

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 13 January 2014 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Horabin (Vice-Chairman), E. Cargill, Cassidy, P. Hignett, K. Loftus, Logan, C. Plumpton Walsh, B. Woolfall and L. Lawler (Co-optee)

Apologies for Absence: Councillor M. Bradshaw and Fraser

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Clough, T. Coffey, M. Grady, A. McIntyre, G. Meehan, S. Nyakatawa and M. Simpson and D. Sweeney

Also in attendance: C. Pollard, H. Smith and Cllr Ged Philbin in accordance with Standing Order 33

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28th September 2013 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP32 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In relation to Minute No. CYP40 The following question had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).

“In light of the decision of Halton Borough Council to change the delivery of services to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education and training, given that –

(a) The Youth Contract eligibility criteria is very specific and is only available for a minority of the cohort.

(b) The statutory responsibility for parent guidance moving to schools creates more demand not less for services to vulnerable young people.

(c) Referral systems to opportunities are entirely

underpinned and are co-ordinated by the Engagement Worker Staff employed by the current contract holder.

- (d) The danger that in Halton and elsewhere NEET will increase within the short, medium and long term and not decrease with these changes.
- (e) The limited service offered by a virtual service through the National Careers Service and three appointments only, access to a face to face service for 18 years old if they are claiming benefits.
- (f) Anecdotally in Halton there is high number of NEET 18 year olds who are not claiming benefits.
- (g) That it is the legal right of the individual to TUPE transfer.

Given (a) to (g) how can Halton BC justify a reduction in resources to only three qualified workers to provide careers information advice and guidance to the NEET cohort aged 16 to 17 and suggest that TUPE transfer does not apply to those workers currently delivering these services.”

The question was received by the Board and in response Ann McIntyre provided the following answer:

The contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Ltd (GMCP) was due to end on 31 March 2014, the contract had already been extended twice for 2012/13 and 2013/14; the contract terms did not allow for a further extension.

Halton Borough Council was proposing different services because:

- a wholesale change nationally over the past 3 years or so in terms of careers support for young people. The services provided by most if not all authorities would have changed fundamentally over this period;
- the changes coupled with the ending of the current contractual arrangements meant that it was inevitable and necessary that the Merseyside authorities needed to review the services they were providing;
- that review came in the face of severe financial restraint and the authorities needed to ensure that they were meeting their statutory obligations and

focussed on those areas not being met but other publicly funded agencies.

A supplementary question was asked as follows:

“Regarding the legalities around TUPE if the services are still being delivered, why are they not supplied by the current staff. Can this be explored?”

In response it was noted that the issue of TUPE was a legal issue. However legal advice had been sought by the authority and it was reported that TUPE would not apply to the current and fundamental changes to the services.

RESOLVED: That the public question be noted.

CYP33 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board received a report which contained the Minutes relating to the Children and Young People and Families Portfolio, which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of the PPB.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

CYP34 SSP MINUTES

The Minutes of the Halton Children’s Trust meetings held on 15th October and 26th November 2013 were submitted to the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

CYP35 CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided information about the current children in care population and the outcomes for children in care and care leavers. It was noted that as Corporate Parents it was important that all members had an understanding of the needs of children in the care of Halton, and exercised their role in supporting them and advocating for them in all areas as parents did for their own children.

It was reported that the aim was to strive to keep children within their families where it was consistent within their welfare. However, where this was not possible and the level of risk of harm to a child was significant and increasing despite support, the Local Authority had a duty under the

Children Act 1989 to safeguard their welfare.

It was reported that children could come into care for a variety of reasons and for varying periods of time. It was noted that this could be a voluntary agreement with the parents under Section 20 of the Children Act 1989, where the parents maintained their legal parental responsibility for the child.

The report further set out the current profile of children in care. It was noted that a total of 187 children were in care, which was an increase from 134 at October 2012. Detailed in the report was the population of children in care in terms of gender and age groups. Members were advised that the average length of time in care was 2.6 years which was a reduction from 4.07 previously. For placement stability, where a child was in care for longer than 2.5 years or had been in the same placement for two years or longer, 89% of children had been in stable placements, which was a significant increase from 78% in the previous two years.

Members were further advised of care leavers who were in care. The figure was currently 67, and the report set out the varying duties that supported them under the Leaving Care Act. The report also set out recent activities carried out in relation to Pledge to Children in Care and production of a "Moving On" booklet which was produced for young people before they left care so they were aware of the duties towards them and the support available.

It was noted that the Virtual Head Teacher, had recently presented the annual report which outlined the progress that children in care were making in terms of the education and outcomes. Members requested that this be brought to a future meeting.

