

Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 17th February, 2016.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark(Chairman), Cllr Tracey Stott(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Lauriane Povey, Cllr Rachael Proud, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Sally Ann Watson

Officers: Lynda Brown (Head of Projects (Education/ Early Years), Martin Gray (Assistant Director - Early Help, Partnership and Planning), Jane Humphreys (Director - Children's Services), Judith Trainer (Scrutiny Officer), Jenna McDonald (LDS)

Also in attendance: Colin Morris (Independent Chair - SLSCB)

Apologies: Diane McConnell (Assistant Director - Schools & SEN)

CYP Evacuation Procedure

48/15

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CYP Declarations of Interest

49/15

There were no declarations of interest.

CYP Minutes for signature - 16 December 2015

50/15

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2015 were signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

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

CYP Draft Minutes - 13 January 2016

51/15

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2016.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

CYP Scrutiny Review of Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board

52/15

The Committee was provided with a presentation on the Stockton Local Safeguarding Children Board.

Key points were highlighted together as follows:

- The SLSCB role was to ensure that agencies work together effectively to protect children at risk of significant harm and produced policies and procedures in addition to communicating and raising awareness of safeguarding.
- The SLSCB was made up from a range of Tees-wide agencies. It was noted that sub groups played an important role in the delivery of work carried out by the SLSCB.
- The Board met on a monthly basis and regular meetings took place with Chief

Executive of SBC, Director of Children's Services and the LSCB Chair.

- Some of the SLSCBs challenges and issues included; impact and outcomes, leadership across agencies and scale of operation.
- Members were informed of a National Review which was taking place to review the role and function of on LSCBs.
- In comparison to some other councils, Stockton had a low number of Serious Case Reviews.
- It was noted that the OFSTED Single Inspection Framework (SIF) would look at the role of LSCB. Stockton LA could expect a review before December 2017
- With regard to funding of the board, the Committee heard that the majority funder of the SLSCB was the Local Authority; other funding was received from the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), schools, Police, National Probation Service, Catalyst and CAF/CASS.
- It was noted that schools were an extremely important element of the SLSCB and a great deal of work was carried out with schools. It was highlighted that independent schools were also included in the work which was carried out.

Colin Morris, who would soon be standing down as independent chair of the Board, gave his views on the effectiveness of the Board. Colin had previously been a Director of Social Services, Chief Executive of PCT and had been the first independent Chair of the Stockton Board. He had fulfilled this role for almost five years and had also performed a similar role in other areas. He commented:

- There was strong multi agency working and commitment to the Board
- Agencies now sent more senior representation and this had led to Board being more challenging and influential
- Attendance by Board Members was excellent
- There had been concerns in the past about the commitment of some agencies, particularly where there was representation on more than one Board, however, steps had been taken to rationalise structures and working arrangements
- The Local Authority remained the driving force behind the Board and efforts needed to maintained to secure the same level of interest and commitment from all of the other agencies represented
- The Board benefited from strong and consistent lay membership
- One challenge was follow through and delivery of agreed actions. Colin had for example written to agencies in relation to CAF, Early Help, Voice of the Child and Section 11 compliance
- There has been significant improvement in the performance information presented to the Board

- There was a need to maintain the momentum and commitment which had been achieved around the VEMT work
- He commented that although a statutory board, the powers of the board were limited and this will be picked up in the National review.
- Work on the Neglect Strategy and Voice of the Child needed to gather pace
- All agencies needed to recognise the need for greater focus on early help
- Overall, he felt that the Board was more effective than many others and commended Neil Schneider the Lead Agency Chief Executive and the Cabinet Member for their support and commitment and the service for their support and honesty
- He was conducting a 360 degree feedback in respect of individuals/ agencies represented on the LSCB and this was to be presented to the Chief Executive.

Members raised the following points/questions:

- It was asked why the Tees Wide Adult Safeguarding Board was tees wide, The Director responded that the guidance around the establishment of Adult Safeguarding Boards was less prescriptive, whereas there was an expectation that LSCBs were linked with Local Authority boundaries, unless services were shared. Members heard that as a result of the board being tees wide, it was now better resourced and operating more effectively. It was heard that with regard to inspection results, most boards rated 'Good' were those of County Council's which were of a larger scale.
- The Committee was keen to be notified of the findings of the national review. It was noted that the national review would be reported in March 2016.
- Members were keen to understand the recruitment process of lay members to the board. It was noted that recruitment for lay members was done through local newspaper advertisements. A lay member was expected to have relevant experience in child care and or an interest in children and young people.
- Darlington was not included in Tees wide groups owing to different Police/ health boundaries
- Work with schools was critical and there had been tremendous progress made. Schools demonstrated a huge commitment to awareness raising training, getting messages out to pupils, all schools attended the termly safeguarding forums and no issues had arisen within Ofsted inspections in relation to safeguarding.

