

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

Meeting held 4 February 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Cliff Woodcraft (Deputy Chair),
Andy Bainbridge, Simon Clement-Jones, Tony Downing,
Francyne Johnson, Abtisam Mohamed, Ian Saunders, Alison Teal and
Sophie Wilson

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Alison Warner, (School Governor Representative - Non-Council Non-
Voting Member)
Sam Evans, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bob Pullin and Colin Ross and Gillian Foster (Diocese Representative) and Peter Naldrett (Co-Opted 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 Cliff Woodcraft declared a personal interest as a member of the same church as Tim Armstrong (Head of Special Educational Needs). Sam Evans (Diocese Representative) also declared a personal interest as a friend of Tim Armstrong (Head of Special Educational Needs).

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee held on 10th December 2018, were approved as a correct record and arising therefrom:-

(a) the Policy and Improvement Officer (Deborah Glen) stated that she had contacted Kate Wilkinson (Service Manager – Performance and Analysis Service) regarding the request for statistics regarding indices of deprivation for Batemoor, Beauchief, Beighton, East Ecclesfield, Greenhill, Jordanthorpe

and Low Edges. Kate had confirmed that once established, it would be easy to replicate for all wards. It was hoped the data would be available for the Committee's meeting to be held on 11th March 2019;

- (b) a holding response had been received from the Chair of the Schools Forum in relation to ensuring that schools continued to record and report the five-stage proficiency in English code. It was hoped the full response would be available for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 11th March 2019;
- (c) the Chair reported that a date had not yet been received for a meeting with Mark Sheikh (Head of Service – Business Strategy) to discuss further investigations into the potential for prudential borrowing with regard to capital funding for schools;
- (d) Deborah Glen (Policy and Improvement Officer) undertook to follow up details of youth activities, including dates and times of sessions with Dan White, to be circulated to all Members of the Committee; and
- (e) the Chair sought clarification regarding recommendation 7.5(c). The briefing note to be prepared by Dan White (Head of Health & Targeted Services), referenced in the minute, was regarding the reasons for the increase in referrals of Looked After Children to the CSE Team. Deborah Glen reported that a response was still awaited from Dan White on the matter and also from Victoria Horsefield (Assistant Director with responsibility for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) regarding the request for an assessment of the roll out of Friend or Foe training in schools. The Chair requested that a progress report on both matters be available for the next meeting of the Committee on 11th March 2019.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 5.1 There were questions from the public on specific agenda items which the Chair consented to be raised at the appropriate time.

6. ADOPTION SERVICE - ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, People Services, attaching the Adoption Service – Annual Report 2017/18.
- 6.2 In attendance for this item were Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children and Families) and Paul Dempsey (Assistant Director – Provider Services, Children and Families Services).
- 6.3 Paul Dempsey presented the report which detailed the activity and performance of Sheffield City Council's Adoption Service for 2017/18 and set out the improvement and development work planned for 2018/19.
- 6.4 Members of the Committee and members of the public raised questions and the

following responses were provided:-

- Feedback was obtained from attendees of groups and activities, but there was no formal way to assess the feedback at present. Most of the feedback was positive. Timings had been improved and support workers were now allocated within 5 days. Further work was needed on educational support.
- A regional advisory board was being worked on which would enable engagement with adoptive parents.
- The website would be amended to provide details of the Adoption Support Fund and how to access it and details would be made available in other formats. 80 families were currently in receipt of funding from the Adoption Support Fund.
- Government legislation stated that adoption services should operate on a more regional level. Doncaster had come forward to host, but there had been concerns regarding the capacity, therefore discussions had reopened. It was important to ensure service improvements would be made. The discussions did not affect the day to day running of the service and a briefing note of the current situation would be prepared.
- Staff absences had reduced, supported by the HR process and the vacancy was currently being recruited to.
- Looked After Children now qualified for the pupil premium and the designated teachers had been notified. All adopted children would be part of the Virtual School, with designated teachers and personal education plans. More training for adoptive parents was also being developed.
- 21% of Looked After children were adopted or placed into Special Guardianship in 2017/18 and this figure was at 24% already for 2018/19. There had been a decrease in adoption and an increase in Special Guardianship. The Council looked at all ways to get children into permanent homes, whether by adoption, foster carers becoming Special Guardianships and wraparound care post 16. The Committee would be provided with the latest figures.
- It was important to write the correct plan for each individual child and if necessary, the child may be placed with adopters outside Sheffield if it better met the needs of the child. Timeliness of placements had improved and a monthly tracker meeting took place for all children. The Authority was trying to recruit adopters for specific types of children.
- Some children were adopted via external agencies, others via other Councils. All were regulated and checked by Ofsted. The Council would prefer to place children with it's own approved adopters, but timely placements were in the best interests of the children. The cost of using external agencies was offset by the reduction in foster care payments.

