informed that current Ofsted inspections were focused on particular schools which have had problems historically. Ofsted had been looking at the remote learning offer, recovery plans and progress. Full inspections were likely to commence after the Easter holidays. Inspections that had taken place in Cambridgeshire so far had been positive concentrating on how engagement was with remote learning, curriculum offer, attendance, support for vulnerable pupils and learning plans.
- Members noted in the report that there had been a steady stream of Ofsted complaints submitted by parents regarding schools, and a total of 8 had been received since the start of January. The Service Director advised that the Minister for Education suggested parents contact Ofsted any time if they were dissatisfied with the offer of remote learning, and this had therefore increased the number of complaints. There were a variety of concerns, and all had to be investigated. Complaints regarding safeguarding aspects were fully investigated with detailed responses being submitted to Ofsted. Schools continued to work in co-operation with the Local Authority and where necessary were receptive to any learning outcomes and recommendations identified.
- It was noted that this year's Free School Meals and Pupil Premium funding would be based on the October census instead of the January census which would mean that schools would miss out on a lot of funding. Members were informed that this was of national concern and a significant amount of money would be lost. Once the school census had come through from January the exact amount lost could be identified. The Service Director advised that it was his intention to write to the Minister for Education and outline the concerns regarding the support that would not be provided due to lack of funding for the children who needed it the most. There had been some top up money received for Free School Meals children but even with the top up funding there would still be significant underfunding.
- Assurance was sought from the Service Director that he was confident that all schools in Peterborough had a rigorous testing regime in place and that it would have minimum impact in disrupting education. The Service Director advised that he had recently met with Secondary Head Teachers to confirm that all necessary plans were in place. It was a huge undertaking for schools and unfortunately there would be some disruption. After the initial three tests, testing would then take place at home.
- Members noted that there was no mechanism in place to externally moderate judgements made by GCSE teachers. Was there a way locally that grades could be moderated between schools and between teachers to try and avoid discrepancies between schools on grading. Members were informed that teacher moderation would be in place for GCSE teachers and Head Teachers were working together to see how this would happen with subject leads in schools working on the methodology.
- It was noted that there were significant workforce challenges when delivering dual education in schools which was placing significant pressure on staff. Was there any guidance and support that the Local Authority could give to schools to try and reduce this pressure? The Service Director advised that one of the leads at Oak Academy had visited Peterborough to share knowledge on how to use Teams to deliver lessons and Local Authority Staff were also offering support to schools.
- Members asked if there was a clear picture of the number of hours per week for which pupils engaged with a remote learning offer across the schools, and if so, what were the variations like and what could be learnt from the information. Members were informed that only two of the fourteen schools in the Local Authority were LEA Maintained schools and it was therefore difficult to comment on the Academy schools. The perceived view from conversations that had taken place was that there was a variation in engagement. Some students were thriving, and others were finding it

difficult. Schools were monitoring who had been accessing learning online. All students were being supported to achieve their outcomes and on returning to school would be assessed to identify gaps in progress and lessons would include reinforcing what had already been taught.

- Much work was being done with regard to the transition from primary to secondary school and looking at what additional support would be needed to be put in place including behavioural reviews and assessing academic progress and identifying gaps.
- It was noted that data from Operation Encompass, the system for Domestic Abuse notifications to schools, had shown a significant increase in cases over the lockdown period. Members wanted to know if additional support would be put in place when the schools returned to assist with potential additional referrals. Members were informed that there was often a rise in referrals after school holidays. Capacity had increased with a new appointment to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to support the additional needs that may come through. The Service Director for Childrens Services had been working with schools to provide additional support. The Early Help service would also be providing support.
- Some of the virtual ways of working would continue as they had proved beneficial with less travel and more interaction e.g., Head Teacher meetings, Special Education Needs (SEND) assessments.
- Members commented that the last set of GCSE results which were teacher assessed were an improvement and asked the Service Director if he could feed this back to Government and ask if consideration could be given to changing policy to teacher assessment and course work going forward. The Service Director agreed that a mix of course work and teacher assessment was a good way forward and would feed this back to the Minister for Education.

Members thanked the Service Director for all of the support and guidance that had been provided and continued to be provided to all schools across Peterborough.

### **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the position of Education around Covid-19 and wider activities and comment on areas the committee may wish to review moving forward as we move into a recovery phase.

## **39. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, containing decisions which the Leader of the Council anticipated Cabinet or Cabinet Members would take over 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.

### **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the current Forward Plan of Executive Decisions which identified any relevant items for inclusion within their work programme.

The Chair advised that it was the last meeting of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee for the year and wanted to thank all committee members for their contributions over the past two years, asking probing questions and providing good scrutiny on behalf of the residents of Peterborough. The Chair also thanked all officers who had attended and presented reports to the committee and answered questions comprehensively.

Chairman

7.00pm to 9.02pm