

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

30 October 2017

PRESENT – Councillor C Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Culley, Curry, L. Hughes, Lister and Storr. (7)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Crumbie, KE Kelly, Mills and Wright; Mr M Frank and Mrs. G Harrison; Suzanne Joyner and Christine Shields. (4)

STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None. (0)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None. (0)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jane Kochanowski, Assistant Director Children’s Services; Ken Ross, Public Health Specialist; Rachel Osbaldeston, Public Health Portfolio Lead; Corina Dias, Human Resource Manager; Nicola Davies, Project Officer; and Paul Richardson, Head of 16-19 Provision.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillors C. Hughes.

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 4 September 2017.

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

CYP18. MATTERS ARISING – With regard to Minute 52/Sep/17, the Assistant Director of Children’s Services advised Members that Ofsted had carried out a fifth and final Monitoring Visit in September. The visit covered Looked After Children and planning for permanence. The outcome letter highlighted positives and relevant areas where consistency of practice was required.

CYP19. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PUBLIC HEALTH OVERVIEW 2017 – The Director of Public Health submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an overview of a number of Public Health programmes in relation to children and young people.

The submitted report provided information about the Darlington Children and Young People’s Profile 2017 and the Healthy Lifestyle Survey 2016 as a means of assessing need to plan services to improve health and wellbeing of local children and young people; and also provided information on the 0-19 Years Child Health Service and the Darlington Children and Young People Healthy Weight Action Plan.

With regard to Child Health Profile 2017 it was reported that the profile showed the majority of children’s experience of health and wellbeing in Darlington was generally

good, with 19 of the 32 reported indicators being better or similar compared to England; and there were some improvements from the previous years, including the continued decrease in the under 18 conception rate and smoking status at time of delivery had shown a significant improvement.

Areas highlighted for improvement were oral health which was significantly worse than the England average.

The Healthy Lifestyle's Survey 2016 is a further tool in understanding local need and gathers and analyses information from children and young people in Darlington about their attitudes and behaviours across a range of health related topics. Surveys had been conducted in secondary and primary schools and the key messages from the 2016 surveys were attached as an appendix to the submitted report.

The submitted report updated Members on the 0-19 Child Health Service contract which commenced in April 2016 with Harrogate and District Foundation Trust to deliver the Healthy Child Programme in Darlington and outlined the key milestones that had been achieved over the past 18 months; and also detailed how the 0-19 Child Health Service contract had supported Early Help through the provision of universal and targeted services.

The submitted report also outlined the Childhood Healthy Weight Action Plan, a multi-agency plan developed with a range of stakeholders, including families and children, to implement the national action plan 'Childhood Obesity: A Plan for Action 2016' locally and identify and co-ordinate local actions to tackle overweight and obesity in childhood. The Action Plan was also appended to the submitted report for Members information.

Following discussion Members expressed their concern at the percentage of children aged 5 years with decayed, missing or filled teeth which was significantly worse than the England average and asked the Public Health Specialist if the authority had information on how many young people were accessing dental practices. Members were advised that this information was held by NHS England. Members were also advised that the NSH England commissioned Health Visitor Contract encouraged parents to take their children to a dentist and to brush teeth even before the presence of first teeth. Members agreed that they should have the information relating to the numbers of children accessing a dentist in the authority.

Members discussed Darlington's obesity rates for children in Reception class and in Year 6 which was above the national average and agreed that further work needed to be undertaken in schools to encourage young people to choose healthy options; and also the percentage of babies which were being breastfed at the six to eight week review which was lower than the national average and agreed that more work needed to be done to promote places in Darlington to allow mothers to breastfeed and to become more breast feeding friendly. The Public Health Specialist confirmed that this was a complex issue and that attitudes towards breast feeding had changed and health visitors were encouraging expectant mothers at 28 weeks of their pregnancy to breastfeed their child.

Members also discussed digital inclusion and the number of young people that have access to the internet with the increased use of IT for completion of their homework; and Members agreed that this would be a useful question to ask in the 2017 Healthy Lifestyles Survey to ascertain how many young people may be disadvantaged by the lack of access to IT equipment.

RESOLVED – (a) That the report and action plans be noted.

(b) That this Scrutiny support the continued focus on improving outcomes and reducing health inequalities for children and young people in Darlington.

