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## CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel was held on Monday 10 October 2022.

**PRESENT:** Councillors D McCabe (Chair), M Saunders (Vice-Chair), A Hellaoui, T Higgins, C Hobson, D Jones and M Nugent

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** E Craigie (Teesside Live) and Councillor M Smiles (Deputy Mayor and Executive Member for Children's Services)

**OFFICERS:** C Cannon, E Cowley, T Dunn, G Moore and K Smith

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor G Wilson

### 22/20 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

### 22/21 **MINUTES - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL - 5 SEPTEMBER 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel held on 5 September 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

### 22/22 **BEHAVIOUR, DISCIPLINE AND BULLYING IN SCHOOLS - AN UPDATE**

In respect of the scrutiny panel's 2021 review of Behaviour, Discipline and Bullying in Schools, the Council's Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Services and the Head of Inclusion, Assessment and Review were in attendance to provide:

- an update on the progress made with the implementation of the agreed recommendations/actions; and
- information and data demonstrating the impact of the 0-25 Inclusion and Outreach Model.

An action plan update and an impact report on the Inclusion and Outreach Model had been circulated with the agenda papers for the meeting.

The Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Services advised that Covid-19 had impacted significantly on children and young people, particularly those with additional vulnerabilities. It was highlighted that some children and young people experienced emotional dysregulation (distressed or functional behaviour), anxiety and other mental health issues. Through research with local schools and settings, it was evident that there was a growing number of children at risk of exclusion (both locally and nationally).

The new Inclusion and Outreach Model was introduced in January 2022. The model provided support for children, young people, schools and settings. The model was further reviewed in July 2022, using feedback received from children, young people, families, schools and settings. The model now included more specialist roles, such as Inclusion Officers, Outreach Practitioners and Specialist Teachers. Two Specialist Teachers focused on providing support for those with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and those on the autistic spectrum. The key aim of the service was to promote inclusion, identify needs at the earliest of stages and prevent exclusion.

All referrals for the delivery of a direct service for children (including outreach, specialist teacher support and a place in alternative provision) came through a triage referral process. Data had been collected, in respect of referrals, for a 6 month period - between January 2022 and June 2022. Throughout that period, there had been 281 referrals and the model had ensured delivery of over 750 interventions. Referrals to the 0-25 Inclusion and Outreach

Service were presented at a multi-agency triage panel. The multi-agency panel included representation from the service (i.e. Inclusion Officers and Outreach Practitioners), educational psychology, social care, early help, health (e.g. school nursing and speech and language therapy), youth offending services, Cleveland Police and the sensory teaching service.

Members were advised that, when compared to previous years, there had been an increase in permanent exclusions in respect of the 2021/22 academic year. The final end of year figure had been 51. It was commented that 26 exclusions had been rescinded and a number of exclusions had been prevented through early identification and support.

The rate of fixed term exclusions slowed during the summer term. Whilst that could not be directly or solely attributed to the Inclusion and Outreach Model, there was case study evidence demonstrating the risk of fixed term exclusions had reduced following intervention from the service. An in-depth analysis of a sample of 11 pupils had showed a 48% reduction in the likelihood of suspension or permanent exclusion. In addition, the service had identified 24 children and young people who required an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Case studies demonstrated that, following intervention, the attendance of individual children had increased. Furthermore, the model was supporting earlier identification of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

The model offered workforce development and training opportunities to all settings, to upskill staff members. The Educational Psychology Service had provided additional support to schools, in particular direct support had been provided to children and young people and their families throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. That support had included advice and strategies on managing home learning during lockdown, on maintaining social connections and on ways of enhancing physical and emotional wellbeing.

During 2021 and 2022, phases 1 and 2 of the national Wellbeing for Education (WfE) project had been delivered by the Educational Psychology Service, in partnership with Headstart. It was explained that, as part of the project, a network for mental health leads in schools had been set up by Headstart. The Educational Psychology Service continued to have regular contact with schools about the type of support they required and the service's training offer ran alongside the work delivered by the 0-25 Inclusion and Outreach Service. The training offer was delivered in partnership with Autism Education Trust and Thrive.

In terms of the impact of training and workforce development, feedback on the phases 1 and 2 of the National Wellbeing for Education project had been highly positive. 92% of those who had attended Phase 1 had confirmed that they would use what they had learnt. 100% of those who had attended one or more aspects of Phase 2 training had said that they would use/share/cascade the content of the training.

