

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

2 November 2015

PRESENT – Councillor Lister (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Crumbie, Curry, Mrs. D. Jones, L. Hughes, Storr, C. Taylor and Wright. (9)

APOLOGIES – Councillors R Mills and KE Kelly; Mr. T Fisher (3)

STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None (0)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – Mrs G. Harrison and Ms J Woodcock, Community Representatives. (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors C. Hughes and Kelley. (2)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Alison Murphy, Interim Director – Children’s Services; Sharon Raine, Head of Organisational Planning; Brian Boggon, Assistant Director – Regeneration Projects; Jean Langthorne, Family Support Manager; and Allison Hill, Democratic Support.

CYP16. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP17. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 7 September 2015.

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

CYP18. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT – Pursuant to CYP39/Apr/15, the Head of Organisational Planning gave a presentation to give Members graphical information on 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 continue to receive overviews of the strategic indicators and shorter term indicators including costs of service to enable them to monitor and understand more clearly the services being delivered and outlining the desired outcomes.

Members examined the graphical data relating to Excess Weight among Primary School Age Children in Reception year for 2013/14 which was just exceeding the North East average; the Rate of under-18 conceptions; the percentage of all infants due a 6-8 week check that are totally or partially breastfed which was under the national average but was slightly better than the North East; the percentage of Women Who Smoke at Time of Delivery was recording a decrease in the numbers but still above the national average; Hospital Admissions caused by Unintentional and Deliberate Injuries to Children (0-4 years of age), (4-14) and (15-24), which

showed higher levels in Darlington compared to the North East and Members had already raised this as a concern and were interested to know if there was any underlying trend in Darlington compared to the Tees Valley; Children looked after per 10,000 population under 18 which was showing a steady increase but similar to the North East average but higher than the England average; Overall absence – percentage sessions missed in Primary and Secondary schools Autumn and Spring terms was in line with both the North East and England averages; the percentage of schools rated good or outstanding by Ofsted which was currently at 93 per cent for primary and 58 per cent for secondary, however this only related to two secondary schools; the percentage of children newly looked after in the year, and still looked after at 31 March who were placed more than 20 miles from their home address from which first placed which was showing improved performance; the percentage of children becoming the subject of Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time (within two years of the previous plans end date) which was also showing improved performance on last year; the average of the percentage of children looked after who had been looked after continuously for at least 12 months and who had had their teeth checked by a dentist and had an annual health assessment during the previous twelve months had shown an under performance and Members agreed that this should be an area of work to focus on in future to make improvements; the number of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for physical, emotional, and sexual abuse or neglect (rate per 10,000 of the children and young people population) which was showing a similar trend to last year; the percentage of children looked after in residential accommodation which was showing a continuing trend compared to last year, however it was noted that there was no benchmarking data available on this indicator and highlighted the need for statistical neighbouring data; it was also acknowledged that there was a need to start setting future targets for children's services; the percentage of looked after children fostered by relatives or friends which showed an increasing trend; and the percentage of former relevant young people aged 19-21 who were in suitable accommodation which was on target to 100 per cent by the end of the year.

Discussion ensued on how best to receive this statistical data in future to enable Members to challenge and ultimately achieve better outcomes for children and young people. It was also acknowledged that there was a need for improved benchmarking against neighbouring authorities and also to provide targets for the key indicators. It was highlighted that these targets will be included in the Improvement Plan.

Members questions related to the number of Looked After Children which was currently higher than the North East and National average and the possible reasons for this and the Interim Director – Children's Services advised Members that it may relate to the levels of deprivation in the North East and work was on going on age profiles of Looked After Children to ascertain at which point they become looked after. Members also discussed Section 20 cases; access to higher level indicators and strategic partnership targets; and ensuring that the correct set of indicators are made available to Members and in particular the key areas were the authority fall below the North East and England averages.

RESOLVED – That the performance management data be noted.

CYP19. IMPROVEMENT PLAN AND THE ROLE OF SCRUTINY FOLLOWING THE OUTCOMES OF THE OFSTED INSPECTION – The Interim Director, Children’s Services gave a presentation on the recent Ofsted inspection which had taken place in respect of Services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers and the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board, which had resulted in an overall judgement of inadequate and requiring improvement for the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board.

