

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

10 September 2018

**PRESENT** – Councillor C Taylor (in the Chair); Councillors Curry, Crudass, L. Hughes, KE Kelly, Lister, Mills and Storr. (7)

**APOLOGIES** – Councillors Crumbie, Mrs Culley and Wright; M Regan, N Lindsay, T Fisher, Jane Kochanowski and Joanne Stoddart.

**ABSENT** – None (0)

**STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – None. (0)

**NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees** – (0)

**OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE** – Rachel Osbaldeston, Public Health Portfolio Lead; Martin Graham, Head of Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement; and Allison Hill, Democratic Officer.

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

**CYP9. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS** – There were no declarations of interest reported at the meeting.

**CYP10. MINUTES** – Submitted - The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2 July 2018.

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

**CYP11. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 1 2018/19** – The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on performance against key performance indicators.

The submitted report provided Quarter 1 (April to June) performance information in line with an indicator set agreed by Monitoring and Coordination Group and subsequently by each individual Scrutiny Committee.

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

It was highlighted that 94.2 per cent of contacts were completed within 24 working hours and 0.5 per cent within 72 hours which equates to an increase by 19.5 per cent compared to Quarter 1 2017/18; 94.1 per cent of children in Quarter 1 had a Review Health Assessment completed; 98 per cent of initial Child Protection Conferences were held within 15 working days; 100 per cent of Child Protection Reviews had been completed within the required timescales; 100 per cent of children involved with Child

Protection and Looked After had been allocated a Social Worker; and 100 per cent of Looked After Reviews were completed within timescale in Quarter 1.

It was also highlighted that 93.2 per cent of statutory visits of Looked After Children in Quarter 1 were completed within timescale which was above the target of 90 per cent; 9.6 per cent of Looked After Children had three or more placement moves within the last 12 months which was an improvement of 6.3 per cent compared to the end of Quarter 1 2017/18 and in line with the statistical neighbours at 9.5 per cent and the national average at 10 per cent; 100 per cent of Return Home Interviews had been completed in Quarter 1 with 92.5 per cent completed within 72 hours of the child being returned home after the missing episode; and 27.5 per cent of Care Leavers were not in employment, education or training (NEET) which was better than the target of 33 per cent and is a reduction of 4.7 per cent when compared with 2017/18 year end figure.

The areas highlighted that required improvement in Quarter 1 were the percentage of assessments completed within 45 working days which was below the target of 90 per cent at 83.5 per cent but above the England average of 83 per cent; 48.7 per cent of dental health checks had been completed at the end of Quarter 1 and progress against this indicator continues to undergo close scrutiny; and although the percentage of Looked After Children who have been in their current placement for two or more years has improved compared to Quarter 1 2017/18 and is now at 63.1 per cent has still not reached the Council's target of 65 per cent.

Members highlighted the performance indicator for Care Leavers in unsuitable accommodation which was 5.9 per cent and wanted some clarification on the assessment of 'unsuitable accommodation'. The Head of Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement advised Members that 5.9 per cent in reality will only equate to one or two young persons and being in custody would be recorded as unsuitable accommodation. Members requested that future reports provide further detail on why the Care Leaver has been recorded in unsuitable accommodation so that the Committee can be assured that this does not mean the Care Leaver is living in danger or in poor conditions.

Members also expressed their concerns that some indicators were slipping; and the percentage of Looked After Children still remained high and agreed that the performance report for the next quarter needed to provide Members with reasons for this slippage and the impact caused.

Regarding the number of assessments in Quarter 1 that had not been completed within 45 working days Members agreed that they needed assurances and evidence that if an authority is not meeting their deadlines what was being done to address this.

**RESOLVED** – That the performance information provided for Quarter 1 2018/19 be noted.

**CYP12. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18** – The Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with the Annual Report of the Independent Reviewing Officer for 2017/18.

