
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2018

Present: Councillors Keogh (Chair), Taggart (Vice-Chair), Murphy, O'Neill, Painton and Laurent

Apologies: Councillors Burke, Catherine Hobbs and Rob Sanders

23. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Councillor Burke, Catherine Hobbs and Rob Saunders were noted.

24. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 November 2017 be approved and signed as a correct record.

25. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - CONFIDENTIAL PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of any consideration of the confidential appendices to the following Item.

Confidential appendices 1 and 2 contain information deemed to be exempt from general publication based on Category 2 of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules. It is not in the public interest to disclose this because it is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

26. **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT - FOCUS ON LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director, Legal and Governance presenting the 2016/17 Key stage exam results in Southampton and the educational attainment of Looked After Children (LAC).

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills; Alyce McCourt, Principle Education Psychologist, and Jane White, Service Lead Children's Social Care were present and with the consent of the chair addressed the Panel.

The Panel noted the following:

- That the Virtual School had 5 staff and approximately 370 children were on role for the Virtual School.

- That the Virtual School action plan had a focus on improving performance from the Early Years upwards.
- Working effectively with school had helped to reduce the number of school days lost due to exclusion to 14 days for LAC attending Southampton schools compared to 41 days lost due to exclusion for LAC attending schools outside the city.
- The Virtual School were requesting frequent updates on each child from schools to assist early identification of potential issues. There were challenges capturing relevant data from all schools as a significant proportion of LAC in the Virtual school were educated out of the city (54%).
- That a new computerised system was in place, E-PEP to track the Education Plans of LAC.
- That Key Stage 4 educational attainment was a concern. The case studies highlighted that good outcomes had been achieved and there was an expectation that Key Stage 4 outcomes would improve as timely and targeted support is provided.
- That Key Stage 5 results for LAC were not available.
- Restorative Justice was used effectively in some Southampton Schools

RESOLVED

- (i) That the resources dedicated to the Virtual School be reviewed to ensure that it was capable of providing the required level of support to all of Southampton's looked after children in education.
- (ii) That, where available, the following data be circulated to the Panel:
 - a. KS5 LAC attainment data for Southampton.
 - b. The number of Year 12 LAC that would be retaking GSCE English and Maths.
- (iii) That information outlining how the Families Matter initiative had supported school attendance in Southampton was circulated to the Panel.
- (iv) That a list of schools in Southampton that had used restorative justice was provided to the Panel.
- (v) That the Panel were provided with a summary outlining the expectations relating to the educational attainment at KS4 of the current Year 11 LAC cohort.

27. EARLY YEARS PROVISION

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director, Children and Families that provided an overview of Early Years provision and the potential impact of the 30 hour early years' offer in Southampton.

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Anne Downie, Early Years and Childcare Team Manager were present and with the consent of the Chair addressed the Panel.

The Panel noted the following:

- The Department for Education had reduced the percentage of funding that local authorities could retain to support early years and childcare providers which had led to a reduction in resources.

- That following a national funding review the maximum government funding for early years provision was £4.79 per hour, when compared to the hourly rate that providers could charge parents which was around £7.50 per hour. There was a concern that providers would reduce the availability of funded hours. The government funded hourly rate did not cover all the costs of managing staff and premises to provide early years foundation stage provision.
- Parents of foster children would be eligible for the 30 hours early years' offer from September 2018.
- The staff recruitment for Early Years providers was a problem, especially the recruitment of male staff.
- That the quality of Early Years provision and Southampton's Early Years Foundation Stage had improved every year for the last 5 years.

RESOLVED

- (i) That, to support staff retention and the payment of the living wage, the Executive considered the feasibility of providing Business Rates Relief to providers of early years education in Southampton.

28. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the repost of the Service Director, Legal and Governance providing an overview of performance across Children and Families Services since August 2017.

Jane White, Service Lead, Children's Social Care was in attendance and with the consent of the Chair addressed the meeting.

The Panel noted that performance continued to improve overall. It was noted that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub had adopted an approach utilising professional conversations with Social Workers which had reduced referrals and also re-referral rates.

It was also noted that whilst some teams are still under pressure due to recruitment issues the number of Social Work vacancies was starting to reduce, and the use of Agency staff had also reduced.