

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel was held on 15 April 2019.

PRESENT: Councillors A Hellaoui (Chair), J Goodchild, T Higgins, J McGee, J A Walker, V Walkington and M Walters

PRESENT AS OBSERVERS: J Cain

OFFICERS: B Bradshaw, S Chouhan and G Moore

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE Councillors L McGloin and J Young.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interest made by Members at this point in the meeting.

1 **MINUTES - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL - 18 MARCH 2019**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel, held on 18 March 2019, were submitted and approved as a correct record.

2 **LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THE CHILD - AN UPDATE**

In respect of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel's 2017/18 review of Listening to the Voice of the Child, the Head of Strategic Services and the Voice of the Child Practitioner were in attendance to provide Members with details of the progress made with the implementation of agreed recommendations/actions. The last update was received in December 2018.

In respect of recommendation a), when the last update was received a Member commented that it would be beneficial if the Top Tips posters were distributed to all schools to provide teachers with a useful resource in engaging with children and young people who access Children's Services. The Voice of the Child Practitioner confirmed that the Top Tips posters had now been circulated to schools by the Director of Education.

In respect of recommendation b), the Voice of the Child Practitioner advised that the e-learning module had been created and piloted with the social work teams.

The scrutiny panel heard that the Voice and Influence Conference had taken place on 6 March 2019. The conference was organised by the Children in Care Council (CiCC) for frontline practitioners in Children's Services. 150 professionals attended. At the conference the following areas were discussed:

- the mandatory Voice of the Child e-learning module;
- Voice and Influence champions across Children's Services;
- best practice;
- commitment to support the voice and influence of children and young people; and
- feedback from the bright spot's survey that was undertaken to gather the views of children and young people in care.

The conference was recorded and it was planned that video clips and key messages would be included in the e-learning module. Once the e-learning module had been launched, completion would be mandatory for all staff in Children's Services. It was envisaged that the e-learning module would be launched the week commencing 15 April 2019.

In respect of recommendation c), the Voice of the Child Practitioner commented that work was currently ongoing in respect of identifying young people from the Talent Match Programme to become involved in a Young Commissioners and Recruiters Panel. Once established, Human Resources (HR) and the Commissioning Team had agreed to develop bespoke training

packages to upskill the young people in respect of HR processes/procedures, interview techniques and the commissioning cycle. Training planned to enable the panel members to become involved with all areas of recruitment, selection and commissioning.

In response to a Member's query, the Voice of the Child Practitioner explained that the panel would consist of children and young people aged 11 and above.

In respect of recommendation d), a mini Children in Care Council (CiCC) had been established. The group had been meeting for three months and had nine members aged between 7-13.

It had been identified that the established groups were not suitable to support those aged between 14-18. Therefore, work was underway to restructure the CiCC and the Care Leavers Forum. The Voice of the Child Practitioner was working with the Head of Looked After Children (LAC) and Corporate Parenting to address the gap and develop new remits and structures for the groups.

The Voice of the Child Practitioner explained that work was also being undertaken with early help practitioners to develop two young people's focus groups. It was planned that one group would involve primary-aged children and the other secondary-aged.

The scrutiny panel was also advised that work was being undertaken with the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Assessment Team and Priory Woods School to develop a SEN Youth Forum. Further work was required to explore options and determine how the group could be best supported.

In response to a Member's query, the Voice of the Child Practitioner explained that a youth group network was currently being established, which planned to improve communication and engagement between groups.

It was added that, as Facebook was identified as a preferred communication channel by children and young people, the following Facebook groups had been developed or improved:

- Pathways
- SEND Local Offer
- Children with Disabilities Team
- Youth Voice Middlesbrough

All were closed groups and the content was managed, reviewed and updated regularly.

A discussion ensued regarding the importance of facilitating discussions between children and young people, who were experiencing similar circumstances. A Member commented on the transition from primary school to secondary school and the importance of obtaining children's and young people's views to ensure that the highest level of support was provided.

