

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 22 September 2014

PRESENT: Councillors Gill Furniss (Chair), John Booker, Mike Drabble, Talib Hussain, Karen McGowan, Pat Midgley, Colin Ross, Ian Saunders, Diana Stimely, Stuart Wattam, Cliff Woodcraft (Deputy Chair) and Geoff Smith (Substitute Member)

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Jules Jones, Education Non-Council Voting Member
Joan Stratford, Education Non-Council Voting Member
Alison Warner, Education Non-Council Member

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nasima Akther, and Councillor Geoff Smith attended the meeting as the duly appointed substitute, and Gillian Foster (Education Non-Council Voting Member).

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 Councillor John Booker declared a personal interest in agenda item 9 (Refreshing the Child and Household Poverty Strategy) as a contractor of the former Sheffield Homes.

3.2 Jules Jones declared a personal interest in agenda item 8 (What Services are Available for Young Carers in the City of Sheffield?) as a Governor of the Sheffield Health and Social Care Foundation Trust.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21st July 2014, were approved as a correct record, and the Committee noted the attached Actions Update.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. UPDATE FROM THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

6.1 Dorne Collinson, Director, Children and Families, provided a brief overview of her role, since her appointment to the post of Director in April 2014. She stated that she had a long employment history in the field of social care, and was responsible for a large and diverse portfolio, which included a number of social care functions, such as children's social work, fostering, adoption and safeguarding. Ms Collinson stated that she was going to place a big emphasis on the early years agenda in an attempt to minimise intervention levels at a later stage. She was particularly impressed with the early intervention and prevention services and planned to make further improvements to services relating to Looked After Children, and would be trying to align a number of the other services to make them more streamlined and easier to access. Part of this work would include the introduction of a one point of contact for members of the public and partner services.

6.2 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- The work to introduce a one point of contact was at an early stage. The plan was to have a new telephone number, which would be a local number, and it was hoped that the new arrangements would be in place by Spring 2015.
- The Service would be undertaking a review of the relevant services following the recommendations of Professor Jay, in the light of the recent child sexual exploitation inquiry in Rotherham. One element of the review would include an audit of recent child sexual exploitation cases referred to the system, to be undertaken by an independent consultant and overseen by a Panel comprising the Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, the Chair of the Safeguarding Children's Board, and a representative from the Health Service. The results of the audit would be fed into the Sheffield Safeguarding Board, as well as being reported to a future meeting of this Committee. The practices adopted by the Service were constantly reviewed following the publishing of details in respect of child sexual exploitation cases in other local authority areas.
- Whilst there were no immediate plans to change the good practice already adopted by the Service, the challenging nature of the work undertaken by the Service meant that officers had to work in an innovative way.

6.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information now reported by Dorne Collinson; and

- (b) thanks Ms Collinson for attending the meeting and providing an overview of her role, and welcomes her to the City in her new role as Director, Children and Families.

7. WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE FOR YOUNG CARERS IN THE CITY OF SHEFFIELD?

- 7.1 The Director, Children and Families Services, submitted a report containing details of the services that were available to support Young Carers in the City, which were supported through the Young Carers Strategy Board, Sheffield Young Carers Project and the VOYCE Partnership Agreement. The report indicated that there were at least 2,000 school age Young Carers in Sheffield, defined as children or young people who provided a substantial amount of care for someone at home, usually a relative or friend, who had a physical or mental illness, disability or substance misuse problem. Young Carers took on practical and/or emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. The issues were compounded by a lack of services available for families, or them not knowing about services or other support available, and there was often a reluctance to involve agencies as families were fearful of acknowledging a child's caring role. The Young Carers would be required to undertake a number of practical tasks, including shopping, cooking, preparing medication and personal care, and the role would often have an adverse impact on their education and personal lives.
- 7.2 In addition to the report, the Committee viewed a video made by CHILYPEP (Children and Young People's Empowerment Project). The video focussed specifically on the rights of Young Carers, and featured a number of Young Carers talking about their experiences and referring to the problems and obstacles they faced whilst undertaking their role. The Committee also received a presentation from the Sheffield Young Carers Project (SYCP) featuring two Young Carers talking about the difficulties they faced in their role, and referring to their contrasting experiences in terms of how they had been supported by their respective educational establishments. They also referred to the assistance provided by the SYCP.
- 7.3 The Committee also received a presentation from Sara Gowen, Managing Director, Sheffield Young Carers Project, and Lesley Pollard, CHILYPEP, entitled 'What Services are Available for Young Carers within the City of Sheffield?'. Reference was made to the Sheffield Carers and Young Carers Strategy, the City Council's Commitment to Carers, the support provided to Young Carers, which included details of the Sheffield Young Carers Project and the VOYCE Project, and the key priorities for Young Carers. They also reported on the impact of the Young Carers' role on their education and personal lives, the benefits of investment in the Sheffield Young