The Board recognised the population was changing in terms of age of children in care. The number of children aged 15+ had increased causing different challenges for carers. Members discussed children placed in care from other authorities and requested figures be circulated. In response it was noted that it was now the duty of the care provider, to inform Halton Council if they had young people in their care, therefore a more accurate figure could be obtained.

Members further discussed other family members caring for young people and financial support provided. The Board queried how many family placements there were

currently in the Borough. In response it was noted that this information would be circulated.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report and comments made be noted; and
- (2) the report of the Virtual Head Teacher on the educational outcomes for 2012/13 for children in care be presented to Members.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

NB: Councillor Dennett declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item, due to being the Chair of the Management Committee of the Bridge School (PRU)

CYP36 HALTON CONSULTATION AND REVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE PROVISION

Members received a report of the Strategic Director Children and Enterprise, which allowed Members to consider the outcome of the Halton Consultation and Review of Alternative Provision (AP), to inform a revised model of delivery for KS3 and KS4 from January 2014.

It was reported that following a recent consultation of AP in Halton had been carried out. A report was presented and the recommendations approved by the 11 – 19 Partnership and Children and Enterprise SMT. It was noted that the review involved consultation with schools, AP providers, pupils, families and LA teams.

The main recommendations in the report were that a Multi-Agency Strategic AP Group should be established to agree a definition for AP and produce a revised model for AP for the Borough. The group would then establish task and finish groups and monitor and co-ordinate the work of these groups. The Strategic Group would be responsible for AP across the Borough, including commissioning provision, monitoring provision and ensuring it was good quality and tracking all the pupils not in full time education by reason of exclusion, illness or other reason. Members were advised that it was agreed that the Strategic Group would:

- identify resources required for the revised model;
- ensure a consistent route to AP and identify the services responsible for its delivery;
- develop a menu of provision including full and part time programmes, outreach and CPD;

- establish clear entry routes and agreed exit outcomes;
- implement a robust quality assurance framework; and
- develop a satellite centre to deliver AP in Widnes.

The report further set out information on the Bridge School PRU KS3 and KS4, single inspection framework, Pupils Missing Out on Education Survey Report November 2013, the Bullfinch Report – Action in Response to Child Sexual Exploitation in Oxfordshire November 2013, and the priorities outlined in the Halton’s Children and Young People’s plan to raise achievements of all young people.

Arising from discussion of the report Members noted that the procedure was the same when children were excluded from Academies and Free Schools and noted the importance of information regarding exclusions being passed on to post 16 training and apprenticeship providers.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Board endorse and support the approach to revising Alternative Provision in the Borough;
- (2) further work be undertaken to identify and understand where there is low attendance; and
- (3) In line with the OFSTED review of pupils missing out on education, a joint approach to information sharing be agreed which could be used on a case by case basis by health services, youth offending teams, police, education services and other key partners.

Strategic Director
- Children and Enterprise

CYP37 OVERVIEW OF CHILDREN IN NEED & CHILD PROTECTION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which updated Members on issues impacting on performance within the Children in Need Service (CIN) on a six monthly basis.

It was noted that the report covered Quarters 1 and 2 of 2013/14. Members were advised that it was important to have a good understanding of the performance and were satisfied that adequate strategies were in place to ensure that the children of Halton were safeguarded. It was further noted that the CIN Service provided contact and referral, assessment and services to children in need and children in need of protection.

The Board was advised that there had been a number of changes and since 2nd September 2013, all contacts and referrals were now managed by one central team, the Contact and Referral Team (CART), details of the team and staffing levels were set out in the report.

Outlined in the report were definitions of contact and referrals and assessments and Section 3.9 outlined details of Child in Need and Child Protection Children in Care giving history of support provided and figures of children dealt with over the last months.

In relation to performance, it was noted that significant improvements had been made by IT services to the ICS system CareFirst and a suite of real-time management reports had also been designed and implemented which allowed increased oversight of performance in all areas of activity.

Members were advised that referrals had stabilised but were still quite high. There had been a significant increase in the number of cases completed in the 6 month period which has had a negative impact on the timings particularly in light of the introduction of a 26 week timescale for court proceedings.

In conclusion, the report set out staffing and caseloads and it was noted that two Practice Manager vacancies had been filled and they would be in position in the new year. Workshops had been held with staff in the last couple of months about the future of the service and how it needed to develop. Staff had many constructive and positive suggestions which informed a formal consultation prior to implementation of any revised service from April 2014.