AGREED that:

1. The information be noted.
2. The Annual SLSCB report be provided to Committee at a future meeting.

CYP 53/15 Scrutiny Review of School Organisation and Admission Arrangements (Phase 2)

Members gave consideration to the Final Report on the Scrutiny Review of School Organisation and Admission Arrangements.

Work was undertaken to assess whether the shift in demand for places was peculiar to admissions for 2015. Members noted that the trend was expected to continue and therefore, the council would need to ensure that there were sufficient places in a number of planning areas in order to meet current and future demand.

AGREED that:

1. The final report be approved for submission to Cabinet.
2. The report be circulated to School Governing Bodies and Head Teachers following Cabinet approval.

CYP 54/15 Q3 2015/16 Children and Young People Thematic Report

Members gave consideration to the Q3 2015/16 Children and Young People Thematic Report.

Key points/emerging issues were highlighted together as follows:

- It was heard that challenges existed with regard to the uptake of free early education/childcare places. Of the 1119 children who were deemed eligible for a place, 855 eligible 2 years olds were accessing a place, this equated to an uptake of 76.4%. A number of actions were being taken to improve take-up and actions were also in hand to develop provision in Billingham, Hardwick, Norton, Ragworth and Stockton Town Centre where there were sufficient places currently available to satisfy demand.
- It was noted that in the North East, the proportion of young people aged 16-19 who were Not in Education, Training or Employment (NEET) was 6.4% and the Not Known rate in the North East was 2.1%. Members heard that whilst Stockton's performance had improved from Q3 2014/15 performance, the Tees Valley had shown a decline.
- With regard to inspections it was heard that no primary or secondary inspections were carried out during the Autumn 2015/16 term. A total 10 out of 61 primary schools in the Borough had status as new academy converters which meant that they did not have a current Ofsted judgement until first inspected. Of 51 remaining schools, 49 were currently rated as good or outstanding and two academies required improvement, one of which was judged to be taking effective action following a monitoring visit.
- Latest data revealed that of 1589 assessments completed 1571 were completed within 45 days of their commencement.
- It was noted that in November 2015, 16 of 181 (8.8%) children were subject to

a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time within two years, it was noted that this 8.8% was an improvement on Q2 2015/16 performance which was 9.6%.

- At the end of November 2015, 107 of 169 children who had been in care continuously for at least 2.5 years had been in the same placement for at least two years.
- The Committee heard that challenges continued around the proportion of Care Leavers in Education, Employment and Training (EET)
- With regard to adoption timescales it was noted that Q2 2015/16 data showed that during the quarter the average time in days between the Local Authority receiving Court Authority to place a child and deciding on a match to an adoptive family was 480 days. It was noted that it was more important to place a child in a secure environment and to have as few a number of adoption breakdowns as possible.
- Members noted information on complaints, comments, compliments and commendations. It was heard that during the Q2 2015/16 period, there were 13 new complaints received at stage 1, none of which were withdrawn.

The Committee raised the following points/questions:

- Members were keen to understand the complaints procedure, it was noted that stage one of a complaint was investigated by a Manager, stage two was investigated by an Independent Officer and stage three investigated by an independent panel. Members were informed that if the complainant was dissatisfied with the result of the complaint, this could then be taken to the Local Government Ombudsman.
- The Committee raised questions around the performance of secondary schools, officers were asked how improvements could be made within this area. In response, it was noted that due to academy conversions, many schools had not been inspected for 5 terms and therefore may have improved during this period of time. Members were informed that many schools would be inspected in 2016 which would therefore create a clear and up to date image on performance.
- It was noted that secondary school challenges existed throughout the North East. Members agreed that it was of high importance to ensure that all young people received a high standard of education.

AGREED that the report be noted.

**CYP
55/15**

Feedback from Member visits to frontline services

Members shared experiences of visits to frontline services.

Members that had visited frontline services were encouraged and reassured by the commitment of staff.

AGREED that the feedback from visits to frontline services be noted and that

officers respond to the next Select Committee meeting on issues raised by Committee Members on the feedback forms.

**CYP
56/15** **Work Programme**

Members gave consideration to the work programme 2015/16.

AGREED that the work programme be noted.

**CYP
57/15** **Chairs Update**

The Chair provided no update.