

## **DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL**

### **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Committee Room 2, County Hall, Durham on **Monday 12 January 2015 at 9.30 am**

#### **Present:**

**Councillor J Blakey (Chairman)**

#### **Members of the Committee:**

Councillors J Armstrong, D Bell, K Dearden, C Hampson, D Hicks, K Hopper, C Potts, M Simmons, H Smith, M Stanton and P Stradling

#### **Faith Community Representative:**

Mrs G Harrison

#### **Parent Governor Representative:**

Mr R Patel

#### **Co-opted Members:**

Mr K Gilfillan and Mr D Kinch

#### **Also Present:**

Councillor O Gunn

The Chair welcomed the new Faith Communities Representative Mrs Gillian Harrison to the meeting.

#### **1 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors K Corrigan, I Geldard, J Hart, H Liddle and L Pounder.

#### **2 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute Members.

#### **3 Minutes from the Meeting held on 3 November 2014**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2014 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman with the inclusion of Councillor O Gunn in attendance.

#### **4 Declarations of Interest, if any**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **5 Any items from Co-opted Members or Interested Parties**

There were no items from Co-opted Members of interested parties.

## **6 Media Relations - Update on Press Coverage**

The Committee received a presentation by the Overview and Scrutiny Officer on recent press articles relating of the Children and Young People's (for copy of slides see file of minutes).

The first article related to the National Honour for community spirited teens and advised of two teenagers who have been working to improve their estate and have been honoured at a national awards ceremony. The young people have been working with investing in children, the local police Durham youth for Christ charity, community centres and groups. Durham AAP was impressed by their work and subsequently had agreed to support the project which was successfully shortlisted for the youth volunteering prize at the Children and young people Now awards held in London.

The second article related to a new helpline which had been set up to give advice and support to young people. The helpline is staffed by professionals who give non-judgemental support, practical advice and information to children, teenagers and adults up the age of 35 years as well as to those who call because they are concerned about a child or young person.

The third article was related to self-harm and how some schools were struggling to cope with students self-harming. A report from the BBC indicated a 20% rise in the number of hospital admissions because of self-harm across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The final article related to baby screening and news that a lifesaving scheme had been expanded. The BBC report advised that newborn babies across England would be screened for more debilitating generic diseases. Babies currently are tested for cystic fibroses and sickle cell diseases at 5-8 days old when blood is taken from their heel. Four more rare conditions would now also be tested for, which had the potential to benefit around 30 children born in England each year. Early identification of these rare conditions could prevent death and significantly improve the quality of life for those living with these conditions.

## **7 Wellbeing for Life**

The Committee received a joint report of the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services and Director of Public Health County Durham which provided an introduction to a presentation on Wellbeing for Life by Children, Young People's and Families Acting Consultant in Public Health. (for copy of report and slides of presentation see file of minutes).

Members were advised of work by the public health team in reviewing contracts and commissioned services since the transfer of the service to the Council in 2013, including the Wellbeing for Life service.

The Committee learned that the wellbeing approach provided support to people to live well and helped address factors that influenced their health and build their capacity to become more independent, resilient and maintain good health for themselves and those around them. The approach went beyond identifying single issue health lifestyle services and a focus on illness and instead takes a whole person and community approach to improving health.

Members were advised that the 'Wellbeing for Life' approach was built on the findings of the Marmot review and supported the County Durham Joint Health and wellbeing Strategy 2014-2017. The model developed takes a life course approach and included an adult's element alongside its children and family elements.

Members learned that the model was made up of four component parts which included:

- Community Parenting Programme (pre-birth – 5years)
- Resilience building parenting programme (5 – 13 years)
- Whole school approach to resilience (5-19 years)
- Family initiative supporting child health (childhood obesity)

Members were advised that the Community Parenting Programme was evidence based intervention that would train and quality assure community volunteers to support identified families from pre-birth to the child's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Positive mental health was central to all other health related choices and was a fundamental component of the children's wellbeing model. Strengthening the resilience of children, young people and families was a significant feature of the service.

Members were advised that there was a role for schools to contribute building resilience in children and young people and that whilst some schools already did this others would benefit from advice and guidance.