The Voice of the Child Practitioner advised Members that, in partnership with Beverley School, an annual consultation pack had been developed. The pack included questionnaires on topics such as transitions, work readiness, safe in the community, preparing for adulthood and leisure and activities. It was planned that the consultation pack would be offered to all schools in September 2019 and would provide SENCO's with termly consultation sessions and a clear feedback loop to the relevant teams. It was commented that receipt of feedback from young people would be collated and analysed to identify how services could be improved and developed.

In respect of recommendations e) and f), the Voice of the Child Practitioner was currently awaiting authorisation on the budget. Work had been undertaken with other local authorities in the region to identify the costs associated with establishing a Youth Council. Further work was required to determine the structure, budget and membership of the Youth Council. The Head of Strategic Services commented that establishing a Youth Council was a corporate priority that was supported by Social Regeneration.

In respect of recommendations g) and h) the scrutiny panel heard that a poster, conveying the United Nations Convention statement on the Rights of the Child, had been created and had been displayed in office buildings. It was added that members of staff were encouraged to hand out the leaflets to the young people they worked with.

In respect of recommendation i) it was explained that once the Youth Council had been established, a young person would become a co-opted member of the Children and Young People's Trust. It was also envisaged that representatives from the CiCC and Care Leavers Forum would become involved in corporate meetings.

In respect of recommendation j) the child friendly version of the scrutiny report had been published and uploaded to the Council website.

In respect of recommendation k), as previously highlighted, Facebook groups had been developed for each relevant area to engage with children, young people, parents and carers. It was added that 149 young people and 214 professionals had signed up to use the 'Mind of My Own' app. The app allowed a child or young person to have a voice in the decisions that affected their lives. The most used scenario statement by a young person was 'my worker is visiting' and 'preparing for a Child Protection Conference'.

In response to a Member's query regarding engagement with LGBT children and young people. The Voice of the Child Practitioner advised that work was being undertaken to remove barriers and strengthen engagement with hard to reach groups. It was added that a community event (# feelgoodboro) had been organised for children, young people and families. 460 children, young people, parents and carers attended the event. The main purpose of the event was to promote the Local Authority's services and support for families and break down some of the barriers in Middlesbrough's communities.

Members were informed that a Children's Services Voice of the Child Annual Report 2018/19 had been published. A copy of which, was attached to the submitted update. The annual report outlined the participation highlights for 2018/19 and detailed the individual, service and strategic priorities for 2019/20. The following participation highlights were referred to:

- The **Bright Spots survey**, which gained the views of children and young people in care. 40% of children in care and 54% of care leavers had submitted their views. It was reported that the feedback received had shaped team plans, service plans and the directorate improvement plan. Each team had also produced a 'you said, we will' response to the findings.
- The **Voice and Influence Conference**, as previously reported, the event was organised by the CiCC and 150 frontline practitioners attended.
- **I.D cards** had been created for frontline workers, which outlined their role and contact information for children and young people.
- Undertaking **audits of case files** to review and develop Voice and Influence work across Children's Services.
- The CiCC organised a workshop on **Family Contact** at the regional CiCC Conference and presented to over 60 professionals. Following delivery of the workshop, and as a result of the feedback received, Children's Care had changed the term 'family contact' to 'family time'. All staff had been briefed on the change of terminology. A discussion ensued and it was commented that the circumstances of each child or young person would need to be assessed before the term 'family time' was used.
- Members of the CiCC ran a stall at Teesside University about **tackling stigma** that care leavers faced. The stall facilitated discussions to determine the reasons for the low numbers of care leavers attending university. Feedback received was reported to the University's pastoral team with an aim to supporting an increased number of care leavers into university. A Member commented that it would be beneficial if further research was conducted to determine the barriers associated with aspirations and achieving. Financial constraints were also discussed.

The Voice of the Child Practitioner advised that key priorities had been identified for 2019/20:

- **Individual level** - improving the voice and influence of children and young people in

the commissioning of placements and the transitions planning process, creating I.D cards for frontline workers, enabling children and young people to chair their own meetings, launching a new survey, increasing the use and impact of the MOMO app and direct work on case files.

