

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

19 February, 2018

PRESENT - Councillor C Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Crudass, Crumbie, Curry, KE Kelly, Lister, Mills, Storr and Wright. (9)

NON STATUTORY CO-OPTEES – Mrs G Harrison. (1)

APOLOGIES – Councillor Mrs Culley and L. Hughes (2)

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor C Hughes (1)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jane Kochanowski, Assistant Director of Childrens Services; Simon Hart, Independent Chair of the Darlington Safeguarding Childrens Board.

CYP32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

CYP33. MINUTES – Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 18 December 2017 and the special meeting held on 15 January 2018.

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

CYP34. EXTENSION OF FUNDING TO AGE 21 FOR CHILDREN IN FOSTER CARE – The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide annual information regarding the cost of funding to age 21 for young people in previous foster care placements.

The submitted report outlined the legal framework requiring local authorities to provide Staying Put Arrangements which came into force on 13 May 2014; implementing Staying Put arrangements in Darlington; planning for Staying Put Arrangements; and the number of current Staying Put Arrangements which currently was seven young people.

The submitted report also outlined how the Staying Put Arrangements are monitored by their Independent Reviewing Officer up to the age of 18 years; and evaluation as part of the ongoing monitoring of the Tees Valley Commissioning Framework.

Detailed costs relating to the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 and projected expenditure for the period 1 April 2017 to 31 March 2018 were also highlighted in the report; and the priorities for Staying Put through 2018 and 2019.

Members agreed that the Staying Put Arrangements were a positive move for these young people to provide stability and in particular for those who go to university, along with the Supported Lodgings facility.

Members questioned if the authority continues to fund Staying Put Arrangements for the young people who attend university and were pleased to learn that there is continued support throughout for young people including Supported Lodging Arrangements. They also discussed any options for recruiting foster carers specifically for these young people.

Members also discussed the benefits of Staying Put Arrangements for those young people who choose to go into the Armed Forces and discussed briefly the pending review of this authority's Foster Care Offer which will be reported to Members at a future date.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP35. DARLINGTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17 – The Director Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to give Members of this Scrutiny an opportunity to consider and comment on the Annual Report of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) for the period 2016/17.

Simon Hart, the Independent Chair of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board attended the meeting and presented the report and highlighted the role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

It was reported that the Annual Report for 2016/17 was based on four strategic priorities and following the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Care Services in July 2015 the DSCB agreed to focus more toward looking at the impact partners were making to the wellbeing of young people.

The Independent Chair gave an overview of the local context and demographics of Darlington; the strength and capacity of the safeguarding arrangements across the partnerships; the Governance arrangements in place across the partners; and the following the Ofsted Report the regular reporting to the Improvement Board to address the requirements of the improvement.

He also highlighted the ongoing work towards developing a performance framework with partners including Health and the Police; and learning from audits and case reviews which are co-ordinated and shared with the relevant Sub-Committees and Darlington Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board (DSAPB) to make full use of the review and development of future practice.

Other areas highlighted by the Independent Chair for future areas of focus included concerns across the partners with access to the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS); the future report to the DSCB on

the effectiveness and impact of the Early Help Strategy; work on child sexual exploitation and the good work being undertaken within schools and the sharing of young persons experiences; e-safety; the results of the new Safeguarding Audit which will be reported to Members of this Scrutiny Committee at a future meeting; and the strengthening of Case Review arrangements.

Members questioned the rate of A and E attendance and hospital admissions for children of all ages which was statistically significantly greater than England the possible reasons for this and if there were immediate transfers to the mental health system; and Members discussed with the Independent Chair the challenges faced with the CAMHS Service currently and their concerns and the Independent Chair advised Members that it was his intention to raise the concerns raised with the Safeguarding Board at regional and national level.

A Member also questioned the increase of allegations that were recorded referrals and Members requested that they receive some comparative data to see if this was the norm across authorities. Members also discussed the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) who work with all partners to ensure that any allegations made against staff who work with children are reported and it was agreed that Members include the LADO's Annual Report in their work programme.

The Community Representative suggested training on the role of the LADO be offered to all Members. She advised Members that in her opinion was a good service offering valuable advice and guidance and felt it would be useful for Members to know how the training is offered to other agencies as a statutory role.

The Chair referred to the statistics on dental health in Darlington 2014/15 which showed that 35.4 per cent of five years olds had one or more decayed, filled or missing teeth and advised Members of the on going work of the joint review with Health and Partnerships on Childhood Obesity and Dental Health.

Members also questioned the links between the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Community, which is the largest single ethnic minority group in Darlington, with the Safeguarding Board and the Independent Chair advised Members that currently the GRT community were not represented on the Board, however work was on going to strengthen liaison in organisations for a stronger picture of vulnerability in the GRT communities.

RESOLVED – (a) That the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report for 2016/17 be noted.

(b) That the thanks of this Committee be extended to Simon Hart, Independent Chair for his comprehensive report and presentation.

CYP36. 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.

Members discussed potential areas for inclusion on the work programme including school improvement; the Outreach Service for autistic children; and poverty in Darlington including 'period poverty' and 'holiday hunger'.

A Member also requested feedback on the budget overspend relating to placement costs for looked after children and the Assistant Director, Children's Services advised the Committee that she will provide that for Members.

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