

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 4 November 2019

PRESENT – Councillors Barch (Chair), Mrs Culley, Ali, L Hughes, Lister, Lucas, Renton and Snedker

STATUTORY CO-OPTees – Carly Spence

NON-STATUTORY CO-OPTees – Glenis Harrison and John Armitage

APOLOGIES – Councillors Bell, C L B Hughes and Preston; and Nick Lindsay

ABSENT – Malcolm Frank, Maura Regan, Tim Fisher and Janet Woodcock

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE – Councillor Crudass; and Ann Baxter, Independent Chair of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE – Jane Kochanowski (Assistant Director of Children's Services) and Allison Hill (Democratic Officer)

CYP53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest reported at this meeting.

CYP54 MINUTES

Submitted – The Minutes (previously circulated) of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2 September 2019.

RESOLVED – That the Minutes of the meeting of this Scrutiny Committee held on 2 September 2019 be approved as a correct record.

CYP55 PERFORMANCE INDICATORS QUARTER 1 2019/20

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 1 (April-June) 2019/20 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 were performing well and where there was a need to improve. It was also highlighted that where indicators are reported annually quarterly updates will not be available.

It was highlighted that 96.8 per cent of referrals are screened and completed within one day which was above the target of 90 per cent; 14.8 per cent of re-referrals were repeated within 12 months which was in an increase on the target of 18 per cent; 100 per cent of children with a Child Protection Plan and 100 per cent of Children Looked After have an allocated social worker; 8; and 29.6 per cent of Care Leavers who were

not in employment, education or training (NEET).

The areas highlighted for improvement in Quarter 1 was the timeliness of assessments which was 88.1 per cent, below the target of 90 per cent and the reasons for this have been analysed and monitored by the Head of Service; 94 per cent of statutory child protection visits were completed within 15 working days with 82.6 per cent completed within 10 working days; and 86 per cent of statutory children in care visits were completed within the timescale and performance was closely managed; the number of children in care had increased to 277; and 60.4 per cent of health assessment and 58.5 per cent of dental assessments due were completed within the required timescale although further work was required in ensuring records are kept up to date.

Members discussed in particular the percentage of Care Leavers that were not in employment, education or training (NEET) and the reasons for them being NEET and requested that for future reports this figure be presented as numbers with the specific reason for being NEET rather than as a percentage; and the criteria for referrals to the Children's Access Point. The Assistant Director of Children's Services also outlined the work of the NEED Reduction Group who meet monthly to discuss each young person who falls into this cohort and make plans in an effort to re-engage them in education, employment or training.

Members questions related to the 15 working days before an Initial Child Protection Conference is held, following the Strategy meeting, and what safeguarding interventions are put in place with the young person during this time; reasons why most of the young people missing in Darlington for Quarter 1 were in residential care when they were reported missing and the timeliness of Return Home Interviews which were completed within 72 hours and the level of engagement by the young person.

Members also discussed the increase in the number of children in care and how many are placed from outside the authority. The Assistant Director of Children's Services advised Members that in addition to the 277 children in care there were 160 children placed in Darlington from other authorities.

RESOLVED – That the performance information provided for Quarter 4 2018/19 be noted.

CYP56 DARLINGTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) for Scrutiny Members to comment on the Annual Report of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) for the period 2018/19.

Ann Baxter, Independent Chair of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board attended the meeting to outline the Annual Report which was a statutory requirement to produce to account for the Board's activities and make an assessment of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements within the local area.

The Annual report for 2018/19 was based on the DSCB's three strategic priorities to ensure effective arrangements are in place that enable children, young people and their families to access appropriate Early Help support when first identified and this

support is well coordinated; to ensure effective arrangements are in place to protect children from neglect, abuse and child sexual abuse; and to ensure partners work together to protect children from harm and ensure the voice of the child is evident in all multi-agency work.

The Independent Chair also the new arrangements following national review on how Local Safeguarding Children Boards operate in future and to include all partners working together to look at new ways of working for both children and adults as one multi-agency partnerships.

Members discussed the national increase in children coming into care and the role of Scrutiny in monitoring performance of the Board and to receive audits and reviews and provide challenge; the increase in home schooling and how this is monitored from a safeguarding perspective; and how the Home Education Service work with the Gypsy Roma Travellers to assist families to place their children in education.

Members noted in particular that the breastfeeding rates at 6-8 weeks after birth for Darlington which was lower than the England average; the rate of emergency hospital admissions for children under 4 in Darlington which was higher than the England average; and the rate of inpatient admissions because of self-harm which was again statistically higher than the England average. Members agreed that these were areas of particular concern and that this Scrutiny should continue to monitor closely.

RESOLVED – That the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report for 2018/19 be noted.

CYP57 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2017/22 - PROGRESS UPDATE

The Director of Children and Adults Services submitted a report (previously circulated) to provide Members with an update on the progress to date against the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2017/22.

RESOLVED – That discussion on this item be deferred until the next ordinary meeting scheduled for 16 December 2019.

CYP58 SCRUTINY COMMITTEES - PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Managing Director submitted a report (previously circulated) for Scrutiny Members to give consideration to proposed changes to the Terms of Reference for the Council's Scrutiny Committees.

It was reported that the Leader intended to implement a number of changes to the Cabinet Portfolios to take effect from December 2019 and officers had been requested to review the current terms of reference for the Council's Scrutiny Committee's with a view to aligning them more closely with the Cabinet Portfolios.

Full details of the changes being made to the Cabinet Portfolios were set out in the submitted report.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CYP59 WORK PROGRAMME

The Managing Director 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 2019/20 based on Officers recommendations and recommendations previously agreed by this Scrutiny Committee.

Any additional areas of work which Members wish to add to the agreed work programme will require the completion of a quad of aims in accordance with the previously approved procedure.

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

CYP60 QUESTIONS