

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Tuesday 4 July 2017 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Potts (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors H Smith, D Bell, J Charlton, R Crute, S Durham, N Grayson, C Hampson, K Hopper, L Mavin, A Patterson, A Reed, M Simmons, A Willis and M Wilson

Faith Community Representative:

Mrs A Swift and Craig

Co-opted Members:

Miss K Ashcroft and Mr J Conlon

Also Present:

Councillors D Hall, P Jopling and M McKeon

The Chairman welcomed Mrs Catherine Craig to the committee as a faith representative and voting co-optee.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B Bainbridge, J Blakey, P Brookes, J Considine, M Davinson, I Jewell and Mr R Patel (Parent Governor Representative)

2 Substitute Members

Councillor S Quinn for Councillor J Considine

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 April 2017 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties

There were no items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties.

6 Media Relations

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred Members to recent press articles relating to the remit of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The articles were:-

- Creative Staindrop pupils auction off 'worthless' items on eBay
- Pregnant women smoking rates concern in England
- Grants of up to £3000 for school holidays clubs

Resolved: That the presentation be noted.

7 Care Quality Commission (CQC), Review of Health Services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding (CLAS) in County Durham

The Committee received a report of the Director of Nursing, North Durham and Durham Dales, Easington and Sedgefield Clinical Commissioning Groups that provided an overview of recommendations from the Care Quality Commission (CQC) review of health services for children and looked after and safeguarding in County Durham (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Director of Nursing informed the Committee that there had been a delay in the CQC publishing their report following the inspection in November 2016. It had been received before the purdah periods in County Durham and this had been the first opportunity to share with Members.

She went on to advise that the inspection had looked at a number of issues and highlighted the provider services reviewed and the long list of recommendations. Each provider service produced action plans and the designated nurse for Safeguarding and Looked After Children then produced an overarching action plan in response to all of the recommendations. Monitoring of the action plan would take place bi-monthly and there would be penalties imposed on providers should the actions not be implemented.

Councillor Charlton asked what the general waiting time was for CAMHS and was advised that a lot of work had been carried out around CAMHS and the information would be provided to her on waiting times after the meeting.

Further to a question raised by Councillor Smith, the Director of Nursing confirmed that there had been an issue with funding but a permanent paediatrician was now in post for Looked After Children.

Councillor Hopper asked if Lifeline had given any assurances that the recommendations had been taken on board. The Director of Nursing confirmed that they had accepted the recommendations and it was up to each provider to make a suitable action plan. This had happened and would be monitored and followed up in contractual meetings.

The Head of Early Help, Assessment & Safeguarding suggested that the report was shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Director of Nursing confirmed that this was discussed at the Local Safeguarding Children's Board as it was an important inspection for them, further to a question from Councillor Smith. The action plan was in place and they were waiting for the rebuild of the emergency department. She confirmed that there were 3 nurses placed in the emergency department. Councillor Smith further asked if this also covered Darlington and was assured that it did. The Director of Nursing advised that there was a large observation area at Darlington for children attending the emergency department.

Mr Conlon asked the Director of Nursing to expand on recommendation 4.1 and she explained that if a young person presented with a parent someone would need to have the foresight to speak to the child directly and a prompt was in place for the professional should this need to happen. Signs to look out for would include the child pulling away from the parent.

The Chairman thanked the Director of Nursing for her presentation and asked if she would come back at a later date to give an update on how the recommendations had been actioned.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

8 Supporting Care Leavers into Education, Employment and Training

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services that gave an update on the progress being made to support Care Leavers to participate in Education, Employment and Training (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Lead Progression and Learning and the Operations Manager Looked After and Permanence gave a detailed presentation that highlighted the following:-

- Governance – 5 keys groups including Corporate Parenting Panel and Care Leavers Steering Group.
- Participation Plan – a clear protocol was in place to support the transition from leaving school to further education, bespoke learning opportunities were developed and a protocol was in place to support progression into education, employment and training.
- DurhamWorks Programme – funding in place until July 2018 with transitions advisers in place to help support the young person and grants offered to small businesses to take on apprentices and traineeships. Members were advised that there were currently 97 care leavers registered with the Durham Works Programme 42 of whom were now in employment, education or training. Specialist Transition Advisers provided wrap around support to care leavers and continue to do so whilst they are on an apprenticeships, in work, undertaking learning, etc.
- Message from the Chief Executive to give every care leaver an opportunity in the work place.
- Teenagers2Work Programme – matching care leavers and looked after children to work experience opportunities
- Performance data

- Future challenges included supporting progression to higher education; continuing to improve progression to education, employment or training and sustaining support for Care Leavers post DurhamWorks.
- Encouraging everybody to help and share information
- Case studies

The Chairman asked about the future of the DurhamWorks European funding and was informed that the European Programme was in place until 2020 but that DurhamWorks was to finish in 2018. The Strategic Manager added that there was funding of £5.1m available for County Durham to support young people and the team were aware that there would be significantly less resources in the future. Some other funding may replace what was available at present but may not be at the same level and there was an argument that any funding should be aimed at vulnerable groups.

