
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel was held on Monday 12 December 2022.

PRESENT: Councillors D McCabe (Chair), A Hellaoui, C Hobson, D Jones, M Nugent and G Wilson

OFFICERS: R Brown, C Cannon, K Dargue, T Dunn, I Hanif, G Moore and K Smith

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors M Saunders and T Higgins

22/31 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

22/32 **MINUTES - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL - 21 NOVEMBER 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel held on 21 November 2022 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

22/33 **YOUTH OFFENDING AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH SCHOOLS - FURTHER EVIDENCE**

The Head of South Tees Youth Justice Service (STYJS) was in attendance to provide the scrutiny panel with information regarding the barriers to young people in the youth justice system engaging in education.

It was explained that the significant majority of students attended school each year and went on to achieve great things. It was advised, however, that in some circumstances a small but crucial minority may become involved in crime and therefore would require support and rehabilitation. Members heard that issues leading to those incidents varied case-by-case but could typically be described as exposure to exploitation, such as substance misuse and/or the inability to regulate behaviour resulting in violence or persistently disruptive behaviour.

In terms of drug or alcohol related issues, the STYJS worked with Project ADDER to provide substance misuse support. In May 2021, an ADDER Worker post had been appointed to, to create additional capacity in the STYJS and provide advice, guidance, intervention and support for young people with substance use needs. The post also improved links and redefined pathways to ensure that young people were referred into Tier 3 services in a timely way. In addition, the post had been successful in establishing links with the Substance Misuse Services in the Youth Custody Service, which had supported a better pathway for the resettlement of young people back into the community. The scrutiny panel was advised that all young people open to the service, who had drug/alcohol issues, could be referred to the ADDER Worker for specialist support. The role offered a point of contact and support for STYJS staff, re-introducing a level of expertise for staff which was previously not available. Staff had also benefitted from increased training in substance misuse and receiving advice and guidance on how to best support those with drug/alcohol issues. It was also commented that links had been established with the wider ADDER Team, which planned to support pathways into adult provision, for those young people who transition to Probation.

It was highlighted that serious youth violence had become an area of significant concern for agencies working with young people, and that included schools. The scrutiny panel heard that there were increasing concerns that the most vulnerable young people in society were being drawn into differing forms of organised crime. Members heard that exposure to such behaviours and lifestyles could leave young people vulnerable to exploitation.

It was advised that, in 2021, a report had been published by the Crest Advisory Group (Violence and Vulnerability), which was referenced at Appendix 1 of the submitted report. The

report stated that the risk of violence was heightened for those living in areas with high levels of neighbourhood crime and income deprivation, such as Middlesbrough. The scrutiny panel heard that the STYJS was currently working with CREST Advisory Group, as part of a strategic needs assessment for the newly developed Cleveland Unit for the Reduction of Violence (CURV). Once published, STYJS planned to work closely with the CURV and partners, including schools, to address the issues identified.

A Member raised a query in respect of those areas in Middlesbrough that were thought to be connected to greater risks of violence. In response, the Director of Education and Partnerships advised that the Local Authority had access to data, which identified the wards where crimes had been committed, i.e. victim and perpetrator location. The Head of STYJS advised that work with CURV, to address the causes of violence, was ongoing.

The Head of STYJS explained there was a range of support available for pupils including the multi-agency Pupil Inclusion Panel, which formed part of the new Inclusion and Outreach Model. Alongside that, the STYJS had worked in partnership with local government colleagues across Hartlepool, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton and the Tees, Esk and Wear Valley NHS Trust to develop a Trauma Informed Model of working. The model supported staff to develop bespoke packages of support for those young people with the most complex needs. It was explained that if a young person was accepted on to the pathway, a formulation meeting was held followed by sessions for up to 15 weeks and progress was continuously reviewed and monitored. Furthermore, it was commented that a discharge report provided a psychological overview of mental health symptoms, and informed an onward trauma informed care plan linking to an individualised intervention plan for the child/young person. The pathway provided psychological input to enable the formulation of a holistic plan, which in turn provided a better understanding of the barriers to young people in the youth justice system engaging in education.

A Member expressed concern in respect of the factors that could influence a young person to become involved in crime. In response, the STYJS Education, Training and Employment Specialist advised that stability and security at home was key, as was a supportive family network. The importance of a young person's home being their safe place was also highlighted.

The Head of STYJS explained there could be numerous and complex reasons contributing to a child not attending school and/or being excluded. It was explained that the development of an 'inclusion pathway' would enable Youth Justice Case Managers to refer young people to the STYJS Education, Training and Employment Specialist for targeted support, when they were at risk of poor attendance or exclusion. The STYJS Education, Training and Employment Specialist advised that upon referral, a bespoke action plan and package of support would be developed. Members heard that the action plan would take into account the young person's views, the parent/carer's views and the school's views to ensure that challenges and barriers were understood and addressed. It was highlighted that the action plan developed would also complement, reinforce and bring together the support provided by other services and agencies. Ultimately, the aim of the 'inclusion pathway' would be to increase inclusion and prevent exclusion.