CYP20. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY REVIEW 2017/18 – The Assistant Director of Commissioning, Performance and Transformation submitted a report (previously circulated) to inform members of the findings of the 2017/18 Childcare Sufficiency Review and to set out the authority’s 2017/18 Action Plan.

Local authorities are required by the Department for Education’s ‘Early Education and Childcare Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities March 2017’ to ensure sufficient childcare as far as is reasonably practicable, for working parents, or parents who are studying or training for employment, for children aged 0-14 or up to 18 for disabled children; and to report annually to elected Members on how they are meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and to make this report available and accessible to parents.

It was reported that factors which affect childcare demand included the number of parents in work in the Borough and recent trends showed an improving picture regarding skills and productivity of Darlington residents with an increase in the employment rate and a reduction in the unemployment rate; regeneration projects; the availability of appropriate family housing and residential development in the Borough; and a number of new dwellings which all affect childcare demand

Supply data for 2017 revealed that the early education and childcare market in Darlington had been fairly stable; however feedback from the childcare demand questionnaire which was distributed via People and Families’ Information Support showed that there is an unmet demand for accessible after-school provision to meet the needs of working parents; and an unmet demand for affordable, accessible holiday provision.

It was also reported that of the 85 settings, schools and child minders providing funded places for two year olds, 75 are Ofsted rated ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’, 8 were awaiting their Ofsted Inspection following registration and two were ‘met’. Work is on going to increase the number of places available with child minders; and to increase the number of funded two year old places available along the North Road corridor.

With regard to sufficiency of Free, Flexible Entitlement (FFE) places for three and four year olds, it was reported that Darlington continues to have a strong private and voluntary childcare sector of 90 providers across the borough, including private day nurseries, pre-schools, nursery schools, maintained and academy nursery units and with child minders.

From September 2017 every local authority in England has a statutory duty to ensure a sufficiency of 30 hours early education and childcare places for eligible three and four year olds and information provided by the Department for Education informs around 820 children resident in the borough will be eligible for 30 hours childcare. The local authority also monitor 30 hours demand in rural areas where additional housing is being built.

Members discussed in particular the unmet demand for accessible after-school provision and affordable accessible holiday childcare and it was suggested that employers be approached to ascertain if they offer any assistance towards childcare and if they have had any issues regarding staff sickness or retention due to unmet childcare needs. Members expressed concern at that the Disability Access Fund and inclusive childcare for younger child and agreed that feedback regarding unmet demand specifically for disabled children and young people could be ascertained via a parental questionnaire distributed via routes such as Darlington Association on Disability. Members added that there had been concerns expressed at Schools' Forum about 30 Hours Childcare funding rates. It was explained that sufficiency and funding rates would need to be monitored.

RESOLVED – (a) That Members note the findings of the 2017/18 Childcare Sufficiency Review.

(b) That Members note the Childcare Sufficiency Action Plan and monitor annually.

CYP21. DARLINGTON STRATEGY FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND/OR DISABILITY (SEND) 2017- 2020 – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to give consideration to the content of the draft Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Strategy (SEND) 2017-2020 (also previously circulated).

It was reported that although there was no statutory requirement to produce a Strategy, it was considered to be best practice to have a strategic plan for delivering improved outcomes for children and young people who have special educational needs and /or disabilities.

The Strategy had been jointly developed by a range of stakeholders from education, health and social care, as well as parents and carers from the local Parent Carer Forum and Darlington Association on Disability. An Equalities Impact Assessment was also carried out as part of the Strategy development to consider the impacts of on disabled children and young people.

It was reported that regulation of SEND will be carried out jointly by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) through a framework of inspection of local areas and it was noted that all local areas will be inspected by 2021. The Strategy covers the next three years and each year will be reviewed to identify key actions based on need and where the biggest impact can be made. Monitoring of the impact of the SEND Strategy will be managed through the SEND Steering Group and progress will

be reported annually to the Health and Well Being Board who also have responsibility for approving the Strategy.

Overall the number of pupils with SEN in Darlington had fallen from 3,428 in January 2010 to 2,430 in January 2017; however the number of pupils with a statement or Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) had risen by 36.8 per cent since 2010 whilst the number of pupils requiring SEND support had declined by 37.6 per cent.

It was highlighted that the most common type of primary need was moderate learning difficulty which equated to 22.27 per cent of the total number of children and young people with SEND followed by social, emotional and mental health at 20.90 per cent, and speech, language and communication needs at 20.77 per cent.

