

DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL

At a Meeting of **Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee** held in Durham Leadership Centre, Spennymoor, DL16 6YP on **Thursday 28 February 2019 at 9.30 am**

Present:

Councillor C Potts (Chairman)

Members of the Committee:

Councillors H Smith, B Bainbridge, J Blakey, P Brookes, J Considine, C Hampson, I Jewell, L Kennedy, L Mavin, A Patterson and A Reed

Co-opted Members:

Ms R Evans

Also Present:

Councillor J Carr

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors D Bell, J Charlton, R Crute, S Durham, N Grayson, K Hopper, M Simmons, A Willis, M Wilson, Mrs J Norman, Mrs C Craig, Mrs C Johnston and Mrs P Parkins

2 Substitute Members

There were no substitute Members in attendance.

3 Minutes

The minutes of the meetings held on 11 January 2019 and of the special meeting on 11 February 2019 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 item from co-opted members or interested parties.

6 Media Relations

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer presented Members with recent press articles relating to the remit of Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee;

- Parents to fight ‘farming out’ of children to care homes far away
- Reading materials for curious kids

Resolved:

That the presentation be noted.

7 The 0-19 Healthy Child Programme in County Durham

The Committee received a report from the Director of Public Health and presentation by the General Manager, Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust, the Public Health Advanced Practitioner and the Named Nurse Safeguarding, Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust (for copies see file of Minutes).

The presentation highlighted the work that had been completed over the last 12 months within Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust’s 0-19 service and the areas for improvement priority for the remaining duration of the contract.

The Chairman thanked the officers for a very detailed and comprehensive presentation.

Councillor Kennedy queried why the Emotional Resilience Nurses were in place for the Year 9 pupils and not Year 7. The General Manager explained that this was a licensed service which was evidence based and Year 9 was the most appropriate year group to target.

Councillor Kennedy went on to ask if mental health awareness work was carried out and was informed that this has been identified as a key priority for all schools, although it was recognised that not all schools had the same needs. The General Manager explained that resilience work was carried out with Years 5 and 6 in addition to the work being carried out with the Year 9’s. The Public Health Advanced Practitioner added that the process of developing a quality school framework was part of the development of the whole school approach.

With regards to breastfeeding, Councillor Smith said that despite winning the UNICEF gold award the rates were still below the national average, and she asked what could be done to address this. In response the General Manager said that they were undertaking a lot more work with schools and younger children to change the culture. Further to this a group of young people were engaged in this area of work and had been asked about their views on breastfeeding. A number of these young people thought that breastfeeding was not the norm as they hadn’t seen it or been aware of it. For example, at the Metro Centre mothers went to the toilets to breastfeed. Further to another question from Councillor Smith, she was informed that this work did apply to girls and boys as it was important to change the culture overall that breastfeeding was acceptable.

Councillor Kennedy suggested that the secondary school project whereby young people look after a virtual ‘baby’ for a week should also incorporate breastfeeding as an option.

Councillor Patterson asked if there had been any barriers or reasons why only 7 out of 32 schools had taken up the Emotional Health and Resilience offer, in particular poor health and areas of deprivation. The General Manager replied that eventually all schools would be offered this and that they would look at any barriers that would deter any schools from

taking part. The Public Health Advanced Practitioner added that targeted work was being carried out in relation to deprivation and there was a breastfeeding initiative also taking place. The Chairman added that this was reflected in other areas such as obesity and tooth decay.

Following on from the points made in relation to deprivation, Councillor Brookes asked if the figures on page 39 of the pack were any different to those previously reported when Surestart Centres were in every community setting. He said that the Surestart Centre in Fishburn had been replaced by health visitors who looked at targeted areas however he believed that this was not working. The General Manager said that she would report back to the Committee on historical data. She explained how it was difficult to target a particular resource and calculations were based on available staffing. It was important to work with key partners to deliver a universal service but the General Manager said that it was difficult to move staff from one service area to another due to case loads. She advised that the average case load was 250-270 but was lower in hotspot areas such as Easington, Stanley and Woodhouse Close with 200 case loads.

Ms Evans asked how the service ensured that the voice of the child was recorded in situations such as domestic abuse and if any feedback from the child was recorded. She also asked about the impact on a child experiencing period poverty and if this was recorded.

