

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

A meeting of Children and Young People Select Committee was held on Wednesday 11 December 2024.

Present: Cllr Carol Clark (Chair), Cllr Barbara Inman (Vice-Chair), Cllr Paul Rowling, Cllr Emily Tate, Cllr Sally Ann Watson and Cllr Jack Miller (sub for Councillor Stephen Richardson).

Officers: Vanessa Housley, Sharon Stevens, Mandie Rowlands, Jane Williams, Katie Newton (Ch'S), Sophie Ward (PH). Judy Trainer (CS).

Also in attendance: Lucy Owens, Clare Besford (Catalyst).

Apologies: Cllr Ray Godwin, Cllr David Reynard, Cllr Stephen Richardson and Cllr Katie Weston.

CYP/27/24 Evacuation Procedure

The evacuation procedure was noted.

CYP/28/24 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CYP/29/24 Minutes

AGREED that the minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2024 be confirmed as a correct and signed by the Chair.

CYP/30/24 Monitoring of Recommendations - Scrutiny Review of Narrowing the Gap in Educational Attainment

The Select Committee received an action plan in respect of recommendation 1 – Improve Attendance.

A lead had been identified for each recommendation and the lead officer for this recommendation attended the meeting and outlined the proposed actions which included:

- Identify what attendance training is currently in place across teams in Education Inclusion and Achievement
- Identify where the gaps are for the Local Authority officers and school leaders
- Appraise overall, persistent and severe absence data to identify patterns and trends
- Split the Attendance Network Meetings into separate primary and secondary meetings
- Publish a dossier of successful strategies gained from the Attendance Networks for school leaders
- Refresh the Local Authority Attendance Strategy across all teams

- Attendance at team meetings across the wider children's services to raise awareness of the support first as everyone business theme from "Working Together to Improve Attendance" DfE Statutory Guidance August 2024
- Attendance Self Evaluation Toolkit promotion at Education Matters and Secondary Heads meetings
- Attendance Network promotion

AGREED that the actions for recommendation 1 be approved.

CYP/31/24 Scrutiny Review of Holidays are Fun (HAF)

The Select Committee received a presentation from Children's Services, Public Health and Catalyst covering:

- The HAF Team
- The programmes and eligibility
- Who is participating and how can we maximise attendance?
- Target groups
- Barriers
- How the programme is promoted?
- Early years/ schools and education settings
- Impact and Feedback
- Booking system improvements
- Links with the Council Plan
- Creating opportunities for our future workforce
- Working with families outside the programme
- The reach of the programme

Key issues highlighted and discussed were as follows:

- There were eligible children in all wards
- Ingleby Town Council ran a summer holiday scheme and there was potential to link up with the HAF programme to expand provision in Ingleby Barwick
- With regard to some of the cooking provision, it was highlighted that Morrisons had previously offered slow cookers at reduced prices, and it might be worth approaching them again for support
- The team worked closely with schools, attending parents' evenings and schools were provided with electronic promotional packs as well as hard copy resources
- Catalyst had a three-year contract with the Council (ending on 28 February 2025). Their role was to manage providers of the programme. There were currently 31 active providers (43 had offered provision over the three year period). Only 10% of the grant could be spent on administration and the Select Committee requested a breakdown of how the administration element had been spent
- Catalyst visited every provider at least once a year for quality assurance purposes. However, feedback from the children and young people themselves was critical
- Youth United Stockton was working to build reach across partners and the programme was promoted through the Catalyst e-bulletin and the various forums and networks

- SEND was an area of low take up and was being addressed with bespoke sessions and training and awareness
- It was suggested that a comparison with other Council's HAF provision should be carried out as part of the review to understand if other Council areas had achieved a greater reach and what learning could be applied
- Promotional literature had to follow the Council's marketing guidelines which had proved to be restrictive. Having a dedicated social media channel would provide better profile but was also against the Council's guidelines
- Members commented that the orange text used on the promotional literature as difficult to read
- It was an aspiration for schools to be a primary delivery partner and innovative approaches were being developed to remove practical and logistical barriers such as employing key holders to take responsibility for premises and some staff might be interested in taking on extra hours
- Following feedback from parents regarding the booking system, added search features now included age, nature of activity, provider name, location and date
- The Council was looking to develop a work experience programme with the Careers Team to create opportunities for young people aged 13 plus to participate in paid employment
- Providers understood the importance of linking and referring families into other agencies for support outside of HAF where needed

The next meeting of the Select Committee would be an informal session and would provide an opportunity to:

- Provide an overview of the HAF programme and the opportunity to thank everyone involved over the last three years
- Premiere the HAF Film
- Hear from organisations who have delivered activity as part of the HAF programme - examples of best practice, successes, challenges and lessons learnt
- Hear from young people who have benefited from the programme
- Facilitated discussions and opportunities to network

AGREED that the presentation be noted and the request for additional information be actioned.

CYP/32/24 Chair's Update and Select Committee Work Programme

The Chair pointed out that the next meeting would be an informal session held at Billingham Forum.

AGREED that the work programme be noted.