- **Service level** - launching the Voice and Influence e-learning module, the LAC pack and the SEND annual consultation pack; strengthening the youth forum for children with additional needs; strengthening audits to review and develop the Voice and Influence work across Middlesbrough Children's Services; increasing the number of children and young people attending meetings regarding their case files; strengthening the role of the CiCC and launching a CiCC take over day of the Local Authority.
- **Strategic level** - strengthening the Voice and Influence of children and young people in the corporate social regeneration agenda, launching the Voice and Influence champion network, strengthening the Young Recruiters and Commissioners Panel, establishing a Youth Council, strengthening the involvement of children and young people in corporate meetings and strengthening the impact of the participation steering group.

It was commented that further work was required to ensure that children and young people's experience of attending key strategic meetings was both positive and empowering.

AGREED

- **That the progress made be noted and a further update be submitted when appropriate.**

3

DRAFT FINAL REPORT - MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS

The draft final report on the topic of Mental Health in Schools was submitted for the scrutiny panel's consideration. The content was discussed at length and the following amendments were suggested:

- On **page 3**, the heading 'Prevalence of Mental Health' be replaced with 'Trends in Childhood Mental Health'.
- On **page 8**, in respect of conclusion b, line 1, that 'and statutory duties' be added after the word 'evidence'.
- On **page 8**, in respect of conclusion c, line 2, that the word 'teachers' be replaced with 'school staff'.
- On **page 8**, in respect of conclusion e, line 4, that 'and mental health problems' be removed.
- On **page 9**, in respect of conclusion f, line 2, that 'problems' be replaced with 'needs'.
- On **page 10**, in respect of conclusion j, line 13, that 'accessing the expertise at' be replaced with 'being aware of the support and expertise offered by'.
- On **page 12**, in respect of conclusion p, line 2, that 'problems and disorders' be replaced by 'needs'.
- On **page 13**, the heading 'chaotic homes' be replaced with 'children living in chaotic circumstances'.
- On **page 13**, conclusion t, line 8, the words 'and chaotic' be removed.

Draft recommendations were also tabled for the scrutiny panel's consideration. The recommendations were as followed:

'a) That the members of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel are informed of the outcome of the trailblazer bid.

b) That local data collection processes are reviewed, and a measurement tool is developed, to gather data/information across all schools and services to report prevalence figures for mental health needs in children and young people and the effectiveness of provision.

c) That data is collected and reported on an annual basis, in respect of children and young people's mental health, to establish an overview of the needs of local children and determine

trends, identify effective practice and highlight any gaps in provision.

d) That members of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel are informed of the progress made with establishing the free school for pupils with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

e) That the vital training, outreach work and alternative provision provided by Holmwood School continues and receives further investment.

f) That, as current alternative provision places are being utilised to support those with high-level SEMH and learning difficulties, additional places are commissioned from Holmwood School that specifically offer preventative/early intervention support to those with low-level needs.

g) That all schools are made aware of the support and expertise offered by Holmwood School.

h) That, in respect of the prevention/early intervention support (currently provided by HeadStart) and therapeutic services (currently provided by Reach) accessed by schools, the Local Authority works directly with schools and the local health service to:

- evaluate current provision*
- determine an alternative delivery model;*
- allocate future funding; and*
- address capacity issues that are causing delays in pupils receiving vital external support in a timely manner.*

i) That collaborative working between public health and schools is further enhanced to:

- assist in ensuring that access to services is continuously reviewed to meet demand; and*
- enable school staff to receive support, expertise and advice from public health professionals.*

j) That a marketing campaign is developed in respect of the Middlesbrough Psychology Service to promote and publicise the key features of the service.

k) That work is undertaken to ensure that all schools:

- are aware of the CAMHS crisis service; and*
- access CAMHS training, which aims to create effective multi-agency working and improve outcomes for children and young people.*

l) That research is conducted to determine whether those cases not accepted into treatment by CAMHS have been assigned appropriately to low-level support, or whether it is later determined that the child or young person requires specialist CAMHS. Upon completion, there is a need to analyse findings, report outcomes and determine trends to establish whether future improvements to working practices are required.