The Named Nurse Safeguarding explained that Inspectors had recently changed the 'voice of a child' to 'through the eyes of a child' and that a lot of dip sampling and audits were being carried out in relation to the 0-19 service. She informed the Committee that through the eyes of child had also been added to every referral and training had been given on the practical ways of capturing this. For example, staff would ask the child how they were feeling and this should always be recorded.

In relation to period poverty the General Manager said that this was on the agenda in Durham and they were key partners in this area of work. Feedback would be reported back to Committee on this issue.

Resolved:

That the recommendations contained within the report be received.

8 SEND - Inclusion and Exclusion

The Committee received a report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services and presentation by the Strategic Manager, SEND that gave an update on Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in County Durham (for copies see file of Minutes).

The Strategic Manager, SEND highlighted the current information available, the progress made locally since the inspection of SEND services in 2017 and information about exclusions of children and young people from school with SEND.

With regards to full time exclusions, Councillor Kennedy asked if schools were using more managed moves within a school area. The Strategic Manager explained that this was something that did happen and could be successful if managed well. He reported that

Behaviour Support Panels would suggest that some children and young people were nurtured at a different school before returning to their main school. The Strategic Manager recognised that there was still work to be done for all children through a consistent approach. Councillor Kennedy asked if the inclusion units within secondary school contributed to a reduction in the numbers and was advised that the 'nurturing units' could be very successful as they gave the children and young people an opportunity to relax away from stressful and anxious situations.

Councillor Blakey queried what support young people had when they left school and asked if the authority received any feedback from colleges. The Strategic Manager confirmed that there was a duty of care for young people with SEND up to the age of 25. He added that although colleges were arm's length organisations, there was a joint responsibility to review and ensure that progress was being made by monitoring. He further commented that some young people studied one Foundation Course after another and how it was important to allow them to transition into adulthood rather than drifting through the system.

Referring to the inspection information presented, Councillor Jewell said that although the weaknesses highlighted were about the systems and not the learning and that the two should go together as this was important for the child and young person. With reference to exclusions, he said that it was important to ensure that the child or young person was receiving the right education provision in the first place. The Strategic Manager advised that the report gave more information and that on balance the offer in schools was well received. He added that the service were challenged by the available resources and that Councillor Gunn had been lobbying parliament about fair funding. Commenting on the point made about exclusions, the Strategic Manager said that all children and young people should have access to the nearest provision and reasonable adaptations should be made. He further commented that the service were working to ensure that every school had the same offer that met the needs of the child and young person.

Councillor Smith referred to a recent suggestion in the media that the threshold for full time exclusions was lower in academies than in maintained schools. She asked if the authority kept any comparative data and if they were seeing this trend. The Strategic Manager confirmed that the authority did hold data by school to school and geographically to be able to compare any trends. He advised that there was not a huge difference in the numbers that was a cause for concern.

Referring to High Needs Block funding, Councillor Patterson asked what plans were in place and what the long term plans for the sustainability of the service were should further funding not be received. The Strategic Manager referred to a recent Cabinet report that highlighted the pressures faced by the service and the volume of shift and demand. He advised that a SEND and Inclusion Response Board had been set up which would look at the money available and ensuring best value for money across the service. The Strategic Manager offered to come to a future meeting of this Committee to present a report on progress against this plan.

The Chairman thanked the officer for his report and presentation.

Resolved:

That the recommendations within the report be agreed.

9 Educational Attainment and Standards 2018

The Committee received an annual report of the Corporate Director of Children and Young People's Services regarding Educational Attainment and Standards for 2018 (for copy see file of minutes).

The Strategic Manager Support & Development, Children & Young Peoples Services highlighted the educational outcomes from early years to Key Stage 5. He reported that there were some challenges with Key Stage 4 in particular with the changes in the curriculum and the way in which exams were assessed. Improvements had been made but it was recognised that there was still some progress to be made.

The Chairman thanked the officer for a very positive report.

Resolved:

That the report be noted.

10 Verbal Update on Joint Review of Children's Residential Care Homes

The Overview and Scrutiny Officer gave an update on the joint review of Children's Residential Care Homes. There had been three meetings held so far with members receiving information on the legislation and regulations on 31 January 2019. Two focus groups held had discussed the impact on young people who live in private residential care homes. Councillor H Smith had attended a Children's Home Network meeting and an additional meeting had been added to the review on 26 March 2019 that would consider the draft accreditation scheme and the work of partners.

Councillor Brookes asked if the review group could explore in more detail the profit side of private children's homes. The Overview and Scrutiny Officer was aware that some lobbying had taken place around this and it was agreed to look into this further.