

People Select Committee

A meeting of People Select Committee was held on Monday, 26th September, 2016.

Present: Cllr Eileen Johnson(Vice-Chairman), Cllr Kevin Faulks, Cllr Sonia Bailey (Sub Cllr Lisa Grainge), Cllr Di Hewitt, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Walmsley, Cllr Stephen Parry (Sub Cllr Rachael Proud)

Officers: Diane McConnell (Assistant Director - Schools & SEN), Jane Wright (Partnership and Planning Manager), Janet Marriot (Early Years Manager), Lee Owston (Her Majesty's Inspector), Vanessa Housley (Senior Inclusion Adviser)

Also in attendance:

Apologies: Cllr Mrs Jean O'Donnell(Chairman), Cllr Lisa Grainge, Cllr Stefan Houghton, Cllr Rachael Proud

PEO 28/16 **Evacuation Procedure**

The Evacuation Procedure was noted.

PEO 29/16 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

PEO 30/16 **Draft Minutes - 18 July 2016**

Consideration was given to the draft minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2016.

AGREED that the minutes be approved.

PEO 31/16 **Scrutiny Review of Disadvantage in Early Years and School**

The Committee received information from the National Lead for Early Years, Ofsted. Key points and emerging issues were highlighted together as follows:

- The report presented to Members was the third national survey report which the National Lead had been involved in. The first report looked at School Readiness and the second reported on the use of the term 'Teacher'.
- The recent report on Disadvantage was much more system wide than previous reports.
- 16 different Local Authorities including SBC were visited. One of which had visits carried out to child-minders.
- With regard to the term 'disadvantaged', it was noted that leaders across children's services, health and education did not all use the same definition of what it meant to be disadvantaged.

In Stockton it was agreed that mean a child had been affected by any factor that impacted on their educational outcomes.

- From the outcomes of Ofsted inspections, it was known that the overall quality of provision for the birth - 5 years age group in England was better than it ever

had been. However, being disadvantaged continued to have a considerable detrimental impact on some children and this was a continued priority for Government.

- There was a lack of understanding of what success looked like in tackling disadvantage. Some measures such as educational achievement were easier to track than the impact of breastfeeding, for example. It was noted that if the target was known, the organisation should have a clear understanding of what success looked like.

- Overall, there needed to be greater clarity on the contribution made by education, health and social care to tackling disadvantage, but particularly health.

- Providing a joined up service was crucial in tackling disadvantage. It was noted that in the best authorities, information from early identification of need was shared successfully across all children's services to provide the right intervention.

- Early assessments of children's health, learning and development were not benefiting enough families that were in the most need of support.

- The most successful local authorities visited had devised innovative ways to align national funding streams to ensure continuity of entitlement across a child's entire early education.

The National Lead identified the issue of duplicate assessments. Two main assessments took place in early years.

- One of the first assessments that a child had was the 2 Year Old Health Check which was carried out between the ages of two to two and a half years. Learning Development Checks were then carried out between the ages of two – three years. The Committee heard that the health sector aimed to carry out checks at an earlier stage than the education sector that aimed to carry out checks during the transition period into nursery. Therefore there could be a one year gap between assessments which was considered to be too long of a time gap due to the changes which could occur in the space of a year.

- It was explained that a new integrated check could be introduced which involved one event attended by a health professional and an education professional completing an assessment together. It was highlighted that the introduction of integrated checks would benefit those families that may have found it difficult to arrange/attend two separate appointments.

- With regard to health checks, it was noted that as per previous figures in Stockton, only 50 - 60% of two year olds had the check completed. Members noted that these figures may have increased.

- It was noted that the Two Year Old health check was extremely important as this identified issues and highlight an opportunity for professionals to support a family.

- Two Year Old health checks provided professionals with the opportunity to

sign post families to relevant services.

- Issues were identified around ensuring that the most disadvantaged families had continuous access to funding. It was a challenge to encourage families to introduce their children into schools and nurseries.

- For those families that had children in a nursery at or before the age of two, a system may be able to be put in place to ensure that the family automatically registered for Pupil Premium across early years and then into school.

It was noted that using 2015 figures, Stockton was placed 141 out of 152 local authorities on the measure of the number of children that had a Good Level of Development by the age of 5, and the area was placed 152nd in relation to the number of people not in education, employment or training. It was noted that progress within the school age was better; there appeared therefore to be issues at each end of a child's development but the school years were good.

In relation to childcare quality and sufficiency this was seen as good in Stockton. It was suggested that there needed to be greater clarity on who was accessing Early Years Pupil Premium.

- The Committee was asked whether Stockton as a local authority had a plan/strategy/approach for tackling disadvantage as a whole as opposed to separate plans for each sector e.g. health, education etc.

- A discussion took place around the differences between affluent and deprived areas in health outcomes for young children. Concerns were raised around the figures that were provided around dental health. It was noted that an average of 134 decayed, missing or filled teeth were observed per 100 five year olds from deprived areas in comparison to an average of 66 in affluent areas.

- Members heard that it was important that dental hygiene programmes were provided in all schools and settings in order to improve dental hygiene.