The Committee were advised that childhood obesity would continue to be prioritised through the established Family Initiative Supporting Child Health (FISCH) which was delivered in primary schools.

Councillor Gunn asked why the University of Brighton had been selected to undertake the evaluation. In addition she further asked how the 20 schools which were going to undertake the pilot had been selected. In conclusion she commented that childhood obesity and issues of affordability and food banks should be considered as high priority among the aims of objectives.

In response the Acting Consultant Public Health advised that the service did where possible work with local universities however the University of Brighton had undertaken significant work in relation to resilience and have a strong reputation in this field. With reference to the pilot schools chosen she advised that a small steering group had been formed and looked at prioritising schools taking into account those schools with higher risk taking into account the levels of teenage pregnancy, free-school meals etc. With regard to FISCH it was noted that this was part of a much wider food and health programme developing an action plan to address real social issues.

Councillor Armstrong asked where the funding was coming from to be able to achieve the goals outlined in the presentation. It was reported that funding had been made available as part of the public health transfer 18 months ago and was fully prioritised within that budget allocation.

Further discussion ensued regarding volunteers and what issues the team faced in recruiting up to the level of 50 active volunteers which was desired. It was discussed that how this information was cascaded to schools and Mrs G Harrison commented that ExtraNet was not the preferred method. She further added that she felt that schools need to be presented with the hard facts and felt that more could be done to get this information in to schools and to notify schools of initiatives like Think Family, which at her school had only been discovered by accident and not via council links.

Further discussion ensued regarding the communication of information and Councillor Armstrong suggested that details of initiatives etc. should be put through Governor's Support.

Councillor Blakey asked whether the actual cost of the evaluation was known. In response the Acting Consultant Public Health advised over the 3 year duration the evaluation would cost £50,000 which was comparable to similar services offered by other universities.

In relation to volunteers, Councillor Smith commented that she considered 50 volunteers to be a small amount considering the size of the county and scale of the job. In response the Acting Consultant Public Health advised that it was hoped that the team of volunteers would work with 200 families at any one time, however value and scale may be added to the programme.

Councillor Stradling suggested that the committee ask Councillor Gunn to look at the way in which information is delivered to schools and why in some cases schools were not being made fully aware of initiatives as quality information was being swallowed up with the huge amounts of paperwork being received by schools. He also agreed that Governor's had a responsibility to ensure that information was being cascaded through their school efficiently.

#### **Resolved:**

- That the content of the report and presentation be noted and;
- an update on the Wellbeing for Life Programme to be given following a period of six months.

## **8 Refresh of JSNA and Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy**

The Committee received a report and presentation of the Corporate Director Children and Adults Services which provided an update on the refresh of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2014 and the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015-18 (For copy of report and slides of presentation see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Manager; Policy Planning and Partnerships advised that the detail within the presentation provided refreshed actions and provided an update to the previously circulated briefing note. She further advised that a copy of the framework would be

circulated to members and Councillor Armstrong asked that this be done so in electronic and hard copy format.

Councillor Armstrong suggested that there was a synergy with the objectives and outcomes of the JSNA and JHWB Strategy with the reviews undertaken by the Committee and recommended that an analysis of the committee's recent review recommendations should be carried out to indicate the interaction between scrutiny and the service.

**Resolved:**

- That the content of the report be noted
- Members of the Committee were to report feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, in order for it to be forwarded to the Service before the deadline

## **9 Safeguarding Framework**

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director Children and Adults Services which provided information on the Safeguarding Framework which outlines the joint working arrangements between the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) and Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) with the Health and Wellbeing Board, Children and Families Partnership and Safe Durham Partnership (for copy see file of minutes).

Councillor Blakey asked whether independent safeguarding boards were still in operation in localities. In response it was advised that the local boards were no longer in operation.

**Resolved:**

That the content of the report be noted.

## **10 Children, Young People and Families Plan**

The Committee received a report and presentation of the Corporate Director of Children and Adults Services which provided an update on the refresh of the Children, Young People and Families Plan (CYPFP) 2015-18 (for report and slides of presentation see file of minutes).

