
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 taking into account the ambitious programme of change across the Council and the key role of Scrutiny in ensuring that the programme is able to deliver the service improvements and the budget savings necessary.
3. Members discussed potential areas to add to the Work Programme including school improvement; the Outreach Service for autistic children; and poverty in Darlington.

Review Group - Childhood Obesity/Dental Health and Mental Health links.

4. Members of the Joint Review Group with Health and Partnerships Scrutiny have met for a second time to discuss commissioning responsibilities, the provision of dental services and the oral health of children in Darlington with representatives of NHS England and the Public Health Principal.
5. The Consultant in Dental Public Health, the Primary Care Business Manager and the Local Dental Network Chair, Darlington and Tees provided a lot of valuable information for Members consideration.

Extension of Funding to Age 21 for Children in Foster Care

6. We received an annual update on the costs to this authority of funding to age 21 for young people in previous foster care placements for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017 and projected costs for the year ending 31 March 2018.
7. It is now a legal requirement (since 13 May 2014) to provide Staying Put Arrangements and the duty requires us to facilitate, monitor and support fostered young people until they reach the age of 21 if this is what they and their foster carers want.
8. As of 19 January 2018 there are seven young people in Staying Put arrangements. Of these six remained with their local authority approved foster carers and one with their Independent Fostering Agency foster carers.

9. We agreed that the Staying Put Arrangements are a positive move for these young people providing them with stability and in particular for those who go to university or into the Armed Forces.
10. We were interested to know 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.

Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17

11. Simon Hart, the Independent Chair of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) attended Scrutiny and presented the Annual Report of the DSCB and highlighted the role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
12. The Annual Report for 2016/17 is based on four strategic priorities of providing leadership for a whole system child focused approach to safeguarding; setting standards for joint working and assessing that they are effective and improving; learning from reviews and seeking assurance that the children's workforce have appropriate knowledge and skills; and to ensure that all vulnerable children in Darlington are identified and that there is a proportionate multi-agency response to their needs.
13. It was reported that following the Ofsted Inspection of Children's Care Services in July 2015 the DSCB agreed to focus more on the impact partners are making to the wellbeing of young people.
14. The Independent Chair gave a very comprehensive overview of the local context and demographics of Darlington; the strength and capacity of the safeguarding arrangements across all partners; Governance arrangements; ongoing work towards the development of a performance framework; and the learning from case reviews and audits used to review and develop future practices.
15. Areas highlighted by Simon for future areas of focus of the DSCB included access to the Children Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS); the effectiveness and impact of the Early Help Strategy; work on child sexual exploitation; e-safety; and the results of the new Safeguarding Audit which will be reported to Scrutiny Members at a future meeting.
16. Members also expressed their concerns with the CAMHS service so were particularly pleased to hear that this was going to be examined by the Board. We also raised our concerns with Simon at the high rate of A and E attendance and hospital admissions for all ages which was statistically significantly greater than England; and also the increase in poor dental health of our children in Darlington, which was already being picked up by our joint Review with Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee.

17. We also discussed the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer who works with all partners to ensure that any allegations made against staff who work with children are reported; and links between the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Community with the Safeguarding Board and learned that work was ongoing to strengthen liaison in organisations for a stronger picture of vulnerability in the GRT community.

Meetings

18. Since the last meeting of Council, I have:

- (a) attended the Darlington Primary Schools Eurovision Song Contest;
- (b) attended the North East Festival of Youth Choirs at Durham Cathedral; and
- (c) taken part in the election count for the Member of the Youth Parliament

Councillor Chris Taylor
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee