

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on Tuesday 28 March 2023.

PRESENT: Councillors T Mawston (Vice-Chair in the Chair), D Davison, C Hobson, D McCabe, C McIntyre, J Platt, M Storey and J Thompson

OFFICERS: S Bonner

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors M Saunders, R Arundale, C Cooke and D Jones

22/170 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

22/171 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 12 JANUARY 2023**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 12 January 2023 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

22/172 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 8 FEBRUARY 2023**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 8 February 2023 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

22/173 **MINUTES - OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - 22 FEBRUARY 2023**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 22 February 2023 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

22/174 **EXECUTIVE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive submitted a report which identified the forthcoming issues to be considered by the Executive, as outlined in Appendix A to the report. The report provided the Overview and Scrutiny Board with the opportunity to consider whether any item contained within the Executive Forward Work Programme should be considered by the Board, or referred to a Scrutiny Panel.

ORDERED: the report be noted

22/175 **FINAL REPORT OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE AND SERVICES SCRUTINY PANEL - SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE TO PREPARE FOR ADULTHOOD AND INDEPENDENCE**

The Chair of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel presented the Panel's Final Report and draft recommendations in relation to its review of Supporting Young People to Prepare for Adulthood and Independence.

The Board was asked to consider the following recommendations:

Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

A) That clear pathways be established for young people, whatever their status (care leavers, SEN or having a disability), including flowcharts, to help young people and practitioners understand processes in place, options available and ensuring everyone is aware of available support/services.

B) Whilst the SEND and Inclusion, Children with Disabilities, Early Help and Pathways (Leaving Care) services all work closely with Adult Social Care colleagues to ensure a smooth transition to adult social care, where determined appropriate, the Panel recommends that an Adult Social Worker be allocated to the young person between the age of 17 and 17.5 years

to ensure a smooth handover and seamless transition for the young person and their family/carers and to establish appropriate pathways plans, clearly setting out how the young person will be supported to become an independent adult and identifying the team around the young person.

C) To bridge the gap for a small number of young people with a disability or learning difficulty where their needs assessment outcome is a health need, that health colleagues begin to work with the young person from age 17, rather than 18, to ensure a smooth transition from Children's Social Care, again with clear pathway planning (as B. above).

D) That work with Health colleagues be strengthened, particularly around joint commissioning and that appropriate health colleagues be invited to relevant groups and Strategic Board meetings associated with SEND to ensure joint working and service development.

E) To establish a mechanism, including a Forum for parents/carers, to raise awareness between all groups associated with SEND so that everyone is aware of the work taking place within each of the groups so that opportunities for collaboration can be identified and duplication can be avoided.

F) To ensure effective use of the Education Health and Care (EHC) process for young people with an identified SEND, up to the age of 25, to drive decision making and commissioning decisions in respect of the young person.

Care Leavers

G) In line with Ofsted's findings from its monitoring visit to the Pathways (Leaving Care) Service in November 2022, in relation to areas requiring improvement, the Panel recommends that these areas be taken forward as part of the Improvement Plan and that progress be monitored and reported back to the Panel in six months' time.

H) Ensure that all young people in care are introduced to the Pathways (Leaving Care) service at age 16 and that the process of being allocated a Personal Advisor to help support them in the transition of leaving care and preparation for independence be fully discussed with young people, taking into consideration their views and wishes.

I) That adequate preparation and support in essential skills (such as cooking, shopping and money management) should be discussed as early as possible and regularly with young people to ensure they feel confident in performing such tasks independently once they do leave care and also that they are aware of who they can contact for help and support if needed.

Term of Reference A – To consider how the Council seeks to secure employment or training for young people with care experience and/or special needs

J) That there is greater promotion of Middlesbrough Community Learning across all Council services, particularly Children's Services, to ensure all staff are aware of the support that MCL can offer to young people, particularly those with care experience, additional needs or those who are NEET. This should include:-

- i) Appropriate representatives (Head of Service/Managers from the MCL Teams) to attend a Children's Services LMT to promote their work and advise how they can potentially support vulnerable young people in a range of post-16 employment, education, training or apprenticeship pathways available to them. The information should be disseminated to Team Managers and staff across Children's Services to ensure that all Social Workers, Practitioners and Personal Advisors are aware of the pathways available through MCL and to appropriately signpost young people (and their families/carers) to the service.
- ii) Better promotion of the 50 Futures Programme across all Council services, including information on support provided to placement providers and the benefits of providing a 50 Futures placement for a young person.