It was reported that Red Quadrant, Consultancy Company had been appointed by the Department for Education (DfE) to work alongside the authority following the publication of the Ofsted report into services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

The role of the appointed Advisors was to work with the authority to develop an effective Improvement Plan, monitor progress against it and to provide support, guidance and challenge, where needed, in order to achieve the desired outcomes. They would be reporting back to the DfE on a monthly basis, with the first detailed review report being submitted in December 2015/January 2016.

It was reported that the inspection covered a broad area of operational practice in Children’s Services and although the overall judgement was inadequate, some areas of service had been judged as good and others improving.

The presentation covered the headline findings from the inspection, which also highlighted a number of strengths in some areas of service to build on, together with 18 recommendations for improvement; the immediate actions which had already been implemented by the Authority; and the proposed timetable for monitoring and improvement with a further Ofsted Inspection expected within 12 to 18 months.

The presentation also covered the draft Action Plan 2015-17 which set out the vision to deliver good services to achieve good outcomes for children and young people in Darlington to ensure that they had the ‘Best Start in Life’.

The draft plan sets out a clear vision of what good looked like and contained a number of immediate actions, which were under three headings of Practice Improvement; Performance Management and Data Quality and Management Oversight and Effective Governance.

Particular reference was made to the priority actions over the period October 2015 to January 2016 and to a number of priority actions which needed to be focussed on and remedial action which had already been undertaken.

With regard to the role of Scrutiny, discussion ensued on how Members develop their role in scrutinising the services provided and questioning and challenging the services with the aim of overall improvement for the outcomes of children and young people.

Discussion also ensued on a new IT system Liquid Logic which had been procured to replace the existing CareFirst system and how this will assist Adults and Children's Services in future; training arrangements for social workers and whether it would be beneficial to include Members in this training or provide joint Member/Staff training; a flowchart of the process once a child enters the system of being looked after for Members information; and further information to be provided to this Scrutiny on the funded early years provision for two year olds and the outcomes for children accessing this provision; whether there was a need for a Common Assessment Framework Co-ordinator; and the general morale in Children's Services at this present time.

IT WAS AGREED – That the presentation and discussion be noted.

CYP20. TROUBLED FAMILIES PROGRAMME – The Interim Director, Children's Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the progress made on the Troubled Families Programme.

It was reported that the Troubled Families Programme began in April 2012 and is led by the Department for Communities and Local Government and aims to work with all partners agencies to help families with multiple problems.

In August 2014 the government announced the expansion of the Troubled Families Programme to support vulnerable families with multiple, complex and long standing problems. The current five year programme which runs from 2015 to 2020 includes a commitment that nationally 400,000 families and in Darlington 950 families would be identified.

For the extended programme the Government is paying an upfront attachment fee of £1,400 per family for all families each area commits to included within their local programme and a 'result payment' of £800 per family for positive outcomes.

It was reported that in Darlington there is a 'dedicated team' model which was built on the already existing Family Intervention Team, who work with families to make positive and sustainable change.

The Team is multi agency including a Team Manager, Senior Practitioner, Child Care Social Workers, a Mental Health Social Worker, Child Sexual Exploitation Project workers (Barnardos), Therapeutic Social Workers, DWP Seconded, PCSO, Troubled Family Analyst and Family Support Workers.

The programme has enabled the Family Intervention Team to change the way services are delivered to these families and the Whole Family Approach has been embedded into service delivery.

In the first six months of the extended programme the team have identified and working with 150 families and have already met payment by results on 14 families (including three back to work claims).

RESOLVED – That the report and progress made be noted.

CYP22. 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.

With regard to the Improvement Plan Members discussed how in future the work programme of this Scrutiny Committee could shape the improvement plan process and how Members can focus on particular areas of concern to include in their future work programme.

Discussion ensued on how the work programme can be shaped and it was agreed that to fully address the issues it would be beneficial to have a task and finish review group to examine the existing work programme and how the work programme should be developed in the future and to brainstorm items of concern to include in the work programme.

RESOLVED – (a) That the current status of the work programme be noted and the additional items be programmed for future meetings.

(b) That Members give consideration to this Scrutiny's work programme and meet prior to the next scheduled meeting of Scrutiny on 11 January 2016.