Councillor Crute said that the two case reviews highlighted had been very positive so showed that the programmes were working. He asked how the service target those young people who were not part of any programme. The Operations Manager confirmed that there were a number of young people that were hard to reach and a designated programme in relation to training around the individual was in place. By arranging for the young person to gain a certificate or qualification and make them see how they could achieve it was in place. With support from the Chief Executive and the response from departments also within the Council offering good work experience opportunities helped to encourage young people to participate. Much more support and designated workers were in place. Councillor Crute was pleased to hear that response and was advised that there were monthly meetings to look at each individual case and was monitored tightly.

Councillor Hall enquired if the Durham Works Programme was included on the committee's work programme and was advised that it was included on the Economy and Enterprise Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme as that committee led on this piece of work.

Further to a question from Mr Conlon the Committee were informed that there were a team of business advisors who would identify opportunities for people on DurhamWorks. Advisors would work with an individual for as long as needed. Grants were available to employers and this did help to open the door. The Operations Manager added that 40 young people were being given the opportunity to work this summer as part of the Teenagers to Work programme.

The Chairman thanked the officers for their presentation.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

9 Update on Progress of Recommendations of Self Harm by Young People Review Report

The Committee considered a joint Report of Corporate Director of Adults and Health Services and Director of Transformation and Partnerships that provided an update on the progress made against the recommendations from the review of Self Harm by Young People (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee were advised of work with St. Cuthbert's Hospice to provide a bereavement service to children and of the work done with secondary schools to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Mrs Swift asked what plans were being proposed for primary schools and was informed that LSCB had been helpful in that discussion and that residential nurses were working with schools separately.

The Chairman was informed that the parent support groups were based in the North and South of the County. Details would be provided following the meeting. She added that whilst undertaking the review a group of parents had said that they valued the support and being able to share experiences with other parents.

Councillor Reed asked if there was still a service available in Consett called For Real. The Specialty Registrar in Public Health said that although he had not heard of it he would look into whether it was still in existence. The Chairman added that this could be part of the CAMHS service and believed that there was also a similar service at Newton Aycliffe. The Head of Early Help, Assessment & Safeguarding said that this service became part of the Lifeline project for Adults and Children but the whole contract had now been moved to a new provider.

The Head of Early Help, Assessment & Safeguarding referred to an excellent service at Waddington Street for young people ran by young people. It provided excellent peer support and it was hoped to incorporate this service into an overall plan. The Specialty Registrar referred to a further service provided by the Wellbeing for Life team of Men's Cree's. This service provided a variety of classes and support.

Mr Conlon referred to the two waiting lists at CAMHS and asked if self harm was classed as urgent or non-urgent. The Speciality Registrar believed that each case was dealt with on an individual basis. He added that the Locate website showed where services were available with peer support.

Miss Ashcroft queried if there were services for children and young people to access on their own as a place of compilation as a method of stopping self harm and was advised that services were available to signpost children and young people to various groups. Peer Support was also available via Minded and there was specific information available in relation to suicide.

Referring to the take up of training by secondary schools Councillor Charlton indicated that this could be that the schools had to pay for the training and not all of them could afford to do so. She was concerned that this left a lot of children vulnerable and requested more information on the costs for training. The Speciality Registrar in Public Health advised that he would find out the information regarding costs and circulate it to members of the committee. The Chairman pointed out that this was one of the recommendations from the review.

Mrs Swift commented that it was important to learn how to communicate effectively using various apps on social media, as this was how young people communicated. The

Chairman said that young people had said during the review that they preferred talking to their peers rather than teachers and adults.

Further to this Mr Conlon suggested that certain lessons at school could help to address the issue. He felt that it would help to reach people and de-stigmatise the matter. The Speciality Registrar said that the review tried to address this and sessions led by specialist nurses were aimed at year 9 pupils. The nurses were specifically trained in mental health and the sessions were designed to give young people the skills needed to help themselves and others. Mr Conlon enquired as to how many schools were involved and was advised that the pilot was for 7 schools and would be offered to all schools next year.

