

COUNCIL
14 July 2022

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.

Missing and Exploited Operational Change

2. We received an update on operational changes, improvements and developments in relation to the Missing and Exploited Service since it was remodeled in March 2020 to ensure that the right service is provided swiftly to children and their families and this remodeling at the Front Door has transformed the Children's Access Point (CAP) into the Children's Initial Advice Team (CIAT) and is now at the forefront of an ever growing Children's Front Door Service.
3. One area in particular which has seen much improvement and change is children who go missing and who are at risk of exploitation and in October 2020 the multi-agency group, the Missing and Exploitation Team was formed within the Service.
4. A further review at the end of 2020 focused on the impact of operational processes and how they supported improvement of practice and we discussed how the revised processes will aim to support those children and young people at the most significant risk of harm and along with internal and external partners can bring about a positive impact on children and their families.
5. We were particularly interested to know what training was being offered to the Bus Network and how the Service intended to measure its success going forward.
6. The Assistant Chief Constable, Tonya Antonis attended the meeting to share with Members her many years' experience in safeguarding and she advised us that she was encouraged by the work of the team linking missing and exploited and the various multi-agency meetings that were taking place to address this national issue.
7. John Armitage, the Primary Schools Forum representative also attended and advised us of the various forums held within schools and confirmed that access to the Front Door was now more accessible and more schools were receiving advice. The role of the Vulnerable Pupil Panel was also acknowledged as a key tool for more specific discussions on vulnerable children who may be experiencing social, emotional and mental health difficulties within mainstream school settings.

Performance Indicators 2020/21

8. Children's Services Year End (April 2021 to March 2022) performance information was presented to the June meeting which highlighted the following areas of good practice:

- (a) 10.5 per cent of children referred by the end of March 2022 had been a re-referral to Children's Social Care within 12 months of a previous referral which was below the internal target of 18 per cent;
 - (b) 4.7 cent of the referrals took over 3 working days to be completed in 2021/22 which was positively just below the target of 5 per cent;
 - (c) 100 per cent of children with a Children Protection Plan (CP) and 100 per cent of Children in Care (CiC) had an allocated social worker;
 - (d) During 2021/22 no child had ceased to be subject to a CP plan who had been subject to the plan for two or more years positively below the target of 5 per cent;
 - (e) 100 per cent of CiC were allocated a qualified social worker and 98.8 per cent of reviews had been completed within required timescales;
 - (f) the number of CiC was 273 by the end of March 2022 with 100 children coming into care and 99 ceasing care during the reporting year and work continues to safety reduce the number of children coming into care;
 - (g) 90.1 per cent of statutory CiC visits had been completed within timescale in line with the target of 90 per cent;
 - (h) 10.6 per cent of CiC had had three or more placements within the previous 12 months and was in line with the internal target of 10 per cent;
 - (i) 74 per cent of CiC aged under 16 years had been in their current placement continuously for at least two years and was positively above the internal target of 68 per cent;
 - (j) 6.6 per cent of CiC had been placed 20 or more miles away from home as of March 2022 below the target of 10 per cent;
 - (k) 90.5 per cent of CiC due a review health assessment by March 2022 had one completed and 83.7 of the children due a dental check had one completed; and
 - (l) 23.1 per cent of Care Leavers were Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) at the end of March 2022 which was positively below the target of 30 per cent and 100 per cent were in suitable accommodation.
9. Areas highlighted for focus were in respect of:
- (a) 72.1 per cent of referrals screened and completed within one working day in 2021/22 was below the target of 90 per cent;
 - (b) Social workers completed 84.5 per cent of the C and F assessments within timescale in 2021/22 below the target of 90 per cent, similar to the same period the previous year;

- (c) 79.3 per cent of Initial Child Protection Conferences were held within 15 working days from the strategy meeting/section 47 being initiated, excluding transfer-in conferences in 2021/22;
 - (d) at the end of March 2022 the percentage of children becoming subject to a CP plan for a second or subsequent time within two years of the previous plan ending was 7.1 per cent above the target of 6 per cent, however this was a reduction from 9.4 per cent at the end of March 2021; and
 - (e) 82.9 per cent of children received a statutory CP visit within ten working days in 2021/22 and was below the target of 90 per cent.
10. We acknowledged the continued challenge in Foster Carer sufficiency and its impact on the performance data and the challenges around stability and also discussed access to mental health services and direct mental health support and how this lack of provision could be challenged.
11. We also discussed the spike in Elective Home Education (EHE) during lockdown, however those numbers had now stabilised but there was still a concern with non-attendance of those pupils on roll and it was agreed that further information and data on EHE/non-attendance be supplied to this Scrutiny Committee to enable Members to monitor the situation.

Work Programme

12. Members gave consideration to the Work Programme items scheduled to be considered by this Scrutiny Committee during 2022/23, and to any additional areas that Members would like to be included.

Members received the further information requested on the current pre-school supply and demand at ward level and also information on how planned investment in the Liquid Logic Early Years and Education System will enhance the collection of data and plan to have further discussions with the Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion on childcare sufficiency.

Councillor Paul Crudass
Chair of Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee