

AGENDA ITEM:

HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

7 JANUARY 2011

CHILDREN'S CENTRES AND NOTIFICATION OF BIRTHS

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To introduce representation from Middlesbrough Council's Children, Families and Learning Department and the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, in attendance to speak to the Panel about notifying Children's Centres of births in their area of responsibility.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. That the Panel notes the information presented to the Panel and considers whether it would like to seek anymore information, ahead of finalising a report on the topic.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORT

3. The Panel will recall that in May 2010, it briefly considered the topic of Children's Centres and the extent to which they are appraised of new births in their areas of responsibility. At the time, the Panel contacted the Department of Children Families and Learning regarding the matter, which confirmed that no systematic processes existed to ensure that Children's Centres were routinely advised about new births in their area. At the time, the Panel agreed to keep the matter under review.
4. At a recent meeting of the Health Scrutiny Panel, a Councillor raised the point that Children's Centres managers had reported that concerns remain about how well informed they are about births in their area of responsibility. Following this matter being raised, the Panel agreed that it would like to investigate the topic of Children's Centres and the extent to which they are informed regarding birth data in their areas.
5. To this end, representatives of Middlesbrough Council's Children, Families and Learning Department and the South Tees Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust will be in attendance at the meeting today, to discuss this point.

6. As a starting point, the following questions have been drafted and shared with colleagues attending the meeting. The Panel is asked to note that the questions below have been drafted based on previous Panel discussions and are intended to assist the Panel's discussion. The below is not intended to be an exhaustive list.
- The Panel has heard that some Children's Centre staff are concerned that they are not advised with sufficient regularity, or with sufficient detail, of the children born in their areas of responsibility, with the result that they do not get the full picture relating to births in their area. Is this a picture that you recognise?
 - What sort of problems do you feel could be posed by the scenario outlined above?
 - Is it the role of a maternity unit to solely deliver babies safely, or should units share information about those births more widely with Children's Services? Or, do they share that information widely enough now?
 - What role can Health visitors play in ensuring that Children's Centres have better access to information relating to births in their areas of operation?
 - What other steps could be taken to ensure that Children's Centres have better intelligence about births in their area and are therefore able to tailor services to those most in need?
7. It is anticipated that the above questions will form a basis for discussion at the meeting today. It is suggested that representatives attending the meeting are invited to outline their initial views on the above questions, ahead of dealing with questions from Councillors.
8. At the conclusion of the meeting today, the Panel is asked to consider whether it feels it has sufficient information to come to a position on the topic, or whether it would like to seek further information from other sources.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

9. No background papers were used in the production of this paper.

Contact Officer:

Jon Ord - Scrutiny Support Officer
Telephone: 01642 729706 (direct line)
Email: jon_ord@middlesbrough.gov.uk