A Member expressed concern in respect of neighbourhood and community influences that could cause young people to become more vulnerable to committing crime. The Head of STYJS explained that over the last year, there had been an increase in partnership working between the STYJS and schools and a contextual safeguarding approach had been promoted by the STYJS Education, Training Employment Specialist via the Pupil Inclusion Panel. It was commented that the approach encouraged partners to share information and collectively plan to reduce risk in different settings. In addition, it was explained that the development of an intelligence sharing form enabled schools to share concerns with Cleveland Police, as they occurred. Members heard that contextual safeguarding was an approach to understand, and respond to, young people's experiences in a range of social contexts, including within school or college, in their groups of friends and within their community and local area.

A discussion ensued and Members expressed concern in respect of those families who were exposed to multiple risk factors. In response, the STYJS Education, Training and Employment Specialist advised that each referral was considered on a case-by-case basis. Members heard that a lengthy and robust assessment was undertaken that considered a young person's background, circumstances and risk factors. It was commented that the assessment was used

to inform the development of a bespoke package of support. The STYJS worked closely with Children's Services to ensure that the package of support complemented and reinforced the approaches taken by other statutory services and agencies involved with the young person.

A Member raised a query in respect of reoffending and the proportion of young people involved with the STYJS. In response, the Head of STYJS advised that there were 41 young people (Year 7 to Year 11) in Middlesbrough who were currently receiving support. The STYJS Education, Training and Employment Specialist commented that, when referring to previous data that had been collected, it was estimated that approximately 38% of those young people would reoffend. Members heard that reporting data in respect of reoffending was both technical and complex, as there was a need to track young people over a period of time. It was commented that future work would aim to capture trends and assess the impact of the work undertaken by the STYJS.

The Head of STYJS commented that the Youth Justice Board had proposed a new set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and from April 2023, the STYJS would need to report on the percentage of young people attending a suitable ETE arrangement. It was commented that collecting that data would enable the STYJS to further understand the barriers to young people engaging in ETE and also assist in determining where to focus future investment.

The Director of Education and Partnerships was the Chair of the Youth Justice Board for South Tees. The Director explained that evidence had shown that schools were a protective factor and assisted in preventing young people engaging in criminal activity. Driving activity with schools aimed to ensure education was central to the response to youth offending. Work continued to monitor attendance and exclusions. It was confirmed there were currently more young people in school, than previously, and less young people were being excluded.

A discussion ensued and Members were in agreement that the proposed 'inclusion pathway' would provide an effective mechanism to ensure that barriers, to young people in the youth justice system engaging in education, were effectively assessed and addressed.

AGREED

1. **That the information presented at the meeting be considered in the context of the scrutiny panel's investigation.**
2. **That the introduction of the 'inclusion pathway' be endorsed by the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel.**

22/34

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD - AN UPDATE

The Chair advised that on 16 November 2022, the Overview and Scrutiny Board had considered:

- the Executive Forward Work Programme;
- an update on ongoing work and current key issues from the Executive Member for Finance and Governance;
- the Adult Social Care and Services Scrutiny Panel's final report on The Role of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Supporting Adult Social Care (with a focus on Covid-19 and recovery); and
- updates from the scrutiny chairs.

NOTED

22/35

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

Supplementary Exclusion Data

A Member raised a query in respect of the supplementary exclusion data, which had been circulated to the scrutiny panel, following its last meeting. The Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Service had provided further data in respect of those pupils who had been permanently excluded who had Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), were eligible for Free School Meals (FSM) and had Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP). The Strategic Lead for Inclusion and Specialist Support Service explained that in respect of the

data reported, each statistic should not be considered in isolation as the figures reported did not necessarily relate to individual pupils, for example - information on one particular pupil could be reported across all three categories as they could be accessing SEN support, be eligible for FSM and have an EHCP in place.

A discussion ensued in respect of exclusions. The Director of Education and Partnerships commented that the current head teacher of Unity City Academy had been appointed as the new head teacher of Trinity Catholic College and would start in January 2023. Members heard that solution focused meetings (as reported at the last meeting) would continue and staff members from the Inclusion and Outreach Service would continue to be based at the school. Furthermore, it was commented that the school had appointed additional staff members to provide improved monitoring and oversight of pupils throughout the school building.

A Member raised a query in respect of the physical assaults reported and the support provided by the STYJS. In response, the STYJS Education, Training and Employment Specialist commented that meetings would be held to discuss cases and determine a package of support.

The Director of Education and Partnerships commented that disruptive behaviour negatively impacted on classroom teaching and learning. Therefore, alongside the monitoring of school exclusion data, it was highly important that the majority of pupils were supported to effectively access high-quality education. It was advised that several schools had introduced structural changes to better manage behaviour and provide on-site alternative education provision, which provided pupils (at risk of exclusion) with the opportunity to work in a different place.

NOTED

Site Visit to Discovery Special Academy

During the review of SEND, the scrutiny panel had received evidence from the head teacher of Discovery Special Academy. During the presentation, it had been suggested that members of the scrutiny panel visited the school, once it moved to its new building, located on the former Nature's World site.

As the school was now open, the head teacher had advised that the school was flexible in accommodating visits after 3.15 p.m.

Following discussion, Members were in agreement that the school should be contacted and asked to propose two dates (one Monday and one Wednesday) for visits, in the hope of accommodating all members of the scrutiny panel.

NOTED