It was noted that private and voluntary settings had dental health promotion measures in place, as did Tilery Primary School, for example.

- With regard to childhood obesity, it was heard that as part of the visits, settings were asked how often physical activities were organised for children to take part in. In response, it was noted that settings did not organise physical activities as children already had access to outdoor areas. Members agreed that having access to outdoor areas did not necessarily mean that children were being active.

- SBC was commended for Fairer Start and the community heroes and champions programme.

The Early Years lead noted that the visit to Stockton as part of the review had been positive overall, and his attendance at the Committee was an example of the priority given to these issues. The Children and Young People Committee enable ongoing accountability.

Ofsted believed that Stockton was well placed for future challenges. It was good to see the Early Years Development Team was still in place, and the work on transition from early years into school was advanced compared to other Authorities.

Ofsted recognised that the 30 hour offer was unlikely to specifically benefit disadvantaged children, but it was noted that next year Ofsted would consider how a child's progress was monitored when they were accessing several settings.

Nationally there was no method tracking the impact of Private and Independent (PVI) settings until the age of 5. It was noted that locally Stockton tracked where children were accessing provision if they had a funded place, but this was not yet analysed. PVI also settings attended partnership meetings in the Borough which included schools, and the transition guarantee enabled schools to see the child's previous settings.

Members raised the following points/questions:

- It was noted that the Committee met with volunteers from the Fairer Start programme ahead of the meeting. Members commended commitment of the Group and the services that it provided.

- With regard to measuring progress with children, it was asked whether SBC had continued to benchmark to ensure that those children that had fallen through the gaps could be identified. It was asked why a national decision had been made which meant that the statutory assessments at the end of the reception year no longer took place. It was highlighted that Ofsted challenged the Government on the cuts of the end of reception checks and it had been agreed that the checks would take place for a further year and during this time, the working group would aim to devise an alternative in its place.

- It was asked whether Ofsted engaged with health providers as part of the review to understand general responses on the school readiness agenda and the need to tackle disadvantage. It was noted that consultation took place with health care providers but their focus was more on the services they were commissioned to provide rather than the wider disadvantage agenda.

It was explained that a meeting took place with the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which had led to a great level of interest. There would be work to ensure that health providers shared the data in relation to the 2 year health checks.

A Public Health funded post had recently started in the Planning and Partnership Team and this would help the team challenge local health providers.

- It was noted that it was important to ensure sustainable development inside and outside of school hours.

- Members thanked the National Lead for Early Years, Ofsted for his attendance and input at the meeting.

- National Lead for Early Years, Ofsted took the opportunity to thank the Committee for providing the opportunity to present findings.

A number of suggested areas for recommendations were highlighted to the Committee for further consideration including the integrated checks, enabling continuing Pupil Premium eligibility where possible, physical activity improvements, and greater focus on quality of outcomes.

The Committee received a briefing on the Early Years and Children's Centre Review. Key points were highlighted as follows:

- The Consultation begun on 12th September and was due to end on 11th November 2016.
- There were a number of reasons which led to the review taking place including a reduction in funding and therefore the need to make savings.
- The review enabled the opportunity to look at how early years services were being delivered within the community and to assess whether or not needs were being met.
- There were occasions when local volunteers acting as peers were found to be the best line of support.
- When parents were asked what factors they considered to make them a good parent they did not name smoking, alcohol etc. The most common responses were related to being free from domestic violence and having safe, warm housing.
- The service was currently focusing on a culture change programme and changing the way people think in order to give a child the best start in life.
- When looking at service provision and how the way in which services were delivered, a gap was identified in preventative work.
- The proposal was to have 5 family hubs as opposed to the 12 current centres as bases to provide services.
- A volunteer programme was discussed which would include an outreach service including home visits. Local people would be encouraged to host their own sessions such as stay and play, and business support could be provided by the local authority.
- 23 information sessions were held during September and October 2016 in order to generate an understanding of what families were entitled to and the proposals for service provision.

Members raised the following points/questions:

- It was asked whether there was an on-going consultation regarding the proposed reduction in centres. In response it was noted that there was a consultation on-going and the service awaited feedback.

- The Committee raised concerns relating to the reduction in centres. In response, it was noted that more outreach provision would be provided as a result of the reduction, and there were many parents who were not accessing services in their current form but it was perceived that they would benefit from additional support. The revised approach would aim to provide this in a more accessible manner.

- Members agreed that interacting with others within the community centres was an important aspect for those families that engaged with the service. Concerns were raised around the lack of engagement with other families as a result of more outreach services and less centres. Concern were also expressed in relation to a possible fragmentation of services.

- It was highlighted that it was important to retain the successful, well used services. It was noted that need was dotted around the Borough, for example there was increasing number of private rented accommodation in Ingleby Barwick which may be one indication.

Members received an update on the Government consultation on a national early years funding formula.

It was noted that a consultation was on-going as the Government was reviewing the way in which Early Years services were funded. The projected impact would be positive for Stockton.

Members heard that SBC had responded to the consultation.

AGREED that the information be noted.

**PEO
32/16**

Work Programme

Consideration was given to the work programme 2016-17.

AGREED that the work programme be noted.