
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 18 FEBRUARY 2016

Present: Councillors Keogh (Chair), McEwing, O'Neill, Painton and Spicer

Apologies: Councillors L Harris, Lloyd, Mrs U Topp and Revd. J Williams

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 17th December, 2014 be approved and signed as a correct record.

22. **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 November 2015.

Work was being undertaken to assess the work levels and case numbers within different teams. On occasions the level of pressure of some cases meant that paperwork was not completed promptly and this had an impact on performance information which meant it was not truly reflecting the position.

Another key area that needed attention was the number of agency social workers that were being employed. The level was far too high and work was underway to try and address this.

It was agreed that information relating to staff absences and use of relief staff would be circulated to members and that this information should be compared to other similar authorities

The importance of sustaining improvements and positive levels was a focus for the teams. With costs and spend still needing to be reduced it would be important to look at the level of risk this would create.

It was reported that there were currently a lot of changes with the five principles officers. One would shortly be leave, with another one only on a contract until the summer. It was felt that it would be possible to manage with the three remaining.

Data comparisons were being undertaken with core city neighbours, as part of the workforce planning.

The DfE would be undertaking a half day visit the following week to assess if there have been improvements in relation to care leavers.

23. **POST 16 EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

The Panel considered the report of the Head of Economic Development and Skills providing an overview of post 16 education and training in Southampton.

The details set out in the conclusions and emerging issues were high-lighted to members, especially the progress that had been made in the reduction of NEETS. However the number of care leaves within the group was disproportionately high and needed to be addressed.

Levels of apprenticeships within the City was high and was an area that had been widely promoted.

Concerns were raised about the overall performance at Key Stage 5 pupils. It was necessary to understand which students were remaining within the City post 16 and what impact this was having on the data. There would also be an impact of the students coming in from outside of the City to one of the post 16 provisions. Comprehensive data relating to post 16s was an issue as this was not information held by local authorities.

Principles from schools and colleges would be attending the next meeting.

Questions were asked about how reliable the indicator was, however it was stated that as this was what was used it was necessary to work with it.

It was reported that there were likely to be many changes to post 16 provision in the near future due to funding cuts, together with encouragement from the Government for colleges to review provisions alongside other establishments. Southampton colleges currently have a steering group looking at the issues and were likely to report on their findings in April. Government support for any changes was for a very limited period, which was driving providers to make early decisions.

It was agreed that colleges would be requested to provide information relating to results from re-takes of GCSE English and Maths.

As a local authority it was agreed that there was a role to ensure that the City's children receive the best outcomes. Working with statistical neighbours with good results could help learn lessons on how to achieve this. Within the City the overall Ofsted grade was good however the outcomes statically were low.

It was agreed that it would be beneficial to have a pre-meeting before the next meeting to ensure that the structure was right in order to get the best from the colleges being in attendance.

NOTE: Councillor Keogh declared a personal interest in the matters set out in the report, as a college lecturer and remained in the meeting and took part in the discussion and decision.

24. **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.