K) That the Action Plan currently being developed with the Virtual School and MCL be provided to the Panel upon completion, for information, and that students currently monitored

by the virtual school be provided with the advice needed, in sufficient time before leaving school, of the pathways available to them, including those available through MCL for those where college was not a viable option.

Term of Reference B - To look at ways in which young people with care experience are supported and encouraged to actively participate – with service development and part within their community

L) The Panel supports the continuation of ongoing work by the Council's Participation Team with a range of care experienced young people through a range of groups and forums and encourages alternative, innovative ways of engaging those young people who may not necessarily want to meet in person but may still have valuable feedback to share in terms of shaping service development, for example, through the app/online.

M) To strengthen the programme of participation and inclusion for young people with SEND, and their families/carers, in order for them to contribute to service development, policies and procedures – ensuring their needs are met.

Term of Reference C - To consider, where it is appropriate for a young person to move to supported accommodation or independent living, the options available and the support provided to young people and their families/carers (where appropriate) to prepare and plan for independent living

N) The Panel is supportive of the future accommodation proposals being developed in partnership with housing providers, particularly in relation to care leavers, and requests an update in relation to progress in the next six months.

O) That, in the development of the future accommodation proposals for care leavers, all relevant partners work together to ensure a package of holistic support is provided for each individual, tailored to meet their specific needs and that a detailed plan be produced, clearly setting out each element of the support to be provided to the individual. This plan should be provided to the young person and shared with professionals supporting them.

P) That all accommodation is checked by the housing provider and relevant children's social care staff to ensure that it meets the required living standards and is located in an area considered to be suitable for the young person, also taking into consideration the young person's wishes.

Q) Once finalised and approved, the proposals for independent tenancies with RSLs (housing providers) should be incorporated into the Sufficiency Action Plan (theme 4 – Improving Placements and Support for Care Leavers) which forms part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

R) That a directory be compiled for young people moving to independent living accommodation containing essential information about the property, local area and amenities and support contact numbers for services/support across all relevant partners (social care, housing, health services, police).

Term of Reference D - To examine how care experienced young people are supported with budgeting their finances and how they are supported to ensure their physical and emotional health needs are met

S) That, as part of ensuring care leavers are provided with support in essential life skills, particular focus be placed on managing finances and budgeting and as part of the accommodation offer for care leavers, detailed planning in relation to financial entitlements and benefits are clearly set out for each young person.

T) All care leavers should be provided with information, as part of their Pathway Plan, as to where they can access help with their mental health and emotional well-being, including access to the dedicated CAMHS worker who is part of the Pathways service team, and other relevant services/support/peer groups to avoid social isolation.

U) The Panel welcomes the introduction of Health Passports for young people leaving care as it provides essential medical history for young people in the future. The Panel feels this is an essential document and requests that the importance of the document is discussed and

reinforced to young people on a regular basis.

That relevant partners (health, Children's Social Care and Tees Valley Adoption) explore the possibility of providing a similar health passport for young people who become adopted.

Term of Reference E - To look at how young people with care experience and/or additional needs are supported to become more independent in travelling to school/college/other education settings/places of employment, or to help them become more independent with travelling socially

W) The Panel is supportive of the independent travel training (ITT) provided to young people to help them have confidence to travel independently to education/employment settings or socially. It recommends that ITT be offered to all young people in Middlesbrough with SEND and/or care experience, where it is deemed they have capacity to travel independently and that this be monitored

ORDERED: That the findings and recommendations of the Children and Young People's Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel be endorsed and referred to the Executive.

22/176 **SCRUTINY CHAIRS UPDATE**

The Chair commented the Scrutiny Chairs updates were largely contained within the Overview and Scrutiny Board update report to Council, scheduled for 29 March. As such it was moved the updates not be heard at OSB on this occasion.

ORDERED that the Scrutiny Chairs updates be heard at full Council on 29 March as part of the Overview and Scrutiny Board update.

22/177 **ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH, IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**

None.