Carers Project and the benefits of investment in interventions for Young Carers in general, and the challenges being faced in terms of developing support for, and attracting investment in order to meet the ongoing needs of, Young Carers. They highlighted the success of the model of partnership working developed through the VOYCE Project, where voluntary, community and faith lead organisations worked together with the City Council and other statutory bodies to develop the project model and attract external funding into the City to deliver it. They concluded by referring to a series of recommendations, which were also set out in the report of the Director, Children and Families Service, now submitted.

7.4 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- All the funding received for the SYCP Family Project from the Big Lottery Youth in Focus Programme was targeted towards those Young Carers supporting family or friends with mental health or substance misuse issues. This was due to the requirements of this specific funding stream. Ideally, the plan was to ensure that support was provided for Young Carers supporting those family members and friends having a wide range of health problems.
- Out of the 189 young people interviewed, following the Young Carer awareness raising assemblies which had been delivered to primary and secondary schools through the VOYCE Project, 91 were not classified as Young Carers by definition and were found only to be responsible for visiting friends or relatives or undertaking chores within the household, and did not have full responsibility for the care of someone. The remaining 98 were defined as Young Carers.
- It was recognised that the actions of Young Carers, in their role, would have an adverse effect on school attendance, and consequently affect schools' attendance statistics. It was also recognised that there was a need for flexibility in certain cases, and there was an emphasis on the young person discussing this with their school, and receiving support to improve their attendance and attainment.
- A Young Carers Centre was considered to be a potential solution to overcoming the challenges outlined in the presentation. The SYCP has begun work around a Young Carers Centre, and development and design would involve Young Carers.
- In the light of the change in the model of delivery to develop a Young Carers Centre by the SYCP to a time-limited service, following the increase in referrals and a growing waiting list over the last few years, the SYCP was looking at how to support

those Young Carers no longer receiving full-time support. There was a need to give consideration to the balance in terms of those Young Carers no longer receiving full-time support from the Project and those young people enrolling on the Project for the first time. SYCP Project Workers assisted where possible, in bringing Young Carers into other services where appropriate, such as counselling and universal services. However, many services were being cut back and waiting lists were growing.

- The SYCP and VOYCE Project worked closely with Sheffield College and other further education establishments in terms of monitoring and providing continued support for Young Carers moving from school to such establishments.
- It was appreciated that a number of Young Carers did not wish to identify themselves for a number of reasons, such as the worry and threat of being taken into care, or being bullied.
- Discussions had commenced in the Education Sub-Group of the Young Carers Strategy Board with regard to looking at whether Young Carers could qualify, under the present criteria, for receiving the Pupil Premium.
- Some, but not all of the City's academies were engaged with the Sheffield Young Carers Project and the VOYCE Project in connection with Young Carers at their establishments.

7.5 The following comments were also made:-

- In the light of the Young Carers' accounts, as part of the presentations, it was important that all schools and other educational establishments were supportive of Young Carers.
- It is in the interest of health services to support Young Carers as this can impact on early intervention/service delivery.
- There was a need for the identification of a method which schools and other educational establishments could use to record the number of Young Carers as not all schools now used the Schools Information Management System (SIMS).

