
OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1. Since the last meeting of the Council, the following are the main areas of work the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee has undertaken.

Work Programme

2. We continue to give consideration to the Work Programme for this Committee and revision to the work programme 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.
3. Each topic within the work programme will be developed through a series of questions and drill down to investigate particular aspects of extensive topics.
4. This Scrutiny Committee are also undertaking a 'deep dive' examination of the service for families with children with disabilities 0-3 years old to test the effectiveness of the service and to consult with relevant stakeholders and will report back to this Scrutiny at the meeting scheduled for 7 November 2016.

Year End Performance 2015/16.

5. We examined the year end performance for 2015/16 against the Council's top level scorecard for Children's Services and considered Quarter 3 performance and the year end information which informed the Department for Education review and which was presented to the Improvement Board.
6. Many of the issues that had been identified at the time of the Ofsted Inspection around delays in recording and reporting information had now been addressed; and regular performance clinics involving heads of service and operational and team managers are now in place.
7. Significant improvements have been made in timeliness of assessment and planning timescales to hold an initial child protection conference; the number of children subject to a child protection plan for more than two years has reduced indicating that interventions with those children on child protection plans is timely; and reviews of child protection plans are at 93 per cent and reviews of children who are looked after are at 94.3 per cent, equating to 13 out of 184 reviews out of timescale. All plans will be reviewed to achieve timeliness for these children.

8. A weekly reporting system has also been introduced for both child protection and children looked after visiting to identify those visits that are approaching timescale; a new system for initial health assessments was introduced in February 2016 to ensure that assessments take place within 20 days; and 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.
9. Members questioned what actions were being taken to improve the position with regard to care leavers; if the data for looked after children and those NEET was broken down by ward and schools attended; the reasons why dental checks were slightly behind target and statistical neighbours despite significant improvements being made; 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.
10. We will continue to monitor performance and in particular performance of 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.

Placement Stability for Looked After Children

11. We received a report on the stability of placements for Looked After Children who have experienced three placement moves or more during a rolling twelve month period.
12. It is the role of the Family Placement Service to recruit, train, assess and support internal foster carers, adopters, supported lodgings providers and the completion of assessments for those making application for Special Guardianship Orders.
13. Performance is showing an improvement and work will continue to further increase performance over the next 12 months.
14. We will continue to monitor placement stability and receive a report annually.

Recording Practices for Statutory Visits for Child Protection Cases

15. We received a report on the current performance for undertaking statutory visits to children subject to a child protection plan in response to the comment by Ofsted in September 2015 that 'too many children' were not being seen within timescales.
16. Improvements have now been made to monitoring these children and this is now being done on a weekly basis.
17. We 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.

Procurement, Mobilisation and Transformation of 0-19 Years Public Health Service

18. We received an update on the transition and mobilisation of the new 0-19 years Public Health Service for Darlington following the service review when 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.
19. 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. The contract has 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.

Darlington Child Health Profile 2016

20. We received a report on the key messages from the Darlington Health Profile 2016 which 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 also against the regional and England averages.
21. 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.
22. 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.

Meetings

23. Since the last meeting of Council, I have:
 - (a) Attended meetings of the Improvement Board on May 25 and June 22.
 - (b) Attended the Intervention Review Meeting with the DFE on May 17.
 - (c) Attended the Darlington Vibe Awards on June 21.

Councillor Chris Taylor
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee