

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

5 January 2015

PRESENT – Councillor C. Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Crumbie, Galletley, L. Hughes, E.A. Richmond and Wright. (7)

APOLOGIES - Councillors Hutchinson, Kelley and Lister and L. Vasey; M. Regan. (5)

STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None. (0)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None (0)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor R. Crichlow. (1)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jenni Cooke, Service Director for Children, Families and Learning; Sharon Raine, Head of Organisational Planning; Odette Robson, Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Business Manager; Jan Pickersgill, Sexual Exploitation Worker for Darlington; and Mary Robinson, Barbardo's CSE Spoke and Missing from Home and Care Team Manager.

CYP23. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interested reported at the meeting.

CYP24. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the ordinary meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 3 November 2014 and the Special Meeting held on 10 December 2014.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes be approved as a correct record.

CYP25. RESIGNATION OF COMMUNITY REPRESENTATIVE – The Chair advised Members that a letter of resignation had been received from Emma Coltman, a community representative on this Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That a letter of thanks be sent to Ms. Coltman on behalf of this Scrutiny Committee to thank her for her attendance and commitment to the Committee during her time as a community representative.

CYP26. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN – COST OF PLACEMENTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – Pursuant to Minute CYP21/Dec/2014, the Service Director for Children, Families and Learning gave a verbal update on the costs of placements for Looked After Children following discussion on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2014/15 to 2019/20 at the Special Meeting held on 10 December, 2014.

The costs of 'In-house' residential, external residential (including Education), expensive residential and secure were reported to Members. Expensive residential

care is currently being used for one young person as an alternative to secure placement and the cost was reported at £4,700 a week including social care. 'In-House' residential was reported as £2,067 per week (using 17.5% on costs).

It was emphasised that the nature and complexity of the needs of the young person determines what placement is required and the costs involved with each young person can fluctuate. More complex young people can incur higher costs for repair and maintenance. All placements are reviewed on a regular basis and all the homes are Ofsted regulated.

The Service Director for Children, Families and Learning also gave Members an overview of the various residential facilities available to the Council, including the Council's own residential homes, which are generally smaller facilities for 3 or 4 young people.

Members questioned the charges for in-house placement compared to external residential providers and agreed that the council's charges were comparable.

Members also accepted that any proposed savings in this area are reliant on a decrease in numbers of looked after children, which recently has shown an increase. Changes in the national guidance regarding who is now 'deemed looked after' has also affected how placements are financed.

RESOLVED – That the position with regard to the cost of placements for Looked After Children be noted and that Commissioners continue to work across authorities to ensure value for money.

CYP27. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION - The Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager gave a presentation on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the position in Darlington taking into account the Rotherham situation were approximately 1400 children were sexually exploited over the full inquiry period 1997 to 2013.

The presentation gave the definition of CSE; highlighted the indicators of risk, including social network and e-safety which is a priority for 2014; and outlined the findings relating to young people who display risk factors associated with exploitation (not confirmed victims).

It was emphasised that the local authority work very closely with the police and other partners through the multi agency Missing and Exploited Group (MEG) and this authority is a gold member of the National Working Group, which is a valuable source to access key information. It was also reported that there were no known organised crime gangs in Darlington and Durham and sharing of information and intelligence remains essential.

Discussion ensued on the joint work being undertaken with Durham on a communications strategy to emphasis the message to parents and carers; encouraging members of the public to 'say something if you see something'; and Darlington LSCB lead on e-safety which is a priority with the emergence of social networking sites.

IT WAS AGREED – That the thanks of this Panel be extended to the Safeguarding Business Manager for her presentation.

CYP28. REVIEW GROUPS – (1) Child Poverty – Submitted – The notes of the meeting held on 28 October, 2014.

It was reported that a further meeting of the Review Group had been arranged for 24 February 2015 to apply other data to the ‘hot spot’ areas and see if there is any correlation for those living in poverty and to also analyse the data to see the impact and outcomes for young people living in poverty.

RESOLVED – That the notes of the meeting of the Review Group be noted.

(2) STEM Applications and Apprenticeships – Submitted – The notes of the meetings held on 4 November and 2 December 2014.

It was reported that a further meeting of the Review Group is to be arranged and this will include inviting in a representative from Barclays Bank to outline to Members their education programmes/apprenticeships for young people.

RESOLVED – That the notes of the meetings of the Review Group be noted.

CYP29. WORK PROGRAMME – The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to the work programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee and to consider any additional areas which Members suggest should be added to the previously approved work programme.

Members considered the addition of an item onto the work programme to examine support services that are available for Looked After Children leaving care in light of Barnardo’s new campaign ‘Beyond Care’ which aims to make sure care leavers are living in accommodation suitable for their needs, and not living in poor quality temporary accommodation, like Bed and Breakfasts and agreed to seek the approval of the Monitoring Co-ordination Group.

RESOLVED – (a) That the current status of the work programme be noted.

(b) That approval be sought from the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group to include the item on Looked After Children leaving care in the work programme for this Scrutiny Committee.

CYP30. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK – With the prior approval of the Chair to the matter being treated as urgent to update Members at the earliest opportunity, the Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report (previously circulated) .

The submitted report advised Members of the revised approach to performance management which has been adopted which allows for an assessment of the

achievement of One Darlington: Perfectly Placed outcomes and the performance of services delivery by the Council.

The submitted report also gave details of the Quarter 2 performance relating to those strategic indicators for areas under the remit of this Scrutiny Committee 'giving children and young people the best start in life'.

Members were advised that they will receive quarterly overviews of the strategic indicators and shorter terms indicators including costs of service to enable them to monitor and understand more clearly the services being delivered and outlining the desired outcomes.

Members considered data in relation to the increased number of Looked After Children which was higher than the regional and national averages and the reasons for this, primarily due to the change in Central government categorisation; the increase in the number of Children in Need; the number of children under 5 years becoming subject to a Child Protection Plan; the percentage of children classed as obese between reception age and year 6, including inequality between wards; the reduction in the under 18 conception rates; the percentage of children achieving at least the expected level of development at Early Years Foundation stage; the changes to the measures for GCSE attainment; the increase in the number of children living in poverty in Darlington; the percentage of women who smoke at the time of delivery and the percentage of infants due a 6-8 week check that are totally or partially breastfed, which may see an improvement with the migration of Health Visitors into the Local Authority from 2016; and the numbers of admission to hospital of young people attributable to unintentional and deliberate injury and the admissions of 0-4 age group both showing a similar gap widening in 2011/12 but has now dropped significantly at the latest measure in 2012/13 below the regional average.

Following the introduction of referral orders for young people in 2008, Darlington has significantly outperformed both national and regional averages for the rate of first time entrants to the youth justice system and the introduction of a restorative justice approach in Darlington has been widely recognised as good practice and widely introduced.

RESOLVED – That the assessment of performance in the first two quarters of 2014 be noted.

CYP31. YEAR ONE AND RECEPTION ATTENDANCE – With the prior approval of the Chair to the matter being treated as urgent to update Members at the earliest opportunity, the Service Director for Children, Families and Learning submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with details of the impact of the actions taken to address attendance in reception and year one.

This Scrutiny Committee undertook a review of Year One and Reception Attendance in 2012 and agreed to continue to monitor the action plan therefrom (CYP5/Jun/12 refers).

It was reported the actions taken to raise awareness in child care settings and primary schools had shown an improvement and evidence shows that the strategies

adopted have made a positive impact on attitudes and the importance of good attendance and there are less children taking unauthorised absence. However, childhood illnesses tend to impact on reception and year one more than on other year groups.

RESOLVED – That the work undertaken to improve attendance levels be noted.