7.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

(a) notes:-

- (i) the contents of the report now submitted, the presentations now made and the responses provided to the questions raised;

- (ii) that, following on from the development of the Person Centred Assessment, the Children, Young People and Families Service and Adults Service will sign up to the Local Memorandum of Understanding between statutory Directors for Children's Services and Adult Social Services; and
 - (iii) the intent in terms of exploring the potential for a Young Carers Centre, and requests a report on progress from the Director, Children and Families, within six months;
- (b) notes and supports future developments that are required in relation to:-
- (i) Health Services representation on the Young Carers Strategic Board;
 - (ii) ensuring schools engagement with the schools network and the adoption of good practice in identifying, recording and supporting Young Carers in all schools, the implementation of the model of support developed by VOYCE for Young Carers in transition and, potentially, the National Schools Standards following the one year pilot;
 - (iii) commissioners of Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Services for Children and Young People making support for Young Carers explicit in service specifications;
 - (iv) organisations considering how learning from the VOYCE Project and the work of Sheffield Young Carers Project can be shared, replicated and implemented;
 - (v) statutory and voluntary organisations supporting the development of transition services between Young Carers' services and carers services;
 - (vi) statutory and local voluntary services working with young carers implementing the new legislation relevant to Young Carers;
 - (vii) the City Council taking into account the services provided over and above those contracted by the Council, when commissioning its service; to acknowledge that the services funded by the City Council are only a small percentage of support currently available, but that it provides a solid core from which further funding can be raised; and
 - (viii) highlighting the work of the VOYCE Project and the

Sheffield Young Carers Project to the Governing Bodies of Schools and Trust Boards of Academies, and alerting them to the importance of effectively identifying Young Carers and the potential positive impact this can have in terms of their academic achievement;

- (c) acknowledges the excellent work of the Young Carers in the City, particularly in the light of all the difficulties and obstacles they face in terms of their education and personal lives; and
- (d) requests a letter highlighting the work of Young Carers in the City, accompanied by the three presentations from the Young Carers now made, be forwarded to the Minister of State for Schools, the Rt Hon David Laws MP, and the Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Tristran Hunt MP

8. REFRESHING THE CHILD AND HOUSEHOLD POVERTY STRATEGY

8.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted a report on the plans to refresh the Council's Child and Household Poverty Strategy that was planned to run to the end of 2014, with the aim of addressing the growing need in the City in the context of continuing difficult economic circumstances and reducing resources within the public sector. Attached to the report were a number of appendices, containing additional information on the Child and Household Poverty Strategy, including an invitation letter explaining what the Council is doing in terms of refreshing the Strategy, a consultation response form, a draft assessment of need in the City, a self-assessment of the 2012-2014 Strategy, and a draft Action Plan, setting out what work was being undertaken and what work could be undertaken in order to tackle child and household poverty in the City, along with links to the Fairness Commission report and the previous Needs Assessment and Strategy.

8.2 The report was supported by a presentation by Anna Brook, Lifelong Learning, Skills and Communities, who reported on the problems of child and household poverty both nationally and in Sheffield, and referred to the timetable with regard to consultation on the new Strategy which, it was hoped, would be published in January 2015. Ms Brook reported on the proposed structure of the revised Strategy, which involved tackling poverty today and mitigating its worse effects, by improving living standards, tackling some of the root causes of poverty, by supporting people into work and increasing their earnings, and breaking the inter-generational cycle of poverty, by giving children the best start in life and improving educational attainment for children, and referred to a number of themes in each of the areas above.

