

Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Thursday, 26th February, 2015.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark(Chairman), Cllr Norma Stephenson O.B.E(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Barbara Inman, Cllr Ken Lupton, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley

Officers: Jackie Ward (CESC), Peter Bell (DSU), Daniel Childs (DSU), Diane McConnell (CESC), Simon Willson (CESC), Shaun McLurg (CESC), Jane Humphreys (CESC), Lynda Brown (CESC)

Also in attendance:

Apologies:

CYP 51/14 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CYP 52/14 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CYP 53/14 Minutes for Signature - 20th November 2014

The minutes of the meeting held on November 2014 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

AGREED that the minutes were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

CYP 54/14 Draft Minutes - 14th January 2015

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2015.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

CYP 55/14 Performance Update Q3 2014/15

Consideration was given to the Children's Services Performance Update Q3 2014/15.

Officers gave an overview of the report and highlighted the following issues:

- In respect of childminders, it was highlighted that 90% of Ofsted judgements were good and better which was the first time this benchmark had been reached.
- Challenges facing secondary schools in the area.
- The number of CAF referrals: 278 CAFs initiated during the Q3 period was an improvement compared to the 283 CAFs initiated in the first two quarters. However, the 561 initiated in the year to date was lower than the 700 target for the period covered. Increase in CAF referrals for schools but little increase in respect of other agencies.
- Long-term and short-term stability for looked after children: the Council had met stability targets for long-term stability and narrowly missed its target for

short-term stability.

- Children's homes: 100% of children's homes rated were as good in Q3, while a recently inspected home was now rated as outstanding.
- NEETS: Performance is better than Q3 2013/14 and was set to improve on the previous year's performance.
- Complaints, Comments, Compliments and Commendations. Latest data available was from Q2; the number of complaints remained relatively high.

Officers presented the Adoption Indicator (Appendix 3) separately, the following information was highlighted:

- The number of adoption plans agreed surged between 2010 and 2013 but had since fallen.
- There had been an increase in the number of prospective adopters who had been approved.
- Three case studies were highlighted to demonstrate how some children's circumstances can lead to time thresholds being exceeded.

Following the presentations, Members raised the following issues:

- Whether uptake of children's centre services affected Ofsted ratings, and how the Children's Centres engage with families and the community to increase uptake.
- Members wished to highlight one of the borough's children's centres being rated 'outstanding'.
- Members noted the increase in CAF referrals from schools, but expressed disappointment that other referral rates were low.
- Members and officers discussed short term placement stability. During Q2 5 children had had 3 or more placements, during Q3 this was 19. Officers stated that it was important to understand the individual circumstances in each case.
- Members and Officers discussed adoption timescales and factors which lead to exceeding threshold timescales.
- Members asked how adoption to other areas affected children and contact with other family members. Officers advised that direct contact was unusual but in these cases placements would be sought within the region; indirect contact was more common.
- Members asked whether there were any policies in relation to religion, ethnicity, etc. Officers stated that there were no such blanket policies.
- Members asked whether the child's local authority or the prospective adoptive family's local authority was responsible for travel expenses incurred during the adoption process. Officers clarified that responsibility lay with the local authority entrusted with the child's care. The local authority's responsibility to the child was for three years after the adoption was finalised.
- Members and officers discussed how and when a child enters the adoption process.
- The issue of adoption disruptions and possible causes was discussed.

AGREED that:

- 1) the Q3 2014/15 be noted.
- 2) A letter be sent to a local Children's Home, congratulating them on their outstanding rating.

Consideration was given to the summary of evidence and draft recommendations for the Scrutiny Review of Transition from Primary to Secondary.

A draft final report would be considered at the meeting on 3rd March 2015, and the review was scheduled to report to the meeting of Cabinet on 12 March 2015.

AGREED that the draft recommendations be noted.

**CYP
57/14** **Work Programme**

Consideration was given to the project plan and it was noted that the following items would be presented at a future meeting:

- Transition from Primary to Secondary - Final Report
- CSE Final Report from Task and Finish Group
- School Organisation and Admission Arrangements - Final Proposals following close of consultation period