The Independent Review Officer (IRO) service is set within the statutory framework of the IRO Handbook (2010), linked to revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance which was introduced in April 2011. The IRO has a key role in relation to the improvement of Care Planning for Looked After Children (LAC) and for challenging drift and delay.

The submitted report outlined the role of the Independent Reviewing Officers and the statutory functions that the service is responsible for; detailed the staffing levels and the management of caseloads; and provided statistical information relating to the number of Children Looked After, demographics and Looked After Reviews at 31 March.

The submitted report referred to Performance Planning and Adoption; the Dispute Resolution Process to resolve problems arising out of the Care Planning process; and the requirement under Regulation 29 (The Fostering Services Regulations 2001) to review the approval of foster carers at least once a year.

The submitted report also highlighted Child Protection Activity; management of the IRO service; and scheduled action for 2018/19.

The Cabinet Member with the Children and Young People Portfolio questioned the officer how the 'voice of the child' is captured and how did we know what the impact was. The Head of Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement advised that the Independent Review Officer's visit young people prior to their review and ensure that the child's views are recorded within the record of the meeting. The majority of children over the age of 4 years attend their reviews and directly contribute to the discussion and outcome of the meeting.

It was highlighted that some young people chose not to participate directly in their Looked After Reviews and will brief an advocate or complete a consultation form.

Where an IRO challenge is required in relation to Care Planning this will be escalated to Managers for resolution.

It was suggested that case examples of good practice would be a useful addition to next year's annual report.

Discussion also ensued on the number of children subject to a Child Protection Plan and the reasons for the plan; timeliness of Child Protection Conferences; the percentage of Subsequent Plans which was in-line with the England average but higher than the regional average and some of the reasons for this; and the good representation of parents at the Initial Child Protection Conference.

**RESOLVED** – That the Annual report be noted.

### **CYP13. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PUBLIC HEALTH OVERVIEW 2018 –**

The Director of Public Health submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an overview of the health promoting activities in relation to children and young people and the plans to address these issues.

The submitted report provided information about the Darlington Children and Young People's Profile 2018 and the Healthy Lifestyle Survey 2017 as a means of assessing need to plan services to improve health and wellbeing of local children and young people; and also provided information about the Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Action Plan 2017-2022 and the Oral Health Plan 2017-2022 (also all previously circulated).

With regard to the Child Health Profile 2018 it was reported that the profile showed the health and wellbeing of children in Darlington was varied compared to the England average, with 11 of the 32 reported indicators for Darlington being significantly different when compared to England, with four significantly better and 11 significantly worse. These were mainly the high number of children admitted to hospital and this is an ongoing priority for all partners.

The areas that showed some improvement in the 2018 profile from the previous years included the percentage of children aged 5 years with decayed, missing or filled teeth which had decreased from 35.4 per cent in 2017 profile (2015/16 data) to 26.4 per cent (2016/17 data) and Darlington is now significantly similar to the England average of 23.3 per cent.

An area highlighted for improvement from the profile was childhood obesity which showed that 10.6 per cent of children in Reception, (similar to England) and 22.5 per cent of children in Year 6, (worse than England) are obese.

The Healthy Lifestyle's Survey 2017 is a further tool in understanding local need and gathers and analyses information from children and young people in Darlington about their attitudes and behaviours across a range of health related topics. Surveys had been conducted in secondary and primary schools and the key messages from the 2017 survey were attached as an appendix to the submitted report.

The Darlington Childhood Healthy Weight Plan 2017-2022 sets out a whole system approach to tackling childhood obesity and reducing inequalities by ensuring the healthy weight agenda is integrated in other relevant plans aims to increase the percentage of children leaving primary school at a healthy weight.

It was reported that although the main causes of obesity were poor diet and low levels of physical activity, environmental changes can have the most impact on reducing obesity; and tackling environmental issues requires a co-ordinated partnership approach from a wide variety of stakeholders to enable effective and sustainable environmental change.