8.3 Members of the Committee made the following comments:-

- Whilst appreciating the work undertaken, and the planned work, to attempt to tackle poverty in the City, the Strategy needed to concentrate on the whole City, and not just those areas with higher poverty levels, and also concentrate on breaking the cycle of child and household poverty. In doing this, there was a need for more radical thinking in terms of the action required on the basis that, despite the best efforts of the Council and partner agencies, such initiatives have not been successful in the past.
- Specific concerns were raised regarding sanctions imposed by the Job Centre, such as for failing to log into the system.
- The Strategy needs to focus on the needs of young children, particularly as high numbers were suffering physically in terms of the poverty they faced, which was having an adverse effect on their educational achievements.
- Consideration needs to be given to the quality of food that families, particularly young children, were eating at home, specifically the high levels of salt and sugar.
- Schools and other educational establishments needed to focus more on the pupils' life skills rather than league tables in respect of academic achievement.
- There was a need to build on the existing programmes, such as Building Successful Families.
- Consideration needs to be given to the aspirations of young people, particularly those living in the more deprived areas of the City, and those attending schools and educational establishments with lower attainment levels, in order to give them belief that they could achieve their goals.
- Need for a qualifying statement to be added to the Needs Assessment (Page 16), relating to the evidence from Dickerson and Popli (Persistent Poverty and Children's Cognitive Development), to avoid stigmatisation, which could be achieved by providing the reasoning behind the lower test scores.
- More focus should be placed on young people taking apprenticeships in order to increase the potential for employment opportunities in families.

8.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the comments now made; and

- (b) requests that any further individual or group comments or views be forwarded to Anna Brook, as part of the consultation on the Child and Household Poverty Strategy, with the deadline for comments being 30th September, 2014.

9. 2014 CITY-WIDE ATTAINMENT OUTCOMES IN SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES - THE EARLY PICTURE AND HEADLINES FOR ALL KEY STAGES

9.1 The Executive Director, Children, Young People and Families, submitted a report providing a brief overview in respect of attainment and performance outcomes from Foundation Stage to A Level in the City's schools and academies.

9.2 In attendance for this item were Iain Peel, Interim Director, Inclusion and Learning Services, Janet Docherty, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement Service and Pam Smith, Strategic Lead – Targetted Intervention, Children, Young People and Families.

9.3 Iain Peel stated that a more detailed report on the attainment statistics, including initial comparisons to national performance and to other local authorities, would be presented at the next meeting of the Committee in November 2014, and went on to highlight the headlines in respect of all the key stages.

9.4 Members of the Committee raised questions and the following responses were provided:-

- In terms of the three schools reported to be below the Government floor standard of 40% in 2014, there had been improvements in the communication links between Sheffield Springs Academy and the local community. Officers were interested to hear from Members if they were aware of any similar communication issues between the other two schools and their respective local communities.
- The Local Authority was aware of low attainment levels in respect of AS Levels at some schools and Sheffield College and considered this to be due to the big step up in terms of levels of difficulty from GCSE Level and Members of the Committee suggested that it also had a lot to do with levels of pastoral care and guidance offered.
- It was not possible to provide details of the key educational outcomes, as broken down by Ward at this point in time, as the National Government dataset was required, and this would not be available until November 2014.
- It was too early to tell if there was a difference in outcomes

between maintained schools and academies. In three to five years, the data would be available in terms of performance trends, so it will be possible to see if there was any difference then.

9.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, the comments now made and the responses provided to the questions raised;
- (b) requests that a further report be submitted to its meeting in November 2014, on the attainment statistics for the City, providing an analysis in terms of the available national data/comparators; and
- (c) expresses its thanks and appreciation to Iain Peel, who was leaving the Authority on Friday, 26th September 2014, to take up a new post at Derby City Council.

10. WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

10.1 The Policy and Improvement Officer, Diane Owens, submitted a paper containing the Committee's draft Work Programme 2014/15.

10.2 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the draft Work Programme 2014/15; and
- (b) in the light of the comments now raised, requests the Policy and Improvement Officer to liaise with the Director, Children and Families Service, to look at which meeting the Sheffield review, following the recent child sexual exploitation inquiry in Rotherham, could be discussed at, with the possibility of a special meeting being arranged for this one item.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

11.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 17th November 2014, at 1.00 pm in the Town Hall.