General discussion ensued on the current Ofsted grading of 'inadequate' at the Beaumont Hill Academy, Darlington's special school provision and the subsequent cap on the number of children being able to be admitted to the school; and the overall lack of settings for young people with high end need which was an issue nationally. Members were advised that this was being examined on a Tees Valley wide basis.

Members also discussed the suggestion for a risk register within the Strategy and agreed that this would be beneficial to provide reassurance to both the SEND Steering Group and the Health and Well Being Board.

Following discussion on the draft SEND Strategy Members agreed to a Member briefing to provide further information on the SEND position in Darlington; to update Members on the current position at Beaumont Hill Academy; and to discuss the financial impact of SEND.

RESOLVED – That the draft Special Educational Needs and/or Disability Strategy (SEND) 2017-2020 be noted.

CYP22. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with the current position on youth employment and provide an update on the Youth Employment Initiative in progressing young people into education, employment and training.

Participation in education and training up to 18 and apprenticeships was rising and based on data from August 2017, it was reported that 92.30 per cent of Year 12 young people and 90.06 per cent of Year 13 young people were in learning. The latest data for 2014/15 showed that 93 per cent of Darlington school leavers progressed into a sustained education, employment or training destination which was above the North East average of 92 per cent and just below the England average at 94 per cent.

It was reported that the August 2017 benefit claimant count showed that 6.9 per cent of Darlington 18 to 24 year olds were claiming unemployment benefits compared to 4.8 per cent in the North East, which equated to 530 young people; and the Tees Valley Youth Employment Initiative (YEI) which commenced in mid-2016, aimed at to

supporting 16-29 year olds into employment and training. The three main delivery partners in Darlington were the Council, Morrison Trust and the Citizen's Advice Bureau and 303 Darlington residents had started on the programme of which 113 had already progressed into education, employment and training.

The submitted report also provided information on apprenticeships which had increased to 330; and the government introduced employer incentive for £1,000 for those taking on 16-18 year old apprenticeships; 2016/17 employment data for Darlington; and the results of the national 2016 Employer Perspectives Survey.

Members discussed the current position regarding youth employment and despite overall employment being above the national average, youth employment remained an issue and the claimant count for the 18-24 year old group was almost double the national average. Members discussed the potential reason for this increase including the lack of youth aspirations and poor attitudes to working. Members were advised that this was being addressed by the Tees Valley Combined Authority to develop better labour market information for schools and the Economic Growth Team to ascertain possible reasons for this increase.

RESOLVED – That the report and support being offered to young people to participate in education and training or enter employment be noted.

CYP23. SUFFICIENCY OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES SOCIAL WORK WORKFORCE – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with a progress update in relation to actions taken to improve the social work workforce within Darlington Children's Services.

It was reported that since the last report to this Scrutiny (Minute CYP14/Sep/16 refers) there had been significant progress made to improve the sufficiency and stability of the social work workforce and as at 30 September 2017 the overall vacancy rate was 17 per cent compared to 29 per cent at the end of October 2016. There had also been a continued approach to maintaining manageable caseloads and the workforce drive also encouraged appointments of 10.94 FTE agency workers into permanent posts across the Assessment and Safeguarding Teams, Children's Access Point Team, Looked After Through Care Team and Independent Review Team, thereby reducing the agency rate to 16 per cent at 30 September 2017.

The submitted report detailed recruitment actions and the drive to promote Darlington as a place to live and work; actions to retain the workforce by the introduction of the new Integrated System Liquid Logic in October 2016 and upgrades to IT equipment allowing social workers to actively work with children and families from within a range of settings; a review of the flexi time scheme arrangement; a revised progression scheme was implemented across all teams on 1 April 2017; and a Recruitment and Retention Payment Scheme for social workers was introduced from 1 June 2017.

The submitted report also provided information on the use of agency workers; caseload management; and training and staff development.

RESOLVED – That the report be received.

CYP24. WORK PROGRAMME - The Director of Neighbourhood Services and Resources submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update on the current work programme for this Scrutiny Committee.

The work programme has been reviewed to link it to the outcomes and conditions in the Sustainable Community Strategy and each topic has been linked to performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework to provide accurate data for Members to use when considering topics and the work they wish to undertake.

The Chair advised Members that he was due to meet with the Chair of the Health and Partnership's Scrutiny Committee to complete a Quad of Aims for the joint review to examine Childhood Obesity/Oral Health Care and Mental health and emotional wellbeing.

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