One of the Council's key targets was to recruit more adopters.

6.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the annual report of the Adoptions Service now submitted and the progress made, together with the responses to the questions now raised;
- (b) thanks Councillor Jackie Drayton and Paul Dempsey for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests Paul Dempsey to:
 - (i) provide a briefing note for the Committee on the status of the Regional Adoption Agency and include progress reports within the regular Committee reports on the Recovery and Improvement Plan;
 - (ii) reconsider publicity and communications of the Adoption Support Fund, via the website and other means;
 - (iii) circulate information on national benchmarks for adoptions; and
 - (iv) report back to the Committee in three months regarding formal feedback mechanisms post-adoption, including performance indicators.

7. FOSTERING SERVICE - ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

7.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, People Services, attaching the Fostering Service – Annual Report 2017/18.

7.2 In attendance for this item were Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children and Families) and Paul Dempsey (Assistant Director – Provider Services, Children and Families Services).

7.3 Paul Dempsey presented the report which detailed the activity and performance of Sheffield City Council's Fostering Service for 2017/18 and set out the improvement and development work planned for 2018/19.

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

- The increase in the number of foster children reflected the national picture. Austerity measures had contributed to the increase.
- The service was looking to increase training provision for Foster Carers and was increasing the role to 1.5 full time employees. Once approved, foster carers were given Personal Development Plans and the amount of advanced training was to be increased. The service's Psychologist was developing a training and development programme. Safeguarding training was also available.
- Foster Carers who gave up the role usually did so due to personal

circumstances e.g. relocating, becoming staying put carers or retiring.

- There were measures in place for families on the edge of care e.g. Multi Agency Teams, educare services for adolescents, a new edge of care service was in place.

7.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the annual report of the Fostering Service now submitted and the progress made, together with the responses to the questions now raised; and
- (b) thanks Councillor Jackie Drayton and Paul Dempsey for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised.

8. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS IN SHEFFIELD

8.1 The Committee received a report which detailed the outcome of the recent Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) SEND Inspection.

8.2 In attendance for this item were Councillor Jayne Dunn (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children and Families), Councillor Jayne Ludlam (Executive Director – People Services), Dawn Walton (Director – Commissioning: Inclusion and Schools), Joel Hardwick (Head of Commissioning: Inclusion and Schools), Tim Armstrong (Head of SEN) and Scarlett Milward (Clinical Commissioning Group).

8.3 Tim Armstrong presented the report and explained that as part of the national framework for inspecting local areas, Sheffield had been inspected in November 2018. The inspection had been carried out by Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and was of the entire local area across frontline Education, Health and Care provision to meet the needs of those with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities. It was the role of the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to formulate a response to the inspection.

8.4 The Inspectors required that a written statement of action (WSOA) be submitted to Ofsted within 70 working days of the publication of the report. The Department for Education (DofE) and NHS England would support the Council to complete the WSOA.

8.5 The WSOA needed to address the following areas of significant weakness:

- The lack of a co-produced, coherent vision and strategy for SEND in Sheffield.
- Communication, clarity and consistency in the relationship between the local area leaders, parents, carers, children and young people.
- Poor strategic oversight of SEND arrangements by the CCG. This results in unacceptable waiting times for access to specialist equipment and

appropriate pre- and post-diagnosis support and children and young people's needs not being met.

