

# Children & Young People Select Committee

A meeting of Children & Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday, 26th April, 2017.

**Present:** Cllr Carol Clark(Chairman), Cllr Barbara Inman(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Elsi Hampton, Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Ross Patterson, Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Tracey Stott, Cllr Sally Ann Watson, Phil Rigby

**Officers:** Peter Mennear, Annette Sotheby (DCE), Diane McConnell (Assistant Director - Schools & SEN), Helen Crawford (14-19 Advisor), Rhona Bolland (Assistant Director - Safeguarding and LAC)

**Also in attendance:**

**Apologies:** Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Ross Patterson, Gill Wild

## 1 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

## 2 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest from members.

## 3 Frontline Site Visits

A report was considered that outlined feedback from Children's Services - in relation to the most recent frontline visits undertaken by the Committee.

Chairman asked for views on further frontline visits to committee meetings previously attended by members. A new programme of visits was to be prepared for this current year. It was requested that the Referral Order Panel should be included in the next round of visits.

A number of visits were planned as part of the SEND review.

AGREED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That a new programme of visits be arranged.

## 4 Scrutiny Review of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

The Committee's new in-depth review was to consider Special Educational Needs and Disability.

The committee was given an overview of SEN policy, practice and provision, in order to inform its discussion of the draft scope.

The Children and Families Act (2014) reformed legislation relating to children and young people with SEND. There had been a change in approach for providing support for children with additional needs and the legislation around this. The key central role for the voice of children and their parents in decision making had been reinforced, together with improving their quality outcomes,

looking more closely at academic and social achievements of children.

There was more co-operation now between Education, Health and Social Care to include much more detail for each child. The Act includes guidance on publishing a local offer of support for SEND children - to share with all stakeholders, particularly parents, what is on offer for children with special needs. The emphasis would be on transition and preparing for adulthood, setting out areas of need and redefining how to categorise the needs that children present. Four areas of need were discussed:-

- Communication and interaction – youngsters potentially on the autistic spectrum and those with speech and language difficulties.
- Cognitional learning – youngsters behind their age expected norm.
- Social, emotional and mental health needs of a child
- Sensory and physical needs – children who have physical or mental disability or hearing or visual impairment.

The majority of children would have their needs met in their local mainstream school.

Following assessment of a child, an Educational and Health Care Plan (EHCP) may be prepared would clearly define specialist care if needed, and explain how services would work together to deliver those outcomes, focussing on a joint approach. Other children and young people may also receive appropriate help classified as SEN Support. Early input of SEN Support at school may prevent the need for a EHCP further down the line.

To ensure this takes place, the government have launched a new Ofsted / CQC framework to evaluate how effectively the local area identifies, assesses and meets the needs of children with SEN and improves their outcomes. These inspections covered all aspects of how a local area was providing for children and young people with SEND, including education, health and care.

Stockton's SEND services were undergoing a period of reform. Data and feedback had been analysed and there would now be close liaison with partners and parent groups. New forums had been formed to focus on priorities (led by the SEND Development Group) with additional task and finish groups.

Staffing had been reshaped, with Stage 1 Review completed in September 2016 and Stage 2 Review to begin shortly, to ensure staff focus on the right priorities, including strategic planning, action plans and evaluations.

The quality of new annual EHCP review processes would be benchmarked.

Outcomes in Stockton needed to be improved as the area is still lagging behind nationally, whereas other cohorts of children were improving.

Members asked why Hartlepool had not done as well as expected in their Ofsted inspections. Hartlepool shared a CCG with Stockton. In response it was noted that there were a number of reasons, and more detail could be provided on request. Joint commissioning with the CCG had been criticised in the Hartlepool report, for example, and local authority communication with parents needed to be better. Members requested a link be provided to access

the report information.

A new EHCP process is in place with new documentation, putting parents and children at the centre, looking to ensure there would be better, smarter targets of outcomes for children.