m) That all schools are involved with the work being undertaken to examine the CAMHS referral process and referral criteria.

n) That, to improve/develop a multi-agency response to children's and young people's mental health, work continues to provide an integrated pathway of support by introducing:

- a single referral route for schools; and*
- joint assessments between key workers, school nurses and CAMHS.*

o) That, with the reconfiguration of local health services:

- specific support is commissioned to improve the mental health, wellbeing and resilience of vulnerable families; and*

- *the impact of parents' and carers' difficulties on children is considered and strongly embedded in practice.*

p) *That all schools are encouraged to:*

- *seek support, advice and guidance from the Parenting Support Coordinator; and*
- *improve engagement with parents and families by appointing designated and accessible staff and developing a parental engagement policy.*

q) *That the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel writes to the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to:*

- *convey concerns associated with bids and limited funding; and*
- *request funding for targeted and specialist services, which is not time-limited.*

r) *That, to reduce financial pressures, schools consider collectively commissioning specialist support for pupils with mental health needs.*

s) *That a comprehensive directory is developed, which:*

- *is designed specifically for schools;*
- *includes the range of effective, evidence-based local services and support that have been proven to work and demonstrate best practice; and*
- *details the organisations that can provide universal, targeted and specialist services.*

t) *That, to encourage parental engagement, arrangements are put in place to hold CAMHS appointments in school settings.*

u) *That school-based CAMHS clinicians are introduced in all of Middlesbrough's schools to:*

- *improve efficiency of referrals to external, specialist mental health support;*
- *build strong relationships with the schools by integrating with the school's culture and developing an understanding of each school's needs;*
- *equip schools to better support their pupils internally;*
- *assist in developing school provision; and*
- *develop positive relationships with parents/carers.'*

A discussion ensued and Members were in agreement that the Chair and the Democratic Services Officer should endeavour to action recommendation q), prior to consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

AGREED

1. **That, subject to the inclusion of any comments or amendments made by Members prior to Friday 19 April 2019, the draft recommendations be approved.**
2. **That, subject to inclusion of the proposed amendments and the recommendations, the content of the final report be approved and submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.**
3. **That a letter be written to the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care to:**
 - **convey concerns associated with bids and limited funding; and**
 - **request funding for targeted and specialist services, which is not time-limited.**

4

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - AN UPDATE

At its meeting on 2 April, the Overview and Scrutiny Board considered the following items:

1. **Education Provision** - The Chief Executive and Director of Education attended the meeting to discuss school place planning and it was confirmed that additional places

had been secured to meet the needs of those children who were not initially offered a place within the borough.

2. **Executive Update**
3. **Executive Forward Work Programme**
4. **Scrutiny Panel Progress Reports**

The Chair advised at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, held on 4 April 2019, the Board considered a call-in request in respect of the acquisition of Homes England land at Middlehaven. After considering all of the information presented at the meeting, the Board was in agreement not to refer the decision back to the Executive.

AGREED:

That the update be noted.

5 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

School Holiday Provision - Final Report

The Chair was scheduled to present the scrutiny panel's final report to Executive on 16 April 2019. The scrutiny panel was advised that Middlesbrough's bid for funding, from the Department of Education Holiday Activities and Food Research Fund, had been unsuccessful. It was confirmed, however, that funding for the current year had been secured to support the delivery of the Feast of Fun project.

A discussion ensued and it was determined that alternative funding options would need to be explored to facilitate the future delivery of the Feast of Fun project. A Member suggested that community councils could be approached.

Pupil Exclusions in Middlesbrough - Final Report

The Chair advised that, in respect of the review undertaken of Pupil Exclusions in Middlesbrough, it would be prudent for the scrutiny panel to receive an update on the progress made with the implementation of agreed recommendations/actions.

AGREED:

- **That arrangements be made for the scrutiny panel to receive an update on Pupil Exclusions in Middlesbrough.**