- Weakness in commissioning arrangements to remove variability and improve consistency in meeting the education, health and care needs of children and young people aged 0 to 25 with SEND.
- The quality and timeliness of education, health and care (EHC) plans.
- Inconsistencies in identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of children and young people with SEND in mainstream primary and secondary schools.
- Weaknesses in securing effective multi-agency transition arrangements for children and young people with SEND.

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

- The report reflected issues which had already been identified by the Council and CCG, and work had already begun to address the issues. The report enabled the Council to support and challenge schools that were not supporting those with SEN as well, in a more robust way.
- The SEND Statutory Assessment and Review Service had been improving, but not fast enough as identified in the report. The team had been restructured and staff numbers had been increased to reduce caseloads.
- Meetings had been held with a range of groups, including parents. The State of Sheffield questionnaire compiled by the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum had also just closed, which had asked how the Council could do better work for the most vulnerable families and how could the Council better support those who struggle to articulate their needs.
- The report had also identified that people had to go to single places in the City to access help and that services needed to be accessed in the community. The education landscape set at a national level was not inclusive, those who could not perform academically struggled and there was a lack of vocational qualifications. This had been raised with Ofsted and the DofE. Secondary exclusions were reducing and there were proposals for the Ofsted inspection framework to look at inclusion.
- A stronger relationship was needed with the provider network and there was a need to work closely with the CCG to strengthen how services were commissioned, what the local authority expected, how they related to families and how joint arrangements worked.
- There had been a reduction in fixed term exclusions at both primary and secondary level which was against the national trend and there had been a better partnership approach over the last few months. There was a need to continue to review trends and a Primary Inclusion Panel had been established which included CAMHS etc. Individual schools were reported

to Ofsted where there were issues. Every child in Sheffield mattered.

- An area response was required to the inspection and this was being co-produced by the Council and the CCG. The benefit would be that any strategy that was produced would be integrated.
- There were some good examples of schools or individuals who were committed and providing excellent work. A locality approach was supported and was being developed further. The report identified that this needed to be consistent.
- There was a correlation between deprivation and exclusion and there was a need to support families to be more resilient. There was some really great work being carried out in deprived areas, but the challenge was greater.
- It was clear that there was some good work taking place, but there were many inconsistencies and pathways were not always in place. There was a need to both challenge and support. More engagement with young people was needed. How were those with SEND supported into independence. Pathways should be embedded.
- Significant investment had already been agreed and the issue had been prioritised. A clear business plan with a range of interventions was necessary.
- Families were not always engaging with services as they were inaccessible and the Council needed to support schools to address barriers.
- There needed to be a quicker process to identify and get back into education those children who were refusing to attend. Support needed to be identified and monitored and communicated to parents. More effective engagement was needed.
- It was explained that the inspection had been set against the background of all statements needing to be converted on top of new cases being identified with limited resources and to the Government's deadline and Members recognised the work that staff had done to meet the deadlines around conversion.

8.7 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the content of the report now submitted, together with the responses to the questions now raised;
- (b) thanks Councillor Jayne Dunn, Councillor Jackie Drayton, Jayne Ludlam, Dawn Walton, Joel Hardwick, Tim Armstrong and Scarlett Milward (CCG) for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised;
- (c) requests that a special meeting be arranged to see the joint response to

the SEND Inspection, prior to submission to Ofsted; and

- (d) agrees to incorporate regular progress reports on this matter in its Work Programme.

9. WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

- 9.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer containing the work Programme for 2018/19.
- 9.2 Deborah Glen (Policy and Improvement Officer) reported that a call for evidence had been issued to the public, both online and via letters to community groups, regarding the Scrutiny Review of Access to Mental Health Services.
- 9.3 The Learn Sheffield Peer Review and a potential report on Support to Roma, Gypsy and Traveller children had also been added to the agenda for the meeting of the Committee on 11th March 2019.
- 9.4 There were also additional items on data to be provided for the next meeting.
- 9.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee notes the contents of the report, now submitted, together with the information now reported, and approved the contents of the Work Programme for 2018/19.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 11th March 2019, at 10:00am, in the Town Hall.