
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2015

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

Apologies: Councillors McEwing and Revd. J Williams

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

16. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The Committee noted the apologies of Councillor McEwing and the Revd. Williams.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd October 2015 be approved and signed as a correct record.

18. **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 October, 2015. At the meeting the Panel received performance information up to November, 2015.

The Panel looked in detail at the data provided in Appendix 1 to the report which had been altered to include a column identifying the data owner and a detailed commentary against each performance area.

The Panel noted in particular the high percentage of referrals of Children In Need and those dealt with by MASH. Managed processes were now in place and with an improved close partnership working these percentages were being managed more effectively.

Focus was made on the high number of agency staff being used by the service and how this can be reduced by retaining council staff. It was noted that the current transformation process was being engaged to redesign staffing structures in a different way.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the Panel are provided with a breakdown of the ages of the children who have been reported missing in October and November, 2015;
- (ii) That a discussion on workforce development, reflecting work underway in this area, is scheduled for a future meeting of the Panel;
- (iii) That information clarifying the Ofsted inspection of local authority children's services grading criteria is circulated to the Panel;
- (iv) That the Chair of the Panel meets regularly with the Service Director for Children and Families to enable effective identification of key issues and agenda planning.

19. **SCHOOL STANDARDS**

The Panel considered the report of the Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Social Care providing an update on the activity undertaken by Education and Early Years with particular reference to School Standards noting the Key Stage 4 results in the City, the role of the local authority in working with failing schools and the role of the Virtual school and how it supports Looked After Children.

Discussion took place regarding the fluctuation of results across schools and the reasons underpinning results. The Panel noted that a number of initiatives were in place to address continuous changes in education, recording of data, improvements made in attendance levels, funding made available to target specific re-training for teachers and the work that was being undertaken by working groups such as curriculum subject teachers meeting to look at common issues.

The Panel acknowledged the improvements that had been made recognising that with these systems in place comparison could now be made between schools to identify underlying trends.

The Cabinet Member indicated that the roll of the local authority was to act as a facilitator ensuring best practices were shared across all schools. Work would begin in the Spring term to communicate the Administrations expectations for schools by 2020.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That, to enable effective performance comparison over time, analysis is undertaken of 2015 Key Stage 4 results with the impact of changes to the weighting of vocational qualifications and multiple entry exams removed;
- (ii) That, to put Key Stage 4 results in context, analysis of the 2014/15 cohorts Key Stage 2 results are undertaken to develop an understanding of whether expected progress has been achieved;
- (iii) To develop an understanding of best practice the School Improvement Team records the approaches taken by secondary schools in Southampton to setting, streaming and grouping by ability;
- (iv) That, in recognition of the role that governance plays in ensuring that every child receives the best possible education, the Council works with schools to develop a skills audit of governing bodies in Southampton and share best practice;
- (v) That renewed efforts are made to ensure that each Southampton secondary school and the Virtual School, has a Southampton City Councillor on their governing body, and that senior managers at the Council are encouraged to become school governors;
- (vi) That a report on the state of schools in Southampton is submitted for discussion at a meeting of Council; and
- (vii) That additional support is provided to Looked After Children, from the first day of enrolment as they move from Key Stage 4 to Key Stage 5 settings.

20. **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.