The Darlington Oral Health Plan 2017-2022 complements the work of the Childhood Healthy Weight Plan as a high sugar diet is a risk factor in dental decay as over a third of children in Darlington aged five years old start school with the experience of dental decay. The plan proposes a 'whole system approach' to tackling dental decay, improving oral health and reducing inequalities.

Members discussion ensued on energy drinks and the caffeine drinks which young people appeared to be purchasing as an alternative; the number of young people aged

10 to 24 years admitted to hospital as a result of self-harm which remained higher than the England average; and the participation of schools in the Healthy Lifestyles Survey.

Members also discussed ways to encourage parents to walk their children to school and the 'walking train'; how to challenge parents lifestyle choices; the level of physical activity within schools and the influence that the authority can have within schools and in particular the academies; how to promote eating within schools as a social event and to address any anxieties that young people may have around eating in public; and to examine ways to restrict the number of hot food takeaways across the borough.

**CYP14. DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT** – The Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to update Members on the progress and performance of the Designated Officer (DO) Service (previously known as the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) between April 2017 to March 2018 and to highlight the required actions for April 2018 to March 2019.

The submitted report outlined the function of the Designated Officer; local arrangements; the criterion for a Designated Officer referral; cross boundary issues; provided statistical information on the number of referrals and annual comparisons; areas of concern and the main category for referral; detailed the source of referrals by profession and employment setting; allegations by staff group; and gave detail of outcomes of cases.

The submitted report also provided performance information relating to the Designated Officer Service; freedom of information requests; service improvements and developments 2017/18; and highlighted priorities for 2018/19.

A Member questioned whether other agencies were obliged to report any concerns to the Designated Officer and the Head of Quality Assurance and Practice Improvement advised that all agencies are required to have a Child Protection Policy in place and a Management Investigation Process.

Members also agreed that it would be useful for them to have a copy of the public information available in relation to the role of the Designated Officer and other relevant safeguarding contacts. This would help Members promote children's safeguarding to faith groups and other organisations within their individual Wards.

**RESOLVED** –That the contents of the annual report and work undertaken during 2017/18 and the priorities of the Designated Officer service for 2018/19 be noted and agreed.

**CYP15. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN MISSING FROM CARE WHO HAVE AUTISM OR ANOTHER DISABILITY** – Pursuant to Minute CYP5/Jul/28, the Director of Children and Adult Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with further information regarding the number of children who are Looked After with autism or another disability, who experience missing from home episodes.

It was reported that there were no children or young people missing from home with a recorded disability including autism throughout the reporting year of 2017/18; however

There has been one missing episode for one young person with autism in the current reporting year of 2018/19 and this young person left his foster placement in the early evening but was located and returned home within the hour.

Councillor Mills acknowledged that the report received provided information on the children who are already diagnosed with autism or another disability however, she still had concerns about how un-diagnosed children could be picked up from incidents of going missing as this could be the first sign of a potential issue with the young person.

Members agreed that they would like to examine a copy of the Return Home Interview Pro-forma with a view to disability or health issues being recorded on it and to include a criteria to recognise potential issues related to autism.

**RESOLVED** – That the report be noted.

**CYP16. WORK PROGRAMME** – The Assistant Director Law and Governance submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide an update on the current work programme for this Scrutiny Committee.

The work programme has been reviewed and revised for the Municipal Year 2018/19 and has been linked to performance indicators from the Performance Management Framework to provide robust and accurate data for Members to use when considering topics and the work they wish to undertake.

Councillor Mills advised the Committee that she was leading on the review of Autism Provision at Hurworth School and will be notifying Members of an initial meeting date in due course.

The Chair advised the Committee that, along with the Chair of Health and Partnerships Scrutiny Committee he was to meet with Ken Ross, Public Health Principal to discuss progressing the outstanding issues on the Joint Review of Child Healthy Weight and Oral Hygiene including mental health links.

The Chair also advised the Members that a report on Educational Landscape was being presented to the next meeting of this Scrutiny Committee and he envisaged a further review as a result of that report.

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