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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, 14 November 2022 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), C. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chair), Abbott, M. Bradshaw, Bramwell, Carlin, Goodall, V. Hill, Jones, Loftus and Aimee Teeling

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Vasic, A. Jones, B. Holmes and A. Leach

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

CYP7 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 June 2022 were taken as read and signed as a correct record. It was noted that the 12 September meeting was cancelled due to the passing of Her Majesty the Queen.

CYP8 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was noted that no public questions had been received.

CYP9 CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES PPB ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021/22

The Chair presented the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2021-22. He gave thanks to Members and Officers for their commitment, support and hard work carried out throughout the year.

CYP10 HEADTEACHER OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR HALTON CHILDREN IN CARE

Action

The Board received the Annual Report of the Headteacher of the Virtual School, which gave the education outcomes and achievements of Halton's Children in Care (CIC).

The Annual Report (appended to the cover report) included detailed data, analysis and a summary of the work of Halton's Virtual School, during the academic year 2021-22. It was reported that the work of the School had continued throughout the academic year and the full Annual Report provided detailed analysis of how Halton's Children in Care had performed against each of the individual key performance indicators.

The Annual Report also gave a summary of the Virtual School's progress towards its identified key priorities for the academic year 2021-22 and identified the priorities for the Virtual School in 2022-23.

Members welcomed the report and the following was discussed following their questions:

- Bench marking for Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) – it was important that the right children were being targeted for this funding, such as those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The impacts being made on those currently in receipt of PPP were being monitored;
- Personal Education Plans (PEP) for those already in care – a PEP was completed for every school age child in care. This included a section of gathering the voice of the child and was an integral part of the process. The Virtual School were also looking at the use of an 'App' to gather their wishes and feelings in other ways, when they were reluctant to talk to professionals;
- Lateness/absence from school – although there was a spike of non-attendance during Covid, this had not been the case since the children had returned following this. It was noted that the attendance of CIC was better than those under Child Protection (CP), this would be looked at;
- Lowering the number of CIC leavers who were NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) – actions already taken were discussed, such as identifying traineeships and upskilling the core skills of the young person. It was recognised that there was a need to remove barriers to employment or further education for care leavers; and
- Effectiveness of PEP's – it was recognised a year

ago that this needed looking at. A new Post-16 Officer role was created following which an improvement was made. The Officer has since left though so this role was currently vacant and being recruited to.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the information provided; and
- 2) accept the Headteacher of the Virtual School's Annual Report as an accurate account of the performance on the education outcomes and achievement of Halton's Children in Care.

CYP11 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE UPDATE

The Board received a presentation from the Strategic Director – People, which provided an update of the work undertaken to date, following the Ofsted focussed visit and the subsequent actions taken in response to their findings.

The Children's Services Department received the Ofsted visit in October 2021 and inspectors looked at the arrangements for Children in Need (CIN), including those who were subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP). Since then, steps had been taken to make improvements to the service, including the establishment of an Improvement Board. It was noted that Members received an initial update at the Board meeting on 13 June 2022.

Following consideration of the update and Members questions, the following additional information was provided:

- Administration support for social workers had been looked at so they could focus on the cases they were working on, this work was continuing but it was hoped to have one administration staff member for 5 social workers;
- Social workers spent a lot of their time using IT; it was recognised that the IT systems needed improvement so that paperwork could be streamlined;
- It was felt that agency staff did not share the same commitment to a team as a permanent member of staff would;
- Halton had eight student social workers who had now finished their training – 6 of them had taken jobs with Halton;
- A Memorandum of Understanding had been agreed with a higher education institute;

- An interim review had been carried out since the initial Ofsted focussed visit in October 2021. Improvements had been made and the annual review is due in January 2023; and
- It was suggested that retention incentives should be in place – it was noted an increased pay offer for social workers was being proposed.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the steps that have been taken and the role of the Improvement Board.

CYP12 HALTON LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGY 2021-25

The Board considered a report and presentation of the Strategic Director – People, advising on the progress and updates in relation to the Halton Local Area SEND Strategy 2021-25 and current pressures.

Members were advised that throughout 2021-22 Halton, in common with other local authority areas, had seen an unprecedented growth in demand for Education Health and Care Needs Assessments. The number of applications for EHC Needs Assessments reached 353 for the academic year in July 2022. This represented a 35% increase in demand, presented in the table in paragraph 3.1.2.

The report outlined the impacts that the increased demand was making across the service. Considerable pressure was being placed on the capacity in both the SEN Assessment Team and those services that provided advice and assessments that contributed towards developing EHCP's, such as the Educational Psychology Service, Speech and Language Therapy Services, Occupational and Physio Therapy services.