The Partnership Manager (CAS) provided a brief introduction to the plan and referred to the briefing note which had been circulated to members prior to the meeting. She advised that the comments of scrutiny members were welcomed on the refresh, with the final version of the CYPFP being presented to the Children and Families Partnership for agreement on 26 March 2015 and being reported to Cabinet on 10 June 2015.

Further details were presented in respect of the proposed strategic actions and how those new actions had been informed.

In conclusion she referred Members to the consultation questions and sought members' comments. Feedback could also be passed via the Overview and Scrutiny Officer. The deadline for comments was 30 January 2015.

Members were advised to email their comments on the Children, Young People and Families Plan back to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer before the deadline.

**Resolved:**

- That the content of the report be noted
- Members of the Committee were to report feedback to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer, in order for it to be forwarded to the Service before the deadline.

**11 Quarter 2 2014/15 Budget Outturn Forecast**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Finance (Financial Services) which provided details of the forecast outturn budget position for the Children and Adults Services service grouping, highlighting major variances in comparison with the budget based on the position to the end of September 2014 (for copy see file of Minutes).

Councillor J Armstrong commented that he found the narrative in the report extremely helpful. He further asked whether the service were forecasting to reach the full capital programme. The Finance Manager in response advised that the capital programme would be revisited at MOWG in February and certain areas of the capital programme may be reprofiled into future years.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**12 Quarter 2 2014/15 Performance Management**

The Committee considered a report of the Corporate Management Team which presented Members with progress against the council's corporate basket of performance indicators, risks and Council Plan progress (for copy see file of minutes).

Mr D Kinch asked for clarification regarding data for looked after children case reviews and the target performance percentage. In response the Strategic Manager Performance and Information Management advised that the target was set at 97.8% and so was above target at 98.8%.

Mrs G Harrison commented that the data capture in respect of pupil premium related to 1 year previous as the funding did not reach the child until 1 year later, this often led to missed opportunities. It was agreed that this would be raised with Caroline O'Neill as members agreed the funding should come with the child in Year 1.

Mr K Gillfillan asked whether there was any further data to report in respect of pregnant mothers and the use of e-cigarettes. It was agreed that this would be taken back to Public Health colleagues and reported back to a future meeting.

Mr D Kinch in referring to page 69 of the report and point 25 asked when this target was likely to be green. In response the Strategic Manager Performance and Information Management advised that this target had originally been set with good intentions however it was somewhat irrelevant and unlikely to ever reach 100%.

**Resolved:**

That the report be noted.

**13 Review of the Council Plan and Service Plans**

The Committee received a report of the Assistant Chief Executive which provided an update on progress on the development of the Altogether Better for Children and Young People section of the Council Plan 2015-2018 including the draft aims and objectives contained within the Plan and the proposed performance indicator set to measure our success (for copy see file of minutes).

The Corporate Scrutiny & Performance Manager referred members to paragraph 10 of the report and the proposed indicators for removal. He further advised that there was a further indicator which was proposed for removal which related to the percentage of child protection cases reviewed in required timescales. It was further noted that those removed could be reported as exception son an adhoc basis during the year if required.

Comments from the committee were welcomed and it was advised that overview and scrutiny comments would be fed back into the reporting process, with the final council approval being reported to Council on 1 April 2015.

Councillor Stradling commented that he could see no valid reason for the removal of (v) 'under 16 conception rate per 1,000 girls aged 13-15. In response the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager advised that this indicator was reported annually and therefore the quarterly reporting of this indicator was not required. In addition there had been some double counting taking place as 15-17 year old conception rates were also captured.

Councillor Simmons in relation to point (ii) 'parent / carer satisfaction with the help they received from Children's Services asked whether there were alternative methods of collecting this information. In response it was noted that the response rate on this indicator was a problem and the current online surveys did need improving in order to produce reliable data. The indicator may be reinstated if those improvements were made in the future.

Mr K Gillfillan added that in his opinion point (vi) 'Number of new referrals to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)' was useful to the committee and also was cross cutting with self-harm.

Councillor Armstrong added that he supported Councillor Stradling's comments on under 16 conceptions and asked whether it would be possible to break the data down in to age groups. In response it was noted that this could be investigated further.

