
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2021

Present: Councillors Guthrie (Chair), Bell, Laurent, Mitchell and Dr Paffey

Apologies: Appointed Members: Rob Sanders

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

The apologies of Appointed Member, Rob Sanders were noted.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

30. **KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director Children and Learning, which provided an overview of the Key Performance Indicators of the Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) service.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor J Baillie;; and Tammy Marks, Service Manager – Special Educational Needs and Disability; were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the Cabinet Member and officers, the Panel noted the following:

- The service had achieved a 100% completion rate for Education, Health and Care (EHC) Assessments within statutory timescales.
- The service had focussed on the relationship with families which had resulted in fewer complaints.
- The completion of annual reviews of EHC assessments had also improved but had been challenged by the coronavirus pandemic restrictions.
- Children with disability support needs were transferred from the Protection and Court Team to the JIGSAW service.
- The review of SEND services evaluated the reasons behind the high level of tribunals in Southampton, the current provision of SEND resources and identified gaps in provision.
- The SEND transformation programme focussed on the inclusion of children in education provision and included:
 - the reconfiguration of SEND provision to improve the distribution of places and the spread of provision to meet the wider needs of SEND,
 - annual inspection of SEND services,
 - and the development of mediation and support services for schools and parents to improve awareness of SEND provision, to improve the early

help offer for SEND and to provide a broader range of alternative solutions to prevent needs escalating to the level where specialist provision was required.

- There was a long-term strategy to manage the workforce and recruitment challenges identified in the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That, through the proposed SEND reforms, the service would engage with the Parent and Carer Forum and SEND Information and Advice Service to encourage a more conciliatory approach to supporting parents of children with SEND, thereby reducing the number of appeals and tribunals.
- 2) That the self-evaluation which would be developed in preparation for an Ofsted inspection would be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.

31. **CHILD FRIENDLY SOUTHAMPTON**

The Panel received the report of the Executive Director – Children and Learning, which provided an update on the Child Friendly City programme.

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Social Care, Councillor P Baillie; Steph Murray, Deputy Director of Children and Learning; Jason Murphy, Stronger Communities Manager; Sallie White, Child Friendly Project Officer; were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the Cabinet Member and officers, the Panel noted the following:

- That the scheme to elect a Children’s Mayor had been launched with Primary Schools in the city. The process would be that schools would nominate a student to put forward a proposal for a community project; the Youth Council would choose the best three proposals; and the Council would choose which school will put forward the Children’s Mayor for the year.
- That the programme included plans to develop a Youth Council, which would be made up of representatives from the many different youth forum groups in the city.
- A Youth Charter would be drafted by the Youth Council which would detail what their wishes would be, what they want to talk about and what they want the Council to deliver.
- Partners supporting the programme included No Limits, Solent NHS Trust and Solent University.

32. **DESTINATION 22**

The Panel received the report of the Executive Director – Children and Learning, which provided an update on the Destination 22 transformation programme.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Councillor P Baillie; and Steph Murray, Deputy Director of Children and Learning were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the Cabinet Member and officers, the Panel noted that the consultation had closed. The programme was based on detailed modelling and calculations on the placement and support needs of Children Looked After by the city; and the Improvement Board had good partner engagement.

33. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel received the report of the Service Director, Legal and Business Operations, which recommended that the Panel considered and challenged the performance of Children and Learning Services in Southampton.

The Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care, Councillor P Baillie; and Steph Murray, Deputy Director of Children and Learning were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel. .

In discussions with the Cabinet Member and officers, the Panel noted the following:

- That the number of audits where practice was good or outstanding had increased.
- The small percentage of enquiries about foster caring that had been converted into local foster carers was a concern.
- The number of Young People Leaving Care who are NEET was a concern.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the number of foster carer inquiries would be added to the dataset considered by the Panel
- 2) That clarification would be provided on what the Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) indicators measured and how they were determined.
- 3) That the Scrutiny Manager and the Performance Manager would fine tune the presentation of the performance dataset.

34. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

The Panel noted that all the requested information had been provided and utilised to inform the discussion of the agenda items.