In terms of statements demonstrating the impact of the model, a parent had commented "*We are really happy with the arrangement and the positive feedback. It is supportive and encouraging to receive a call with good news. This is making home life less difficult, it's making a difference to our family.*"

Members were advised that the presentation slides, containing several impact statements, would be shared with the scrutiny panel.

In terms of early years and primary education, in light of the feedback received, the following changes had been made to the model:

- the referral form was refreshed;
- the multi-agency triage panel processes were streamlined;
- the number of KS2 assessment places at River Tees Multi-Academy Trust was increased; and
- a nursery assessment model was introduced at the Cleveland Unit.

In terms of secondary and post-16 education, in light of the feedback received, the following changes were made to the model:

- in terms of the triage process, there were now allocated hours for outreach services;

- the referral form was refreshed;
- the number of KS4 assessment places at River Tees Multi-Academy Trust was increased;
- the role of one Inclusion Officer was refocussed to undertake reviews;
- the number of registered Alternative Provision (AP) providers was increased; and
- the challenging of schools, in respect of exclusions, was strengthened.

To conclude, there was emerging data, case study and impact evidence to suggest that the Inclusion and Outreach Model was having a positive impact for children, families and schools.

Members were advised that the impact of Covid-19 and children and young people's experiences during the pandemic was likely to remain a key factor influencing them, their development and their education in the medium to long-term. It was evident, that through research with local schools and settings the impact of the pandemic had led to a growing number of children at risk of exclusion.

It was explained that the Inclusion and Outreach Model would be regularly reviewed to ensure that the model continued to meet the emerging needs of Middlesbrough's children and young people.

To demonstrate the positive impact of the model, the Head of Inclusion, Assessment and Review provided information on two case studies:

In respect of the first case study, the following points were made:

- a child was at risk of exclusion and a referral had been made to the multi-agency triage panel;
- the child's school requested support from an external AP placement;
- the multi-agency triage panel provided new information to support decision-making (social care, youth offending and health services);
- receipt of the new information had identified that moving to an external AP placement would have increased the child's risk of exclusion, therefore, the panel focused on the need to maintain stability and consistency and ensure safeguarding;
- a permanent exclusion was avoided;
- a bespoke package of 1:1 tuition was put in place to meet the needs of the child; and
- a level of consistency and oversight was provided to ensure effective safeguarding and management of risk for the child.

In respect of the second case study, the following points were made:

- a child was referred who was presenting in school with challenging behaviour;
- the child was at risk of permanent exclusion, had a high level of vulnerability in the community and there were concerns of anti-social behaviour;
- the school was supported with co-ordination across Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), The Link, youth offending and early help;
- a piece of work was undertaken, which focussed on the voice of the child;
- liaison between school and home was offered to support the plans;
- an appropriate AP placement was identified by working in partnership with the school and the child's family;
- a package of support was put in place, across agencies, which met the needs of the child;
- an AP placement had been secured;
- positive feedback was received from the child's family (they felt safer in the community) and the child felt "brighter" about managing their emotional needs.

A Member queried the reason for the high number of referrals. In response, the Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Services advised that referrals seek support for early intervention and due to the impact of Covid-19, there was an expectation that referral rates would be high.

A Member queried whether referrals were being received at the earliest of stages. In response, the Head of Inclusion, Assessment and Review advised that previously the model had dealt with high volumes of crisis management, however, more recently referrals were

being made at an earlier point.

A Member queried the high number of referrals received from early years settings. In response, the Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Services advised that throughout the pandemic younger children were unable to access education and did not have contact with their extended families, which had ultimately impacted on speech, language and communication development. It was explained that the Cleveland Unit Nursery Assessment Model aimed to identify needs and provide catch-up support to address delayed development. It was added that all settings had access to training and workforce development opportunities to enable staff members to deliver support that effectively meets the emerging needs of children and young people.

A discussion ensued and the importance of listening to the voice of the child was highlighted.

