

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board since the last Board meeting

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2014

EXB59	HALTON'S CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2014-17
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an overview of the new Halton Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2014-17(the Strategy).

The Board was advised that the previous Strategy was devised in 2006 and then renewed and extended until 2011. In November 2013, the INVOLVE group came together to promote and improve the participation of children, young people and their families.

It was noted that work began in January 2014 on the new Strategy, with partnership working between professionals and children, young people and parents developing new and creative ways of working. The report set out examples of the approaches that had been used to develop the Strategy.

It was reported that the Strategy would sit under the Children and Young People's Plan and was intended as a practical, useful document, which included:-

- An explanation of participation;
- Reasons for participation including legal obligations;
- Possible barriers to participation;
- Current participation and what would be achieved in Halton; and
- What participation would look like in Halton after the Strategy was in place.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the report be noted;
- 2) the Participation Strategy 2014-17 be endorsed; and
- 3) the roll out of the new Children and Young People's Participation Strategy be supported, in order to embed active participation in the culture of Halton Children's Trust and the wider Halton partnership

EXB60	FOSTER CARE ALLOWANCES – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on a revised scheme for the payment of allowances to Halton Foster Carers.

The Board was advised that foster care allowances were determined by each local authority. In 2010, Halton decided to increase allowances beyond the national minimum, as set out in Appendix 1. It was reported that the scheme had worked well, but a review was necessary for the following reasons:

- (i) the current scheme did not recognise the different knowledge and skill level amongst the foster carer population;
- (ii) there was no 'incentive' for carers to complete their necessary core and developmental training;
- (iii) many local authorities and some of the national bodies (e.g. BAAF, Fostering Network) recommended the use of a 'levels' based scheme which recognised the skills of each carer, the training that they do, the experience that they gain and the development they achieve in the caring role; and
- (iv) case law has established that financial support for Special Guardianship Orders should be based on a local authority's 'base' fostering allowance.

It was proposed that in future, allowances would be paid at two levels:-

- Level 1 – base fostering allowance paid to all carers; and
- Level 2 - enhanced allowance paid to those carers who demonstrated additional skills, knowledge and experience.

It was noted that the proposed revised scheme, attached at Appendix 2, had been consulted upon with carers between June and August 2014, had been amended to reflect their feedback and had the support of existing carers.

Reason(s) For Decision

To implement a revised scheme that represented a more effective and efficient use of Council resources and recognised experience, knowledge and skill.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The proposal had been through the consultation process and had been amended as a result of it.

Implementation Date

The revised scheme of payments would be introduced from April 2015 for existing carers and would be advertised from October 2014 for newly recruited carers.

RESOLVED: That the revised scheme be endorsed.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16 OCTOBER 2014

EXB72	YOUTH PROVISION TENDER – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the proposed restructure and tender for Youth Provision within the Borough.

The Board was advised that since April 2012, Halton's youth provision had been delivered through two separate contracts, both of which would end on 31 March 2015. It was reported that the current strategy of delivering youth provision in targeted hotspot areas for risk taking behaviour would be maintained.

However, the Board noted that, in order to provide a more flexible and efficient service, it was proposed to combine both the universal and the early intervention and targeted outreach work into a single contract. A service specification would be developed for a single tender, which would involve young people and encourage a collaborative approach by potential providers.

Reason(s) for Decision

To agree to combining the current youth service provision and to go out to tender for services from April 2015.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Maintaining the current provision was considered; however, the need for a more flexible service and the opportunity for efficiencies had necessitated the change.

Implementation Date

The new service would need to be fully operational by April 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) combining the universal and targeted provision for young people into one contract be approved; and
- 2) approval of the specification for the contract for youth provision be delegated to the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Families.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 6 NOVEMBER 2014

EXB80	ASPIRE CONTRACT TERMINATION – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an update on the current trading position of the traded school improvement partnership, Aspire.

The Board was advised that funding for staff previously funded through the National Strategies at the end of the 2010/11 financial year, had been withdrawn by

Government, and this had left a gap in funding provision for the school improvement services to schools.

Following this, it was reported that the majority of schools and governors favoured the setting up of a joint venture partnership to provide school improvement services to schools and settings across two local authorities. This partnership was entered into in August 2011 between Halton, Warrington and Serco. Staff were transferred, as set out in the report, but by July 2012, it was noted that the Aspire Partnership were losing money after their first year of trading. The shortfall was due to insufficient income generated by the company and by 2012/13 academic year, the pricing policy was revised to ensure the service reflected market rates.

The Board noted that by 2013 Aspire were in direct competition with 'Teaching Schools' for the provision of school improvement services, but by March 2014 it had been decided that the Aspire partnership was no longer viable. A statement explaining the dissolution was set out in the report, which would be sent to schools during the Autumn term 2014.

Reason(s) for Decision

The Aspire Partnership was no longer viable and was not providing value for money. Feedback from schools had indicated that services provided were no longer meeting schools' needs.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

Implementation Date

The contract would be terminated with immediate effect.

RESOLVED: That the agreement between Halton, Warrington and Serco be terminated with immediate effect.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 11 DECEMBER 2014

106	CONTRACTED SERVICES FOR MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS CHESHIRE – WAIVER OF TENDERING STANDING ORDERS
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, requesting an extension of the existing contract with Catch 22 for the provision of Missing from Home or Care and Child Sexual Exploitation services to children and young people across the four Local Authorities in Cheshire.

The Board was advised that since 2008, Halton had commissioned a Missing from Home and Care service to fulfil its statutory responsibilities for children and

young people that went missing. During 2010/11, the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB's), along with Cheshire Constabulary, had produced a Pan-Cheshire Joint Protocol for Children and Young People, which identified and managed the risks for all runaways, which ensured a consistent approach across borders and agencies.

Following from this, all four Cheshire local authorities commissioned a joint Pan-Cheshire Missing from Home Service. Halton, as the lead authority, appointed Catch 22 as the service provider in 2012. It was reported that from April 2014, the Service was expanded to include the emerging links around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and both elements of the service supported vulnerable children, young people and their families as well as assisting with local and national requirements.

Members were advised that in accordance with Government policy, all Cheshire local authorities were engaged in the process of significant re-organisation to support the requirements around CSE. It was recommended that existing arrangements continued through this transition period so as to ensure that continuous care and support could be offered to vulnerable children, young people and their families. It was further noted that Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Councils had all agreed to an extension with the same provider.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) in light of the exceptional circumstances set out in the report, Procurement Standing Order 1.8.3 be suspended, and Procurement Standing Orders 3.1 and 3.7 be waived in order to extend the existing contract with Catch 22 for the provision of the Missing from Home or Care and Child Sexual Exploitation Services to children and young people across four Local Authorities in Cheshire, in order to ensure continuous care and support; and
- 2) the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, in conjunction with the Portfolio holder for Children, Young People and Families, be authorised to enter into the above contract for up to a maximum of six months from April 2015.