Mr D Kinch in referring to parent / carer satisfaction asked whether there was any data relating to dissatisfaction as he found this to me a more important statistic. Councillor Armstrong advised that this data was presented annually to the Corporate Issues Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Chairman asked whether data was collected for all referrals to CAMHS rather than just new referrals. It was agreed that further work could be undertaken to look at developing a better indicator to measure performance in this area.

## **Resolved:**

That the content of the report be noted.

### **14 Verbal Update on Review of Self Harm by Young People**

The Committee received a verbal update from the Overview and Scrutiny Officer on the review of Self harm by Young People. She advised that the evidence gathering stage was now complete, and work was continuing in drafting the final report. Members of the working group had met on 16 December to consider the key findings of the review and to formulate recommendations.

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer further advised that the key findings from the review were as follows:

- Risk taking behaviours is part of adolescence some young people will try self-harm once and not do it again while others will continue to use it as a coping mechanism for their worries and anxieties. By raising awareness of the issue of self-harm will provide young people with knowledge on how to keep safe and adults with the knowledge of the signs to watch out for.
- Definitive data on self-harm for County Durham is limited which is similar to both the regional and national position. The data only reflects the numbers of young people who attend hospital, however there are many more young people who self-harm but do not seek any kind of medical assistance and are not included within the data. Commissioners expressed frustration at the inconsistent methods of gathering data in relation to self-harm which makes it difficult when designing services.
- Although looked after children and young people were identified as a vulnerable group who may self-harm looked after children and young people in County Durham do have access to a very wide range of services from foster carers to psychiatrists. However it does not necessarily follow that because a young person falls into a vulnerable group they will self-harm, exposure to risks or being considered vulnerable does not mean that a young person will self-harm it could make them more resilient to pressures put upon them.
- There is a fine balance between addressing self-harm and overreacting to a risk taking behaviour. Some incidents of self-harm are considered to be 'one-offs' but for some it could be the beginning of a cycle and therefore the correct pathway is varied from person to person. Young people suggested that there are times when adults over react by involving as many services as possible.
- The importance of good mental health and emotional wellbeing is considered in many Council and Partnership strategies and plans as identified in paragraphs 17 to 21. Work is also continuing in the preparation of a Young People's Mental Health, Emotional Wellbeing and Resilience Plan.
- There are many services commissioned to provide help and support to young people who self-harm. Yet these are targeted and specialist services that require a referral to access them. Universally, young people have access to school nurses, GPs, teaching staff and youth workers. Young people indicated that from this selection it is youth leaders/workers they have the best relationship with and suggested that perhaps they could work in schools liaising with young people about emotional health and wellbeing.



- The internet hosts a range of sites which provide good and bad information. Parents and carers should have a conversation with their child to inform them of the dangers of the internet. As a local authority we also have a duty of care for those young people accessing information via pcs in council buildings.
- Schools have many constraints on their time and must cater for the needs of all their students. Best practice suggests a whole school approach in relation to mental health and emotional wellbeing of students.
- Not all schools have the capacity or the resources to provide a range of pastoral care but are able to 'buy in' services as required to support their students.
- Internet safety for children and young people is a key concern for parents, carers and teachers alike. It is important that young people understand and are aware of the dangers when surfing the internet especially when seeking help and support for their anxieties and worries.
- Parents need to be aware of the warning signs which may suggest their child is experiencing mental health or emotional wellbeing issues, including the signs to look out for should they suspect their child is self-harming.
- Young people have indicated they value the relationship they have with youth workers/leaders and feel more comfortable speaking to youth leaders/workers when asking for advice in relation to risk taking behaviours including self-harm.

Councillor J Armstrong in referring to internet safety asked whether any information had been received from the Head of ICT Services regarding the council's internet policy on access to these type of sites. It was noted that an answer had been provided and would be reported to a future meeting.

Councillor O Gunn noted that AAPs had not been mentioned and felt that it was important to keep local AAPs up to date. In response Councillor Stradling suggested that a copy of the draft report should be circulated to each for comment.

**Resolved:** That the content of the update be noted.