
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22 OCTOBER 2015

Present: Councillors Keogh (Chair), L Harris, Lloyd, McEwing (Vice-Chair), O'Neill, Painton and Spicer

In Attendance: Councillor Jeffery – Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Social Care

9. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September, 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

10. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services providing an overview of performance across the Children and Families Division since August, 2015.

Focus was made particularly on the areas where there had been significant changes. It was reported that some of the significant changes since the previous month would be a result of school holidays and lower reporting during August.

The Cabinet Member indicated that if members found it beneficial they were welcome to attend any of the briefings on areas of work covered by the portfolio.

RESOLVED that from the December 2015 meeting of the Panel, benchmarking information be included in the performance table to enable comparisons to be made with other cities.

11. **LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2014/2015**

The Panel considered the report the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board looking at whether the Board's annual report provides a rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local safeguarding services.

It was agreed that the document, together with the summary sheet, was in a good format and easy to read and understand.

Recognition of positive matters detailed, such as early years provision, was given.

The Panel considered the points raised under "Learning from Ofsted" and what actions were being undertaken to improve. This include the establishment of the Scrutiny Panel and also the Cabinet Member chairing the Corporate Parenting Panel.

It was reported that the LSCB monitored and coordinated the actioning of information, follow by auditing the work and outcomes. The priority areas for 2015-18 were noted. It was also noted that stronger links were now established with the Local Safeguarding Adults Board, as often these adults were having an impact on children.

With regards to commissioning the LSCB were ensuring that all services were including safeguarding in their services.

The police had strong links with the Youth Offending Team and were trying to gain early involvement and action with the youths in an attempt to divert them away from major problems in the future.

It was noted that child sexual exploitation was a major priority within the police and that they were working with the Local Authority to identify children at risk. Visits had been made to schools to see how support could be given to the children. An event had been organised for January, 2016 for all agencies to look at better profiling and understanding.

It was reported that children effected by mental health issues were supported by a specialist team. However, many issues prevented them from becoming engaged in these services and it was important to ensure that it was the “right” service.

Work was being undertaken in schools for children to understand consent. This was done within the context of explaining healthy relationships. It was important to ensure that there was a consistent approach across all schools.

Ensuring the voice of the child was heard and understood at LSCB was a challenge. Children were engaged directly and were involved in the appointment of two lay members onto the Board. When quality assurance was undertaken one point of focus related to the voice of the child.

RESOLVED:-

- i. that the Panel review a draft of the 15/16 LSCB Annual Report in July 2016 and again following publication in order to enable a timely oversight;
- ii. that a link to the LSCB Annual Report 2014/15 and Summary be circulated to all Councillors, to raise awareness and ownership; and
- iii. that the risk assessment template, and the definitions used by the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Group relating to Child Sexual Exploitation be circulated to the Panel.

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council’s Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of the confidential item below.

This is based on Category 2 of paragraph 10.4 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules. The information contained therein is potentially exempt as it relates to individual personal details and information held under the Data Protection Act 1998.

Having applied the public interest test it is not appropriate to disclose this information as the individual’s legal expectation of privacy outweighs the public interest in the exempt information.

13. **LEARNING FROM SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS**

The Panel noted the confidential report of the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board summarising the four serious case reviews published by the board in the last 18 months.

The cases detailed all had very different issues, however some of the themes for learning were the same.

Monitoring was being undertaken to ensure that the highlighted learning was ensuring that improvements had been made.

It was reported that there was now a dedicated officer working with families whom had opted for elective home education.

It was noted that work relating to the prevention of female genital mutilation was investigated at a task and finish working group to ensure that the work was coordinated. It was reported that there were now dedicated actions plans relating to this. And that this, together with forced marriages, was scrutinised at a very high level by the police.

14. **OUTCOMES FOR CARE LEAVERS**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director – Children and Families Services giving an update in relation to the core outcomes for young people within the current cohort of care leavers in Southampton.

The Panel indicated that this was a priority area and it was important to ensure that the appropriate support was given to this group of young people. Priority also needed to be given to the support relating to educational attainment at the end of Key Stage 4.

Concerns were raised about the current position with regards personal education plans (PEPs). It was noted that this was a key priority area and there was a high expectation for all PEPs to be completed and tracked.

RESLOVED:-

- i. That, in order to show the progress of cohorts of care leavers over time, an overview of the outcomes for care leavers over a 3 year period be circulated to the Panel;
- ii. That significant improvements be made with regards to the number of Looked After Children (LAC) that have up to date Personal Education Plans, with an expectation that by the 17 December Panel meeting every LAC in year 11 has an up to date PEP; and
- iii. That an example of a PEP be circulated to the Panel.

15. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel noted the report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services setting out progress on recommendations made at the previous meeting.