

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

18 December 2017

PRESENT – Councillor C. Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, L. Hughes and Storr. (4)

APOLOGIES – Councillors Crumbie, Mrs Culley, KE Kelly, Lister and Mills. (5)

ABSENT – Councillors Curry and Wright. (2)

STATUTORY CO-OPTEEES – None. (0)

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTEEES – None. (0)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Sharon Raine, Head of Transformation and Performance.

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor C Hughes, Cabinet Member, Children and Young People Portfolio.

CYP25. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP26. MINUTES – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 30 October 2017.

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

CYP27. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 2 2017/18 - The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators for quarter 2 (July to September) 2017/18.

It was reported that the set of indicators included in the submitted report and previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee at their meeting held on 19 June 2017 were aligned with key priorities and it is intended they will be used to monitor the Corporate Plan 2017/21 which was currently being developed.

The submitted report highlighted where Children and Young People were performing well and where there was a need to improve.

The submitted report also contained the Children's Social Care Monthly Performance and Quality Assurance Report for Quarter 2.

The submitted report highlighted that contacts completed within one working day was 98 per cent and exceeding the target of 95 per cent: quarter 2 percentage for assessments completed within 45 working days was 94 per cent above the target of

90 per cent and higher than statistical neighbours; 100 per cent of child protection reviews were completed within timescale; 94 per cent of statutory visits for Looked After Children were completed within timescale at the end of the quarter 2, above the target of 90 per cent; and at the end of quarter 2, 29.2 per cent of Care Leavers were not in employment, education or training (NEET) which is better than the target of 30 per cent and was a reduction of 8.3 per cent when compared with quarter 1.

The submitted report also highlighted areas for improvement which included the increase in the number of re-referrals within 12 months of a previous referral which was higher than the target of 20 per cent and higher than national, regional and statistical benchmarks; at the end of quarter 2 performance for three or more placement moves was 12 per cent of looked after children which was higher than statistical neighbours, the North East average and England average; and at the end of quarter 2 42 per cent of Looked After Children had an up to date health check which was higher than at the same point in 2016/17 at 37 per cent and it was reported that the Head of Service, Assistant Director and Director will continue to monitor this performance on a monthly basis through a health checker.

Members also noted that 34 per cent of Looked After Children had an up to date dental check which was higher than at the same point in 2016/17 16 per cent and will continue to be monitored on a monthly basis through a dental tracker.

The Cabinet Member with the portfolio for Children and Young People referred to the percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of a previous referral and raised a point that a percentage does not always reflect the numbers of Looked After Children and that the focus should be on these children rather than the overall percentages. The Cabinet Member also questioned what additional support was being put in place during any breakdown of placement and how the young people were being helped.

Members also asked for clarification of 'data cleansing' and the Head of Transformation and Performance outlined that since the introduction of Liquid Logic and the transfer of data from 'Care First', data is 'cleansed' on a continual basis through Performance Clinics to ensure that the data is accurate and timely. Members sought reassurance that data cleansing was subject to tight controls to ensure accuracy.

Members also discussed the monthly reporting of data and whether this was necessary now that improvements had been made and the Head of Transformation and Performance confirmed that it has been necessary until all improvements are embedded and consistent and will be reviewed in the coming year and where appropriate, performance will be reported by exception.

RESOLVED – That the quarter 2 performance data be noted.

CYP28. PLACEMENT STABILITY FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) – The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide information on the stability and duration of placements of children who are Looked After.

The submitted report highlighted the two performance indicators relevant to placement stability: the percentage of Looked After Children at the reporting date with three or more placement moves during the last 12 months; and the percentage of Looked After Children aged under 16 at 31 March who had been Looked After continuously for at least two and a half years and who were living in the same placement for at least two years, or are placed for adoption and their adoptive placement together with their previous placement together for at least two years.

With regard to the current performance for the indicator referring to three or more placements, it was reported that Darlington has continued to improve toward its target of 10 per cent as it has reduced from 16.1 per cent in May 2017 to 12 per cent in September 2017.

Regarding the current performance for the indicator referring to placement duration, it was reported that this has also continued to improve and there had been an increase from 51.6 per cent in April 2017 to 57.1 per cent in September 2017. Darlington's target for this indicator is 65 per cent. A performance tracker had also been introduced to enable management oversight of performance and to monitor placements of every looked after child.

It was also reported that the Placement Stability Strategy introduced in June 2017 was having a direct impact on improving both performance indicators and actions have been identified to continue to ensure these are progressed at pace.

Members referred to the issues with some social workers not understanding how to code placements correctly when inputting into Liquidlogic and were advised that all social workers had been re-trained and received specific guidance on correct coding and confirmed that there was now accurate reporting of data.

The Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People portfolio questioned the involvement of schools in placement breakdowns and was advised that the Head of Assessment, Care Planning and Looked After Children co-ordinates all placement moves and has close contact with schools through the Team Around the School approach to highlight to social workers potential breakdowns of placement.

RESOLVED – That Members note the information for the current performance regarding placement stability for children in care and the information and analysis report provided in the submitted Appendices.

CYP29. 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 for the joint review to examine Childhood Obesity/Oral Health Care and Mental health links had commenced and a meeting had been arranged in January to meet with the Primary Care Commissioning Manager (Dental) from NHS England; and that he was to contact all Head teachers to determine the 'take up' of Free School Meals within their school.

It was also reported that a Special Meeting of this Scrutiny Committee will be arranged in January to discuss the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2018/19 to 2021/22 which was out for consultation including setting a budget and council tax increase for 2018/19 and Capital Programme for 2018/19 to 2021/22.

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