
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 5 JANUARY 2017

Present: Councillors Keogh (Chair), Murphy, O'Neill, Painton, Burke, Taggart (Vice-Chair) and Laurent

Apologies: Councillors Mrs U Topp and Revd. J Williams

In attendance: Councillor Paffey – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Councillor Lewzey – Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care

9. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November, 2016 be approved and signed as a correct record.

10. **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Lead, Education and Early Help providing the Panel with information on educational attainment for Looked After Children (LAC) in Southampton and work being undertaken to improve outcomes.

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills; Jo Cassey, Service Lead for Education and Early Help; Alyce McCourt, Principal Educational Psychologist; and Ann Dyton, Virtual School Head were in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

The Panel particularly noted the following points:-

- The Cabinet Members commitment to LAC attainment and the vital role schools played.
- A number of changes had been introduced that had started to improve attainment for LAC. They had focused on attendance, inclusion and investigating for Special Educational Needs.
- Training was available to designated teachers, social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers to support LAC attainment.
- Best practice research from academia had been used to support initiatives and action.
- Personal Education Plans had improved considerably through improving practice in schools and with social workers.
- Education and Social Care teams had worked closely, especially for LAC placed outside the City.
- The Panel's support for the Corporate Parenting Committees quality work experience guarantee for LAC.
- Consideration had been given to identifying 'Champions' within the Council who could act as buddies for LAC.
- Progress of children and young people coming into care had not been tracked sufficiently.

- Attainment data for LAC was not acceptable.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That, to enable more timely and targeted support, systems be developed and implemented that enabled the progress and performance of LAC to be tracked more effectively;
- (ii) That, prior to the next meeting of the Panel, the following information be provided:
 - a. Anonymised information on the grade predictions for the current Year 11 LAC Cohort for GCSE English and Maths.
 - b. Details on revision classes and additional support available within schools to support Southampton's Year 11 LAC cohort.
 - c. Details on how many of the 2015/16 LAC Year 11 cohort are re-taking their GCSE's.
- (iii) That the Panel be provided with a briefing paper at a future meeting on the proposals for a 'buddying scheme' for LAC.

11. **UPDATE ON SERVICES FOR CARE LEAVERS IN SOUTHAMPTON**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Lead, Children's Social Care updating the Panel on services for Care Leavers.

Councillor Lewzey, Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care; Hilary Brooks, Service Director for Children and Families Services; and Jane White, Service Lead for Children's Social Care were in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

The Panel particularly noted the following points:-

- The percentage of care leavers who were in contact with social services was approaching 100%; the NEET figure had been decreasing but needed to improve further; the percentage of care leavers in suitable accommodation had improved.
- Some Care Leavers had complex emotional needs and needed support to become ready for employment, education, training or apprenticeships. Pathways advisors were supporting Care Leavers to make good decisions.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Panel be provided with a breakdown identifying the length of time care leavers who were NEET had been out of education, employment or training;
- (ii) That the Panel be provided with the number of care leavers currently working as an apprentice at the Council;
- (iii) That, to support rising aspirations for LAC, success stories demonstrating what care leavers from Southampton could achieve be promoted;
- (iv) That consideration be given to supporting 'taster sessions' for looked after children where they were provided with the opportunity to try different occupations prior to leaving care.

12. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance providing an overview of performance across the Children and Families Division since October 2016.

The Panel noted the following points:-

- December dataset, circulated at the meeting, showed a significant improvement across a range of indicators.
- Systems and data integrity had improved enabling managers and practitioners to focus on addressing key issues.
- The Panel recognised the improved performance and the contribution staff had made to the improving outcomes.

13. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel noted the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance setting out progress on recommendations made at the previous meeting.

Councillor Painton agreed to raise the issue of the Taxi Trade and Child Sexual Exploitation training at the Licensing Committee.

The following updates to the monitoring appendix were made at the meeting:

- Child Sexual Exploitation Recommendation 2 – Officers were looking at incorporating this information into the work of the CSE/MET team.
- Elective Home Education Recommendation 1 – Difficulty obtaining details, reasons provided were varied. A process was being put in place to get a clearer understanding of the issues, around the statutory limitations.
- Elective Home Education Recommendation 2 – It was illegal for SCC to search this information without permission from parents.
- Elective Home Education Recommendation 3 – Supported the idea in principle but any approach would be evidence led and targeted.
- Elective Home Education Recommendation 4 – Letter prepared by the Cabinet Member.