Members discussed referrals from hot spot areas and requested further information and figures of any such areas. In response it was noted that this would be circulated to the Board. Members were invited to visit the new CART office and were asked to contact Tracey Coffee should they wish to arrange a visit.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Board note the work of the service and the improved outcomes for children in need and in need of protection; and
- (2) a further report be provided in 6 months' time.

CYP38 MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS PROMOTED IN SCHOOLS (MHAPS) PILOT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which provided information on the forthcoming MHAPS pilot to be delivered in Warrington.

It was reported that as a result of a visit made by the Joint Health Children, Young People and Families PPB Mental Health Scrutiny Topic Group to Thorn Road CAMHS in October 2013, the group met with an ex CAMHS service user, Hannah, who was now employed by 5 Boroughs Partnership to run a Metal Health Awareness Promotion in Schools pilot.

Hannah addressed the Board and spoke of her experience using mental health services, how she reached a turning point in her life, and how she felt that CAMHS lacked in having a connection with schools and informing young people of help available. Hannah informed the Board her experiences helped her greatly in her new role for 5 Boroughs Partnership, and her aim was to educate young people and spread the message on how to access services.

Members asked Hannah if she had visited many schools in Halton. In response it was noted that the deadline was 31 January to collate responses from schools, these would then be taken to the CAMHS Board and Hannah was looking at visiting schools in February or March 2014. The Chair thanked Hannah for her informative presentation.

The scrutiny group was particularly interested in this pilot, as it came at a time when young people were increasingly vulnerable to social pressures and at risk of developing poor mental health. Although the pilot was being undertaken in Warrington, it was anticipated that it would be rolled out across the rest of the 5 Borough's footprint during the second half of 2014.

The report set out the pilot's foundations, delivery of a pilot in schools to address stigma and raising their awareness which was also emphasised by the short film "You're not alone", which was based around a day in the life of a young person with Mental Health problems. The film was designed to reflect young people's experiences of Mental Health and their lack of knowledge of who to talk to in their schools. It was noted that the pilot co-ordinator was

able to lend some personal experience to delivering the pilot from the perspective of recalling her own experience of not understanding Mental Health or the difficulties she was going through and also knowing how to access Mental Health Services. Members were advised that Thomas Boteler High School in Warrington had been selected for the initial pilot.

The report set out details of the pilot in terms of year groups that would be trialled, details of lessons and information that would be provided. It was noted that the pilot would be undertaken between February 2014 and May 2014 and would be evaluated by pre and post session questionnaires, overseen by CAMHS clinical and operations management.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and comments made be forwarded to the Pilot Co-ordinator

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

CYP39 INVESTING IN CHILDREN BOARD - CHALLENGES AND THE RESPONSE TO DATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director Children and Enterprise, which informed Members of the Investing in Children and Young People Board. It was noted that this Board was established to ensure that all the work of agencies in Halton that delivered services for our children and young people, had a central focus on ensuring that the children were safe. A presentation was provided by Ann McIntyre and Mark Grady, which outlined the challenges within the Borough and the response to date. The presentation set out the following:-

- background – Journey of the Child Practice Review;
- role of Investing in Children Board;
- methodology;
- headline strengths;
- headline areas for consideration;
- key messages;
- Halton response; and
- future areas for consideration.

The Chair thanked Ann and Mark for an informative presentation and requested that any further reports on this topic be brought to the Children, Young People and Families Board before they were submitted to Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board endorse and support the approach by

the Investing in Children and Young People Board; and

- 2) as corporate parents, Members consider the contribution they can make to ensure the best outcomes for our children and young people.

CYP40 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which provided progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

It was reported that key priorities for development or improvement in 2013-16 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:-

- Children and Families Services;
- Learning and Achievement; and
- Children's Organisation and Provision.

Arising from the report the following points were highlighted / noted:

- the role of School Improvement Link Officer was key in terms of preventing inconsistencies in quality of teaching, the lack of challenge for more able pupils and looking at attendances that were below average;
- the outcome of the Adoption Inspection was adequate overall with good judgements for safeguarding and quality of outcomes;
- in relation to shared services for commissioning and there had now been a Clerkship role for Governor support. Clerk's to Governors had to meet a specific criteria for this Clerkship role which would ensure quality advice and support was provided to Govenors; and
- two further inspections had been carried out on Edinburgh Road and Inglefield which had been rated good and outstanding respectively. It was noted that this was the fourth year running Inglefield had been rated outstanding. Members commended the management team at Inglefield for the result.

In relation to capital spend it was noted that this information would be circulated to Board Members.

The Board wished to place on record their congratulations for the Ofsted ratings at Edinburgh Road and Inglefield.

RESOLVED: That the second quarter performance management reports and comments made be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.47 p.m.