

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, 8 November 2021 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), Abbott, Bramwell, Carlin, V. Hill, Jones, Loftus, Ratcliffe and Aimee Teeling

Apologies for Absence: Councillors C. Plumpton Walsh and Goodall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, T. Coffey, J. Farrell, S. Williams and M. West, P. McPartland and J. Lloyd

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP16 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP17 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

CYP18 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The minutes relating to the Children and Young People Portfolio, that had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix 1 for information.

CYP19 HEADTEACHER OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR HALTON CHILDREN IN CARE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – People, which presented the Headteacher's Virtual School's Annual Report for Halton Children in Care (CIC).

The Annual Report was appended to the report and provided detailed data, analysis and summary of the work of the Virtual School, during the academic year 2020-21.

It was noted that due to the impact of Covid-19, a decision was made to suspend all primary tests and to change to teacher assessment for the allocation of GCSE results. Members noted that because of this, it was not possible to provide yearly comparisons for end of Key Stage progress and attainment. Further, whilst some school attendance did resume for parts of the academic year, there was a national lockdown in the spring term, which meant it was again difficult to provide yearly comparisons.

The Board was advised that the work of the Virtual School had continued throughout the academic year. The full Annual Report provided detailed analysis of how Halton's Children in Care had performed against each of the individual key performance indicators; how they had been supported in order to mitigate against the impact of Covid restrictions; gave a summary of the School's progress towards its identified key priorities for the academic year 2020-21; and identified the priorities for the School in 2021-22.

Following presentation of the item Members raised the following:

80% of CIC were in good/better schools – how were you assuring the wellbeing of the 20% that were not

By constantly reviewing the provision on an individual needs basis so through termly progress meetings (outside of the PEP reviews); looking at the work being done in the school and outcomes during the school day; pastoral support offered; and monthly meetings to keep on top of any pupils that were a cause for concern.

How do you deal with telling a school that they did not meet the needs of a child

Usually the school would agree, if the child was not making progress at a particular school then it was important that they found a placement which could change this to better the outcome for the child.

Where were unaccompanied asylum seekers taught

They must have a placement in a school or college to be able to receive the education, whether this be virtual due to Covid or physically attending.

Did asylum seekers come from the dispersal system

The vast majority did, but some self-presented. The Home Office carried out an age assessment but some say they are below 18, which triggers statutory responsibilities upon the Local Authority (LA), at the expense of the LA.

The phrase 'stuck PEPs'

This was explained in relation to Riverside College, where quality assurance raised issues in relation to the recording of information on PEP's for children not being robust enough, so the quality of them required improvement. The Virtual School were working with them to improve this to ensure all information was entered into the PEPs within a clear timeframe.

RESOLVED: That the Board

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

CYP20 CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT REVIEW
AUTUMN 2021 – 2022

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – People, which provided a summary of the revised Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) Report.

It was noted that Sections 6 and 7 of *The Childcare Act (2006)* and the associated statutory guidance: *Early Education and Childcare – Statutory guidance for local authorities (March 2018)*, required all local authorities in England to undertake and provide an annual childcare sufficiency report to elected Council Members on how they were meeting their duty to secure sufficient childcare and to make it available to the public. In accordance with this, Halton's Childcare Sufficiency Assessment had been reviewed and updated – this was attached to the report.

The CSA report detailed achievements since the last review and outlined Halton's current position. It also highlighted any gaps in provision and explained how these were being addressed. The report also shared how Covid-19 was impacting the childcare sector and identified any potential sustainability concerns for some providers.

Members' debated the following:

- The cost of childcare for families – this was dependent upon the age of the child and the premises costs of the setting, so was variable;
- Requirements to be a childminder – have to be registered with Ofsted and adhere to statutory conditions such as Early Years Foundation Stage Framework; Ofsted Inspection Frameworks and Regulations and planning requirements;
- The difference between a childminder and a nursery;
- Provision for 3 and 4 year olds – this was clarified – all 3 and 4 year olds whose parents met the 30 hour eligibility criteria were entitled to 30 hours free childcare; and
- Parents were free to shop around to suit their own commitments for example and were allowed to use more than one setting to equal the 15 hours universal offer or 30 hours if eligible and met their needs.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the revised Childcare Sufficiency Assessment.

CYP21 ANNUAL REPORT - COMMENTS, COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS RELATING TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICES 1ST APRIL 2020- 31ST MARCH 2021

The Board was presented with the Annual Reports for Comments, Complaints and Compliments relating to Children's Social Care Services from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021.

The report provided analysis on complaints processed under the *Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure*, and evidenced how feedback from service users had been used to improve service delivery. It was reported that the aim of the Children Act 1989 Representations Procedure was for children and young people to have their concerns resolved swiftly and wherever possible, by the people who provided the service locally. It was noted that a complaint may generally be defined as an expression of dissatisfaction or disquiet in relation to an individual child or young person, which required a response.

Members were advised that there were four categories to the representation process: Statutory Complaints; Representations; Customer Care Issues; and Compliments. Commentary on these was provided in the report which also presented detailed information and data relating to the numbers of complaints received between 1

April 2020 and 31 March 2021.

The report also detailed feedback on compliments made by clients and positive feedback from workers / professionals relating to Children's Services in the Directorate. The positive impact and outcomes on the lives of people accessing services in this Directorate were highlighted.

Members welcomed the report and recognised the good work that was carried out, as presented in the feedback examples from Child Protection and Children in Need, Children in Care and Care Leavers, and Team around the Family. It was also understood that managing complaints was also about managing a client's expectations which these days was much higher, due to improved technology and communication. People forget that staff had caseloads to manage and were not available all the time; this was also exacerbated during the Covid-19 pandemic.

RESOLVED: That the reports presented be accepted as the mechanism by which Elected Members can monitor and scrutinise children's social care complaints and compliments.

Meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.