It was reported that these capacity issues had resulted in a decline in the completion rate for EHCP's, which was due to three main factors; these were described in the report. Further, Members were advised that the growth in demand for EHCP's was placing huge stress on the availability of specialist provision in Halton. Paragraph 3.2.7 gave details of capital developments that had been put in place over the last 3 years to help accommodate the increase in the numbers and complexities of pupils with SEND, as all specialist places and resource bases were oversubscribed for 2022.

The report made comparisons on the current pressures with national data and neighbouring authorities; gave information on funding / grants being made available;

and presented information on the new SEND Sufficiency Strategy currently being consulted upon.

In response to Members questions the following information was given:

- Alternative provision plans for Key Stages 1 and 2 – officers were currently working with schools to help understand the gaps here and what was being accessed presently. It was too early to decide now the depth of work required.
- Career paths were built into a child’s EHCP from age 14, however it was felt that this should be sooner and as early as leaving primary school;
- A ‘flightpath’ was more about aligning curriculums for children leaving school and going onto further education – so a college for example is better able to understand a pupil’s need better;
- A large number of headteachers had left the profession lately, which had provided some positives and some negatives – positives in a creative way with new ideas and ways of doing things and negatives such as not knowing the area and how things were done in Halton;
- Travel training support was provided for those students who needed it;
- One Members query regarding being excluded from travel and access to work schemes would be followed up outside the meeting as the information was not to hand at the meeting;
- DfE data showed that the sector where Halton trailed national rates of inclusion in relation to the proportion of pupils with an EHCP was secondary academies. Conversations regarding this were being had with them, as well as offering support, training and consultancy work, so that there will be consistency amongst the SEND provision across all secondary academy schools in the future.

RESOLVED: That the Board receives the presentation.

Operational Director
Education,
Inclusion and
Provision

CYP13 SUMMARY OF 2022 PROVISIONAL UN-VALIDATED ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES

The Board considered a report which provided a summary of the 2022 provisional un-validated attainment outcomes for Halton’s Children and Young People.

The data presented included a summary of Early

Years Good Level of Development (GLD) indicator; Key Stage One phonics results; and Key Stages 1, 2, 4 and 5 attainment information. This data provided the Board with an early indication of the educational attainment data across Halton's Schools before publication of the validated data by the Department for Education (DfE) in December. The DfE publication would include detailed national data on progress and provide comparative groups. Members were advised however, that the data provided in this report gave sufficient information for the Local Authority, schools and wider stakeholders to plan and prioritise actions.

The report also shared with the Board some key updates regarding educational priorities and developments both locally and nationally:

- Priority Educational Investment Area (PEIA) – of which Halton is one;
- Halton Learning Alliance – to be formally relaunched;
- Delivering Better Values Programme – which Halton was part of;
- Early Years Experts and Mentors Programme – Halton participating in; and
- Headteacher of the Virtual School – a successful appointment had been made – Mr Benjamin Holmes.

The following comments were made following the Officer's presentation of the item:

- One Member commented it was important to note that the attainment figures presented for England used in comparison had worsened since 2017, due to the pandemic;
- It was acknowledged that improvements needed to be made and it was disappointing that Halton was behind in all except two areas; it was hoped that the PEIA would help Halton to improve outcomes in the future;
- The challenges Halton faced in comparison to other areas of England such as London were discussed, as well as the impacts of Covid 19 still being felt in education;
- The educational aspirations of Halton's parents, and expectations of teachers and headteachers of pupils was discussed; and
- Halton Learning Alliance – this has been formally relaunched and will be led by the education sector. This will bring all education partners together and see schools working together.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the presentation be received; and
- 2) Members note the key updates and implications for the Borough.

CYP14 SUPPORTING FAMILIES UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – People, which provided an update on the Supporting Families Programme and its current performance levels.

It was reported that following the Spending Review in October 2021, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced an extra £200m boost to the Supporting Families Programme, which would now continue for the next 3 years (2022-2025) and allow the Programme to be expanded. The report outlined the improvements being made to the Programme by the DLUHC in order to achieve this.

It was noted that Halton signed up to the Programme commitments and funding agreement in April 2022, which included key parameters around performance requirements, resourcing the Programme, and service and data transformation. These were outlined in the report and a detailed update on all aspects of the Programme in Halton was provided as well as a performance update.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CYP15 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 2 2022/23

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 2 of 2022-23 (July 1 2022 to 30 September 2022).

The key priorities for development or improvement in 2022-23 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan for the following Departments:

- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services.

The reports detailed progress made against objectives, milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

Members were requested to consider the progress and performance information and highlight any areas of interest and/or concern, where further information could be reported at a future meeting of the Board.

It was noted that the current targets would be subject to a review for future performance reports.

RESOLVED: That the Performance Management reports for quarter 2 of 2022-23 be received.

Meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.