A Member queried whether academies were able to access support delivered by the 0-25 Inclusion and Outreach Service. The Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Services advised that support was available to all schools and settings. Head teachers had welcomed the model and had provided positive feedback. It was added that a named Inclusion Officer had been attached to each school to enable the delivery of effective support at the earliest of stages. The Head of Achievement commented that a recent Ofsted inspection had reported that in respect of early years, behaviour was good.

A Member queried whether schools contributed toward the cost of delivering the model. In response, the Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Services advised that delivery of the model was funded by the High Needs Budget, which had been allocated and approved by the School Management Forum. It was clarified that schools were not charged directly for the support they accessed, however, there was a collective agreement in place that schools contributed indirectly by the utilisation of the High Needs Budget.

A Member raised a query regarding Ofsted's inadequate judgement, following its inspection of Outwood Academy Ormesby. In response, the Head of Achievement advised that the Local Authority was working with the school to understand and determine the improvements that were required.

A Member raised a query in respect of the support provided by the Specialist Teachers. In response, the Head of Inclusion, Assessment and Review advised that once a referral was received, the level of intervention required was determined. The Specialist Teachers undertook visits to assess the child and observe staff interaction and the environment. Following visits, the Specialist Teachers would then compile a report identifying areas of improvement and determining the interventions required to effectively support the needs of the child. Once the report had been issued, arrangements would be put in place by the 0-25 Inclusion and Outreach Service to ensure the effective delivery of interventions. It was added that, if required, the Specialist Teachers would undertake multiple observations.

A Member raised concerns that schools were not providing direct funding for the delivery of the model. In response, the Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Services advised that as the High Needs Budget was being utilised to fund its delivery, all schools were effectively contributing an equal share. It was added that charging individual schools, for the services and support they accessed, could potentially impact on use and possibly cause delays in respect of identifying needs and the delivery of interventions.

A Member raised a query in respect of the rescinding of permanent exclusions. In response, the Head of Access to Education and Alternative Provision advised that sometimes decisions were made in haste and upon further reflection, an alternative solution was identified. In terms of the process followed, if an exclusion was recommended by a head teacher, a hearing would be called by the governing body. At that point, the governors may decide to overrule the decision of the head teacher. If the governing body agreed to uphold the decision of the head teacher, an Independent Review Panel would then take place. At which point the panel could decide that the exclusion was not valid and overrule the decision made by the head teacher and the governing body. Ultimately, there were various points during the process whereby an exclusion could be rescinded. It was also advised that the Local Authority worked closely with schools to identify alternative strategies and solutions.

A Member raised a query in respect of the support available during the appeals process. In

response, the Head of Access to Education and Alternative Provision advised that families were able to access advocacy support from an adviser and receive representation during the appeal process. It was added that an increased number of families were accessing advocacy support provided by the Local Authority.

**NOTED**

22/23

**YOUTH OFFENDING AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH SCHOOLS - TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Members were invited to consider, discuss and agree the draft terms of reference proposed for the review of Youth Offending and Partnership Working with Schools, which had been circulated with the agenda papers for the meeting.

**AGREED**

**That the terms of reference be agreed as follows:**

- a) **To examine the role of South Tees Youth Offending Service (STYOS).**
- b) **To identify the barriers to young people in the youth justice system engaging in education.**
- c) **To examine how the STYOS works with schools in Middlesbrough to:**
  - a. **react swiftly and firmly to early signs of criminal behaviour;**
  - b. **promote engagement in the education system;**
  - c. **improve attendance;**
  - d. **prevent exclusions (fixed-term and permanent);**
  - e. **improve attainment; and**
  - f. **deliver well-targeted educational support.**
- d) **To identify effective practice in respect of partnership arrangements with schools, which actively support the delivery of high-quality and bespoke education in the youth justice system.**

22/24

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - AN UPDATE**

The Chair advised that at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, held on 21 September 2022, the Board had considered:

- an update from the Mayor;
- the Executive Forward Work Programme;
- the Corporate Performance Update - Quarter One 2022/23;
- the Revenue and Capital Budget - Projected Outturn Position as at Quarter One 2022/23; and
- updates from the scrutiny chairs.

**NOTED**

22/25

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

**Local-Authority-Maintained Schools**

A Member raised a query in respect of local-authority-maintained schools becoming academies. In response, the Head of Achievement advised that the Government had recently published a White Paper, which detailed an ambition for all schools to be in (or joining) a strong academy trust by 2030.

**NOTED**