

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 12 April 2021

PRESENT – Councillors C L B Hughes (Chair), Bartch, Mrs Culley, Ali, Bell, Crudass, Lister, Lucas, Renton and Snedker

STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – None

APOLOGIES – Carly Spence, Tim Fisher, Nick Lindsay and John Armitage

ABSENT – Malcolm Frank, Maura Regan and Janet Woodcock

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jane Kochanowski (Assistant Director of Children's Services), Sharon Raine (Head of Performance and Transformation), Allison Hill (Democratic Officer) and Tony Murphy (Head of Education and Inclusion)

CYP31 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

CYP32 TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THIS SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 1 MARCH 2021

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 1 March 2021.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 1 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

CYP33 HRH PRINCE PHILIP, DUKE OF EDINBURGH

The Chair and Members held a moment of reflection for HRH Prince Philip and acknowledged his work with children and young people and in particular with the Duke of Edinburgh Award.

CYP34 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 3 2020/21

The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators.

The submitted report provided Quarter 3 (October to December) 2020/21 performance information in line with an indicator set agreed by the Monitoring and Co-ordination Group and subsequently by each individual Scrutiny Committee.

The submitted report highlighted where Children and Young People Services were performing well and where there was a need to improve. It was also outlined that where indicators are reported annually, quarterly updates will not be available.

It was highlighted that 92.5 per cent of Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) were held within 15 working days of the Strategy meeting being held / section 47 being initiated, which remains higher than our statistical neighbour, regional and national average benchmarks; 100 per cent of children with a Child Protection (CP) plan and 100 per cent of Children in Care (CiC) have an allocated social worker; year to date no child has ceased to be subject to a CP plan who had been subject to the plan for 2 or more years and continue to positively perform below our targets of 5 per cent; 85.8 per cent of children received a statutory CP visit within 10 working days in Quarter 3; 93.4 per cent of statutory CiC visits were completed within timescale year to date above the target of 90 per cent and an improvement on the timeliness of visits when compared with the same period last year (88.2 per cent); 6.7 per cent of Children in Care (CiC), as at December 2020, have had 3 or more placements within the previous 12 months which is better than the internal target, national, regional averages (all at 10 per cent) and statistical neighbour (9.9 per cent) which was an improvement on 10.7 per cent as at December 2019; 7.4 per cent of our Children in Care have been placed 20 or more miles away from home as at December 2020; 100 per cent of the children, newly into care, were seen by CDDFT within 20 working days for an initial health assessment during Quarter 3 2020/21; 91.7 per cent of children due a review health assessment year to date had one completed; and 26.5 per cent of Care Leavers were not in employment, education or training (NEET) which is positivity below target of 30 per cent and 98.0 per cent were in suitable accommodation.

The areas highlighted for focus were in respect of referrals screened and completed within 1 day which was 75.6 per cent during Q3 2020/21 giving a year to date performance of 77.7 per cent, below the target of 90 per cent; 19.7 per cent of re-referrals year to date, were repeated within 12 months, above the target of 18 per cent; timeliness of assessments was 85.2 per cent, below the target of 90 per cent; at the end of December 2020, the percentage of children becoming subject to a Child Protection plan for a second or subsequent time within 2 years of the previous plan ending was 8.3 per cent, above the 6 per cent target; the number of Children in Care had decreased to 284 by the end of December 2020, in line with the number at the end of December 2019 (280) and work continues to safely reduce the number of children becoming looked after; and as a result of dental surgery closures during lockdown, 29.5 per cent of Children in Care, that were due a dental check assessment, have had one completed.

Members discussed in particular the percentage of referrals completed within one working day and the rise in those taking over 3 working days and questioned what procedures were in place to expedite this; the percentage of re-referrals that are received within 12 months of a previous referral and what has been done to address this area; regarding the number of children and families assessments completed and if there were any emerging themes; a Member questioned if officers were expecting any change in the number of Child Protection Plans coming out of lockdown and the reasons why this authority was below the regional statistics for Child Protection Plans; and discussed the number of children in care with three or more separate placements which had reduced however Members felt still required constant monitoring.

Members also acknowledged the work that had been undertaken to ensure that the number of initial health assessments completed within 20 working days was 100 per

cent; however they questioned what the authority intended to do to encourage the number of children in care to have an annual dental check; and Members requested further information on the number of agency social workers the authority employed; and the approximate ratio of Looked after children placed from outside the authority in Darlington.

RESOLVED – That the performance information reported for Quarter 3 2020/21 be noted.

CYP35 WORK PROGRAMME

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) requesting that consideration be given to this Scrutiny Committee's work programme and to consider any additional areas which Members would like to suggest should be included in the previously approved work programme

RESOLVED – That the work programme be noted.

CYP36 FINAL REPORT OF THE EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE REVIEW GROUP

With the prior approval of the Chair to the matter being treated as urgent to make recommendations at the earliest time the Review Group established to examine the effects of the pandemic on children and young people presented their final report to Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for approval.

The final report outlined the findings and recommendations of the Review Group established by this Scrutiny Committee at the meeting held on 4 January 2021.

The aim of the review was to examine the current picture, identify good practice and if there are any gaps in service; and to make suggestions or recommendations to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Darlington Cares Board and/or Cabinet.

Members discussed the report and recommendations and Councillor Crudass presented a number of additional comments and recommendations to be included in the report. Members confirmed that as this was an important piece of work they wanted to ensure that a unanimous decision could be made on the final report, therefore agreed to refer the final report back to the Review Group to re-consider the final report and the additions presented by Councillor Crudass.

RESOLVED – That no decision be made on the final report and that it be referred back to the Review Group for further discussion and be presented to a Special meeting of this Scrutiny for approval.