

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

27 June 2016

PRESENT – Councillor C Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Crumbie, Curry, L. Hughes, Lister, Mills, Storr, Tostevin and Wright. (10)

APOLOGIES – Councillor KE Kelly; Mr. Frank, Miss Regan and Mr. Fisher. (1)

ABSENT – None (0)

STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None. (0)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – Mrs. Harrison and Ms Woodcock. (2)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Alison Murphy, Interim Director – Children’s Services; Mark Gwynne, Head of Performance; Hilary Tillotson, Service Manager, Placements and Adoption; Judith Stonebridge, Specialist Registrar in Public Health; Lorraine Fox, Head of Public Health Nursing, Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust; and Allison Hill, Democratic Support.

CYP1. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP2. TIMES OF MEETINGS – RESOLVED – That for the remainder of this Municipal Year the timings of meetings of this Scrutiny Committee be held at 9.30 am.

CYP3. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 11 April 2016 and the Special Meetings held on 7, 20 April and 16 May 2016.

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

CYP4. YEAR END PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16 – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to give detail on the year end performance for 2015/16 against the Council’s top level scorecard for Children’s Services.

Members previously considered Quarter 3 (October to December 2015) performance and now gave consideration to the year-end information which has informed the Department for Education review and presented to the Improvement Board.

It was reported that many of the issues that had been identified at the time of the Ofsted Inspection around delays in recoding and reporting information had been addressed.

The top level scorecard has been designed to provide a simple overview of the key performance measures to understand how consistently social work is happening on the ground. The quality of work is picked up separately through the audit programmes.

It was reported that there has been a focus on improving the reporting and data quality on the key indicators whilst driving achievements of targets through regular performance clinics involving heads of service and operational and team managers.

Following the DfE Review in May it was agreed to refocus the Improvement Plan for the next stage of the improvement journey and will result in changes to the top level indicators during the year to ensure that it effectively covers each aspect of the child's journey.

Particular reference was made to the significant improvements that have been made in assessment and planning and the required timescales to hold an initial child protection conference; and the number of children subject to a child protection plan for more than two years had reduced indicating that interventions with those children on child protection plans is timely; reviews of child protection plans were at 93 per cent and reviews of children who are looked after were at 94.3 per cent, equating to 13 out of 184 reviews out of timescale and all plans will be reviewed to achieve timeliness for these children.

Particular reference was also made to the introduction of a weekly reporting system for both child protection and children looked after visiting to identify those visits that are approaching timescale; the new system from February 2016 in relation to initial health assessments to ensure that assessments take place within 20 days; and the fact that all 55 care leavers were currently in suitable accommodation. With regard to not in education or employment (NEET) there were 17 care leavers (31 per cent) which was an improvement on the target of 33 per cent and lower than the England average and statistical neighbours.

The submitted report also provided statistical information and data on the key performance indicators to follow the journey of the child through the system, with graphs to add value and help to demonstrate overall performance; and outlined the key activities in progress and those to be implemented.

Members questions related to care leavers and what actions were being taken to improve the position; whether the data on looked after children and those NEET was broken down by ward and schools attended; dental checks which was slightly behind target and statistical neighbours despite significant improvements being made and the reasons for this; and the percentage of children who were the subject of a child protection plan during the reporting period who had all Statutory Visits carried out within the 10 working day required timescale.

A question was raised on which areas from the data officers felt showed particular concern and Members were advised that initial health checks (CSC 184), reviews of children subject to a child protection plan or looked after and the stability of placements for looked after children will be areas to target an increase in performance.

Members agreed that the data reports for all indicators continue to be built on and regular performance clinics continue to be held and that Members receive a progress report on performance to each ordinary meeting of this Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted and the progress made against the performance indicators.

CYP5. PLACEMENT STABILITY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) on the stability of placements for children and young people in relation to performance indicator CSC015 that measures the number of Looked After Children who have experienced three placement moves or more during a rolling twelve month period.

The submitted report gave the background to the Family Placement Service which is responsible for the recruitment, training, assessment and support of internal foster carers, adopters, supported lodgings providers and the completion of assessments for those making application for Special Guardianship Orders.

It was reported that the target for year ending 31 March 2016 was 12 per cent and as at 31 March 2015 the figure was 11.39 per cent, showing a 1.61 per cent improvement on the previous 12 month figure of 13 per cent. Performance was showing a small improvement and it was reported that work will continue to increase the performance over the next 12 months.

The submitted report outlined how placements are monitored; areas for further development 2017/18 including management oversight of placement stability; on-going recruitment of internal foster carers; evaluation of placements provided by the Tees Valley Framework; monthly monitoring of the Fostering Recruitment Strategy; the implementation of the Recruitment and Retention Strategy; and planning for the development of an Edge of Care Service.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be noted.

(b) That Members receive an annual report on placement stability for looked after children.

CYP6. RECORDING PRACTICES FOR STATUTORY VISITS FOR CHILD PROTECTION CASES - The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with the current performance in undertaking statutory visits to children subject to a child protection plan (CSC189).

It was reported that children subject to a child protection plans have been identified as being at risk of continuing significant harm and it is therefore essential that they are seen regularly to ensure that they are both safe and well and that there is progress on reducing the risks that have been identified by the professionals through the child protection conferencing process. It is expected that all children subject to child protection plans are seen in their home every ten working days.

The national statistical return measures the percentage of children who are subject to child protection plans and who have had their visits on time and this various

across local authorities demonstrating that there is a wide variance in performance and how the data is measured.

It was reported that following the Ofsted report in September 2015 when it was reported that 'too many children' were not seen within timescales improvements have been made to monitor on a weekly reporting basis the number of children with visits more than five days out of time, the number of children with visits out of timescale by less than five days and the number of children within visit in timescale.

Members examined the weekly performance information contained within the report and in particular to the information on the number of children where visits were more than five days out of time which equated to 2-3 children and discussed the possible reasons for failed attempts to visit and any specific reasons for families not engaging with the service.

RESOLVED – That the current performance and improved system for reporting and monitoring be noted.

CYP7. PROCUREMENT, MOBILISATION AND TRANSFORMATION OF 0-19 YEARS PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE – The Director of Public Health submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the transition and mobilisation of the new 0-19 years Public Health Service for Darlington.

It was reported that following a service review it was agreed to align the current services of Children's Services for 5-19 and Health Visiting Services 0-5 years to produce an integrated model for Children's Services for 0-19 years to give the Council more options and more flexibility when re-procuring.

Following the procurement process which began October 2015 the contract to provide the new 0-19 years Public Health Service for Darlington was awarded to Harrogate and District Foundation Trust. It was reported that the contract had now successfully transferred to HDFT including the transfer of staff and the authority had a robust performance management process in place to ensure that the service is safe, effective, efficient and continues to provide value for money.

Members requested that the programme of contract managed in place be shared with Members of this Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP8. DARLINGTON CHILD HEALTH PROFILE 2016 – The Director of Public Health submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform Members and partners of the key messages from the Darlington Health Profile 2016.

The Darlington Child Health Profile 2016 provides an overview of the health and wellbeing of children in relation to 32 indicators and provides a snap shot of child health in Darlington and provides a comparison overtime and against the regional and England averages.

The indicators fall into five broad domains ie. premature mortality, health protection in relation to vaccination and immunisation rates, wider determinants of ill health, health improvement including obesity and under 19 conception rates and hospital admission rates relating to alcohol and substance misuse and prevention of ill health for example smoking status at time of delivery and hospital admissions for accidents and other specific conditions.

It was reported that the profile showed that the health and wellbeing of children in Darlington was generally worse than the England average and 15 of the reported indicators for Darlington were significantly worse when compared to England and 8 of these were also worse when compared to the regional figures.

Key findings of the report were that childhood immunisation rates amongst two year olds in Darlington was good and above the recommended coverage rate of 90 per cent and 88.9 per cent of children in care in Darlington were up to date with their immunisations; and the increase in the number of attendances at A and E for 0-4 year olds was due to a recording issue not an actual increase in accidents.

The submitted report also highlighted the priorities to improve the health and wellbeing of children and young people in Darlington and reduce inequalities in health between Darlington and England.

Members questions related to the smoking statistics and how e-cigarettes are included in these figures; the increase in A and E attendances by 0-4 years which was likely to be due to service changes and the ways in which data is coded; and the work being undertaken to address children between the two recording groups for obese children 4-5 year old and 10-11 year olds.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP9. WORK PROGRAMME - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) on the current work programme for this Scrutiny Committee and to see Members views on the new methodology for the work programme as agreed at the Scrutiny Meeting held on 11 April 2016.

It was reported that the proposed work programme has been reviewed and revised to enable the Committee to analyse information for each topic area aligning it to the eight outcomes and three conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and relevant performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework.

The proposed structure of the work programme will provide Members with the opportunity to develop each topic through a series of questions and drill down to investigate particular aspects of extensive topics.

The Chair advised Members that he intended this Scrutiny Committee to undertake a 'deep dive' examination of the service for families with children with disabilities 0-3 years to test the effectiveness of the service and to consult with relevant stakeholders and Members will report back to this Scrutiny at the meeting scheduled for 7 November 2016.

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

CYP10. SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS – IMPROVEMENT BOARD UPDATE – The Interim Director of Children’ Services advised Members that a letter from the Minister of State for Children and Families had now been received by the Leader of the Council, providing feedback arising from the Department for Education (DfE) Review which had been held on 17th May, 2016. It was reported that the letter acknowledged the strengthened leadership and governance arrangements in both practice and performance management and welcomed the strong commitment throughout all levels of the Council to continuing the next phase of the improvement journey and embedding long-term sustainable change. A further review will be undertaken in November 2016.

RESOLVED – (a) That the position be noted.

(b) That this Scrutiny extend their thanks to Alison Murphy, the Interim Director of Children’s Services for her help over the past few months and to wish her well in the future.