The One Point Panel meets weekly to track what provision is needed for individual children.

Members shared concerns around children becoming isolated if taken away from their surroundings. It was reported that new ways of working were being looked at to support children in mainstream schools. Some children were being sent away from their locality, which meant they were not interacting with their peer group and were away from their local community. Some children had to make too many transitions at the end of each key stage, therefore a change had been made to ensure that children could access provision in cross-phase pathways to meet the needs of youngsters as they move through their education journey.

Members were shown a comparison between current Additional Resourced Provisions in schools (ARPs) and proposed ARPs around which comprehensive consultation had taken place.

Members requested feedback into why a Tees Valley bid for a new Special Needs Free School had been turned down. This would be provided in due course.

Members asked if a specific amount of funding was available to support each child in their EHCP, whether there was enough funding and who the funding was allocated to. It was noted that each individual EHCP would indicate the support needed for that child, for example occupational health input – the emphasis being on what was required, not necessarily focussing on the cost.

Personal budgets were still in their infancy.

Discussion took place around preparation for adulthood for 14 – 25 year olds. Parent consultation takes place for children under 14 years, and youngsters over 16 years are consulted directly along with their parents. Young people with capacity are encouraged to make their own decisions.

EHCPs now covered the period between birth and 25 years.

When young people were preparing to leave school or college, help would be given to allow them to choose further education, higher education or employment so that young people could have a choice in their future. Some may want to stay with parents while others may want to live with friends of their own age. Friends and relationships are very important to young people of that age. It was vital to ensure that all agencies and services were involved as early as possible to help with the transition.

Young people with SEN often need more time to learn if they have learning difficulties. In this case the college would put in an application to their local authority for funding which would then be decided by a panel.

Young people in college may receive high needs funding from the local authority without needing an EHCP, if they do not already have one in place, but will require an EHCP from when they are over 19.

Work had been done with colleges to make them more accessible, for example quiet rooms, special areas and variable start and finish times. In addition, employability programmes, independent living skills and travel training were available. Parents who had concerns about their child going to college could meet college staff beforehand to help with any anxiety about their child's transition.

Members asked if enough opportunities were given to youngsters with SEN as it was a concern if they were only offered default courses like catering, for example. It was noted that colleges were able to offer career guidance, job fairs and open evenings to help young people to choose, but this was an area for further development. Members requested reassurance that conversations about adulthood were starting early enough, and that potential outcomes were sufficiently aspirational.

Members requested information on the destinations of young people with SEND in Stockton as they moved into adulthood.

Members were given an overview of various groups set up to take forward the SEN development work, including the SEN Development Group and SEN Managers Focus Group, and were invited to attend the meetings. The Chairperson requested meeting dates so that members may be able to attend. Members also suggested visiting Daisy Chain.

The Parent Carer Forum for Stockton was Stockton United for Change, and a session would be set up with them to discuss preparation for adulthood.

Development of documentation was ongoing to assist in pathway guidance for schools, young people, parents and professionals. It was hoped that leaflets (pictorial/written) would be produced with the help of the various stakeholders including children and parent groups, and the draft documents would be provided to the Committee.

It was agreed to explore a copy of the Stockton Self Assessment documentation at the next meeting.

Members noted that a young person-led theatre group in Newcastle called Twisting Ducks was a good example of a group advocating their views, and further information could be sought from them. Officers would contact them to discuss.

The draft scope was considered and agreed. It was proposed that the Committee would focus on the Preparation for Adulthood element. A number of visits to services and multi-agency meetings would be arranged for Members to attend.

**AGREED:**

1. A list of published joint Ofsted/CQC reports be circulated
2. The draft scope and project plan be agreed
3. The requested information be provided
4. That visits to provision and multi-agency panels be arranged

**5 Work Programme 2017-18**

The next meeting would be held on 10th May 2017

**6 Chair's Update**

The Chairman had nothing to report.