
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 27 SEPTEMBER 2018

Present: Councillors Taggart (Chair) (except items 15, 16 and 17), J Baillie, Guthrie, Keogh (except item 17), Laurent (except items 11, 12, 13 and 14 (part)), Mitchell and Murphy (except items 11, 12, 13 and 14 (part)).
Appointed Member Rob Sanders.

Apologies: Councillors Catherine Hobbs

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

The apologies of Appointed Member Catherine Hobbs were noted.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 July 2018 be approved and signed as a correct record.

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

RESOLVED that the Chair moved 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 any consideration of the confidential appendices to the following item

Confidential appendices 2, 3 and 5 contained information deemed to be exempt from general publication based on Category 7a of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules. The appendices contained information which was subject to an obligation of confidentiality.

14. **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN SOUTHAMPTON**

The Panel considered and noted the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance which requested that the Panel considered the provisional 2017/18 key stage 4 and 5 exam results in Southampton and the educational attainment of Looked After Children.

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Aspiration, Schools and Lifelong Learning, Hilary Brooks, Service Director, Children and Families Services, Derek Wiles, Service Lead, Education and Early Help, and Maria Anderson, Head of the Virtual School were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting. In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- The data in the report was provisional and would be verified later in the year.
- The Attainment 8 Progress data had not been released in time to be included in the report.
- That key stage 4 exams had been more demanding this year and that despite improvements in English and Maths results for Southampton attainment remained below the national average. Science GCSE results however had improved by 8% from 2017 to 2018.
- That a strong culture of collaboration and mutual support between schools in Southampton existed that was both encouraging and beneficial.
- That the exam results for Looked After Children in Southampton had improved and were above the national average for Looked After Children. However the results were still below average for key stage 4.
- That the Virtual School had adopted a proactive approach to monitoring the school attendance and other factors that contributed to the attainment of Looked After Children, so that additional support needs would be identified at an early stage. An evidence based approach was used to identify which factors affected attainment. The importance of stability was noted.
- Young people leaving the Looked After service were provided with financial support to go to University
- That there was a wide variation in the exam results achieved by the schools in Southampton.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Panel would receive destination data for Southampton's Looked After Children moving from Year 11 to Year 12.
- (ii) That case studies highlighting positive outcomes for Southampton's Looked After Children would be circulated to the Panel.
- (iii) That, to help raise educational attainment outcomes, consideration would be given to offering Looked After Children that have the potential to perform well in their GCSE exams the opportunity for intensive support, including residential tuition over the Easter holidays.
- (iv) That the issue of 'off-rolling', schools informally excluding pupils, would be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.

COUNCILLOR MITCHELL IN THE CHAIR

15. **SEND UPDATE**

The Panel considered and noted the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance which requested that the Panel discussed and challenged the SEND review and progress made on the implementation of the SEND action plan.

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Aspiration, Schools and Lifelong Learning, Tammy Marks, Service Manager, Special Educational Needs and Disability and Derek Wiles, Service Lead, Education and Early Help, were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting. In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- That nationally and locally there had been an increase in the diagnosis of social, emotional and mental health difficulties, autism with challenging behaviour and complex needs and that the need for special school places was predicted to increase.
- That the SEND multi-agency partnership had added the recommendations from the SEND review to the SEND Partnership Board action plan.
- To make sure that future service demands could be met in a financially sustainable way, it would be essential that schools are inclusive and take responsibility for children with SEND within their community.
- That action had already been implemented to increase the range and quantity of resource provision in the long term.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the updated SEND action plan is circulated to the Panel.
- (ii) That, to develop understanding of practices, officers speak with FE colleges about pupils with SEND being encouraged to delay taking KS4 exams until year 12.
- (iii) That Members, when speaking with representatives from schools in their ward, raised the issue of inclusivity and taking responsibility for children with SEND.

16. **EARLY HELP SERVICES**

The Panel received and noted the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance which requested that the Panel discussed and challenged the performance of the Early Help service.

Phil Bullingham, Service Lead, Safeguarding, Improvement, Governance and Quality Assurance, Jane White, Service Lead, Children's Social Care and Derek Wiles, Service Lead, Education and Early Help were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting. In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- That in recognition that too many children had been escalating to the MASH and social work pathways, plans had been developed to bolster early help pathways and build specialist early help services.
- That services were proactively targeting those parents that need the services rather than expecting parents to contact them.

- That under the proposals the Early Help offer would become more targeted and would focus on more complex families. Smart commissioning and partnership working would be used to encourage the voluntary sector to fill the gap between universal and specialist services.
- That professional groups had been working together to produce action plans for the improved management of safeguarding in the community
- That progress made towards Children's centres becoming vibrant community hubs, included improved sharing of spaces with a wider range of services and the recruitment and training of parents as volunteers to help with the delivery of play services.
- That it was essential that these changes delivered the required outcomes as future budgets and plans are predicated on an effective early help service.

17. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel received and noted the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance that provided an overview of performance across Children and Families Services since June 2018.

The Panel also noted the Performance Summary from the Chair and the response provided by the officers.

Hillary Brooks, Service Director, Children and Families Services, Phil Bullingham, Service Lead, Safeguarding, Improvement, Governance and Quality Assurance, and Jane White, Service Lead, Children's Social Care were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting. In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- That analysis of the journeys of children who had become looked after, revealed that many referrals into MASH are high risk referrals that had not accessed the Early Help Service.
- That staff from Early Help Service and integrated teams had been contacting MASH for advice instead of their managers.
- That recruitment of staff into MASH continued to have been difficult and there were still vacancies in the team that needed to be filled.
- That the joint team work which focussed on the legal gateway and permanence planning for Looked After Children, had helped the number of Looked After Children to be reduced to 499 which was the lowest number since 2012.