Councillor Jopling asked if there was an element of prevention to nip problems in the bud rather than issues building up to self harm, drugs and alcohol. The Speciality Registrar advised that there was evidence to support that and was available in schools where assessments were carried out.

Mr Conlon asked if people running sessions in schools looked out for warning signs and was advised that when someone was identified as an immediate risk they would be referred for further help and support. The Specialist Registrar added that nurses would use their training and judgement as to whether to escalate to other services.

The Chairman thanked the Specialist Registrar for the update.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10 Quarter Four 2016/17 Performance Management Report

The Committee considered a report of the Director for Transformation and Partnerships which presented progress against the council's corporate performance framework for the Altogether Better for Children and Young People priority theme for the fourth quarter of the 2016/17 financial year (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager, Performance and Information Management reported that figures for under 18 conceptions continued to reduce and mothers smoking at the time of delivery had reduced from the previous year however remained a concern. Durham's performance for turned around families was above the regional and national average.

With reference to statutory referrals the Committee were informed that the target of 85% was not met but were assured that any immediate safeguarding issues were dealt with within 4 hours. There had been a significant increase in the number of children with a child protection plan from 350 in 2015/16 to 501 in 2016/17. Children's services had set an optimum caseload per social worker of 20 and focus groups had been set up to give social workers a more manageable workload. The number of children adopted from care had improved and reviews for looked after children were being closely monitored to ensure the delays were kept to a minimum.

Finally, the Strategic Manager reported that Durham had taken part in a pilot to collect data on social worker changes for the Children's Commissioner Stability Index. A similar pattern was found nationally to that of Durham.

Councillor Reed referred to at risk children and asked if work took place to identify a family member to take a child rather than the child being placed in care. The Head of Early Help, Assessment and Safeguarding explained that in every case family members would be the first option. There would be an immediate check of all family members to assess suitability and pointed out that it was a preference to place a child with a family member where possible. Foster care was only used when necessary. Councillor Reed, as a former foster carer herself, said that somewhere down the line a family member was usually found after the child had been taken into care. She was informed that some family members were not known at the time of placement and would still need to be assessed once identified.

On answering a question from Councillor Crute the Head of Early Help, Assessment and Safeguarding explained that there was a relationship between case load sizes and quality. She added that reducing caseloads would not necessarily guarantee quality and that this would have to be monitored. She referred to the new electronic system that had been procured to replace SSID and explained that it was much easier to use and would save time for the social worker. Councillor Crute referred to the recruitment and retention of social workers and the fact that a number of staff had gone to work for other local authorities. He asked if we were doing enough and was advised that there was a regional agreement in relation to social worker recruitment and a social work academy had been set up by Durham County Council to develop our own social workers whereby newly qualified staff would be brought in and developed in house. The Committee were also advised that a social worker apprenticeship programme would commence next year which would enable family workers to train as social workers

Referring to Looked After Children and children with a child protection plan, Councillor Patterson said that although the numbers had increased in County Durham it was a good thing that we knew about the children and it showed that people were better at spotting the signs and that this would help put interventions in place more quickly.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

11 Refresh of the Committee's Work Programme 2017 - 2018

The Committee received a report of the Director of Transformation and Partnerships, which provided Members with an updated work programme for 2017-18 (copy see file of minutes).

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer referred the Committee to the proposed work programme for the coming year with several special meetings already added to the schedule. A special meeting on 11 September would be held at Seaham High School and would focus on educational issues, the special on 21 November would look at social care issues and the special on 5 February would be a joint meeting with Adults, Wellbeing and health OSC looking at obesity. The Scrutiny Officer advised that members of the previous committee had mentioned they would like to carry out a piece of scrutiny review activity on the role of the social worker through the eyes of the child. She reminded Members that the work programme was flexible and that items could be added as and when required. Councillor Crute said that it was important for Scrutiny to allow flexibility and be able to react to recent news issues such as the Children's Commissioner for

England's piece of work into vulnerability of children nationally. It was important for the Committee to understand the term vulnerability and would be a common theme on the agenda from self harm to look after children and would be looked at in some detail later in the year once the definition was clearer and the data was understood.

Resolved:

- (i) That the new work programme be agreed.
- (ii) That the topic for the in depth Scrutiny review of the role of the social worker be agreed.

12 Summary of Minutes from the Children and Families Partnership

The Committee considered the minutes of the Children and Families Partnership on 20 March 2017 (for copies see file of minutes).

Resolved:

That the minutes be noted.