
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 26 SEPTEMBER 2019

Present: Councillors Taggart (Chair), Mitchell, Chaloner, Guthrie, Laurent and Mintoff (except for items 16 and 17)

Apologies: Councillor J Baillie, Catherine Hobbs and Rob Sanders

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

The apologies of Councillor J Baillie and also of Appointed Members Rob Sanders and Catherine Hobbs were noted.

12. **STATEMENT FROM THE CHAIR**

The Chair informed the panel that Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation had carried out an inspection of the Youth Offending Team and the Inspection report would be published in November.

RESOLVED that the Youth Offending Team Inspection would be considered by the Children and Families Scrutiny panel at a meeting in 2020.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 2019 be approved and signed as a correct record.

14. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - EXEMPT PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

RESOLVED that the Chair moved that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, to exclude the press and the public from the following item, having applied the public interest test it was not appropriate to disclose the information in the exempt appendices as it was likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

15. **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN SOUTHAMPTON**

The Panel received the report of the Director, Legal and Governance which requested that the Panel considered the provisional 2018/19 key stage exam results in Southampton and the educational attainment of Looked After Children.

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Aspiration, Children and Lifelong Learning;
Hilary Brooks, Service Director, Children and Families Services; Derek Wiles, Service

Lead, Education and Early Help; and Maria Anderson, Head of Virtual School; were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel. In discussions with the officers the Panel noted the following:

- For key stage 2 there had been a focus on the implementation of robust measures to address under performance for two schools in the City.
- For key stage 4 there was good peer to peer support among schools and a lot of peer challenge that was driving improvement. This included topic support groups that provided challenge and promoted better ways of teaching in schools.
- There were only two quality assurance officers for the City when there used to be thirty.
- Schools had made a decision to ensure that the curriculum offered met the needs of the students and therefore not every student followed a GCSE pathway at key stage 4.
- Fewer children were school ready at entry to key stage 1 than four years ago.
- The high percentage of students that speak English as a second language in the City made literacy attainment difficult to achieve.
- Elective home education and off rolling of students was a concern.
- Overall the exam results have improved.

RESOLVED

- (i) That the Panel would be provided with 'off-rolling' figures for Southampton schools.
- (ii) That, reflecting concerns about the number of children that are entering primary school without being 'school ready', the Panel would be provided with an overview of the actions that have been taken, or are planned to be taken, that would ensure the children who required additional support were targeted and supported to access good early years education.

16. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Director, Legal and Governance which provided an overview of performance across Children and Families Services since June 2019.

Councillor Paffey, Cabinet Member for Aspiration, Children and Lifelong Learning; Hilary Brooks, Service Director, Children and Families Services; Sharon Hawkins, Interim Service Lead, Children's Social Care; and Phil Bullingham, Service Lead, Safeguarding, Improvement, Governance and Compliance; were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel. In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- There had been an increase in cases into the service and peripatetic teams have been utilised to assist with the management of this increase as cases progress through the system
- Research into the increase in contacts had been commissioned and a presentation of the findings could be made at the next meeting.
- The recruitment of extra practitioners as well as a focus on management oversight of cases and reducing the high caseloads had contributed to the allocation of all cases within the service.

- The manager of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) had worked on resolving some ambiguity about the different criteria for different tiers of the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board’s continuum of needs.
- The new website system for making referrals to the Children and Families services had helped to ensure appropriate allocation of families to either the Early Help Hub or MASH.
- There was a need to build our intelligence base around Missing, Exploited and Trafficked children (MET) in order to understand more about hotspots and county lines and map risk.
- Funding had been received from the Department of Education to increase the family group conference offer, which would be utilised by Early Help and Edge of Care to prevent problems from escalating.

RESOLVED

- (i) That a breakdown of Looked After Children that are not placed with in-house foster carers or independent fostering agencies would be circulated to the Panel.
- (ii) That the 23 January 2020 agenda would include consideration of the issue of child exploitation in Southampton.

17. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel received the report of the Director, Legal and Governance which enabled the Panel to monitor and track progress on recommendations made at previous meetings.

The Panel noted that the analysis undertaken to identify where service demand is coming from would be presented at 7 November meeting of the Panel. They also noted that work on anonymised case studies showing examples of completed Education, Health and Care Plan assessments were in progress and would be distributed to the panel in advance of the meeting in November.