

CHILDREN'S HEALTH, SOCIAL CARE AND EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

WEDNESDAY, 29 MARCH 2017

PRESENT:- Councillors Gemma McCracken (Chair), Malcolm Davies, Fay Howard, Colin Lovell, Teresa Page, Barbara Parry, Carol Shelley, Gary Sumner and Nadine Watts.

Steve Colledge (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers), Mark Edwards (Healthwatch), Doug Morris (Swindon Parent and Cares Group), Steve Henderson and Michelle Howard (Equalities Advisory Forum).

Also present: Miss Chloe Townsend, Miss Dani Wells and Mr Jacob Patterson, (elected Members of the Youth Parliament), Paul Dobson (Project Manager, Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project), Fiona Frances (Service Manager for Quality Assurance and Review Service), Lyn Frith (Commissioner, Education), Gill May, (Executive Nurse, Clinical Commissioning Group), Kevin McNamara (Director of Strategy, Great Western Hospital), Peter Nathan (Head of Education), Christina Rattigan (Interim Divisional Director of Nursing and Midwifery), Karen Reeve (Director of Children's Services), Maria Young (Head of Children, Families and Community Health).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fionuala Foley, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Liz Townend (Church of England Diocese).

38. Declarations of Interest

The Chair reminded Members of the need to declare any known interests in any matters to be considered at the meeting.

Councillor Barbara Parry made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest to agenda item 9 (Children's Services Performance Report) in her capacity as an employee at Uplands Educational Trust.

Councillors Carol Shelley and Gary Sumner made personal, non-prejudicial declarations of interest to agenda item 9 (Children's Services Performance Report) in their capacity as governors at Swindon School.

39. Public Question Time

No public questions were asked.

40. Minutes

Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2017 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

41. Progress Update of Youth Participation

The Project Manager, Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project, submitted a report updating the Committee on performance and key issues relating to youth participation, Swindon's Members of Youth Parliament, Swindon Youth Council and

the Young Inspectors and Thought Tank. He explained that there was a positive response from schools to the “Emotional Health and Well-being” survey and at the request of the Senior Public Health Manager a mapping exercise would be undertaken to understand the kinds of mental health and support services available in Swindon. It was noted that this would be undertaken through targeted consultation with those dealing with well-being and mental health issues.

The Project Manager, advised of the membership of the Swindon Youth Council, which met three times a year and to the work being undertaken by the Council. The Committee noted the Swindon Youth Council’s continued close working relationship with Great Western Hospital to improve the experience of young people receiving treatment at the hospital.

The Project Manager, Swindon Ten to Eighteen Project, and the Youth Parliament members, responded to members’ questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The results of the Emotional Health and Well-being Survey and the identification of bullying and mental health issues as major issues of concern.
- The inclusion of minority groups in the survey
- The availability of support for all young people in the community.
- The need to refrain from using acronyms when signposting pathways to access support.

Resolved – That the report be noted.

42. Swindon Clinical Commissioning Update Report

The Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) submitted a report updating the Committee on performance and key issues relating to the service. Ms Gill May, Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), introduced the report and commented on the Groups’ priorities and action being undertaken. Ms May referred to the increase of children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) since 2004 and advised that this national trend was reflected in Swindon. She explained that a review of the ASD pathway was being undertaken due to the increase in the number of patients. Ms May commented on the Children’s Services Review and advised that progress had been made with the CCG identifying project management support for two key work streams. These included scrutinising existing funding for contracts and developing performance and outcome reporting tools.

Following her introduction of the report, Ms May responded to the members’ questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The recruitment of an occupational therapist and community speech and a language therapist.
- Delayed publication of the Children’s Services Review and whether funding opportunities had been missed as a result.
- Increased data gathering about children with special educational needs and disabilities in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- The later in life diagnosis of children with Autism the support available in these cases.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That an interim report on the outcomes of the Children’s Services Review

be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

(3) That the Commissioner, Education, be requested to liaise with the Executive Nurse at NHS Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group, regarding the Children Services Review.

43. Recruitment of Social Workers

The Head of Children, Families and Community Health, submitted a report providing an update on a) the recruitment of social workers; b) Government Social Work accreditation; and c) Social Work Health Check and caseload issues. She explained that social workers deliver statutory responsibilities as set out in the Children's Act 1989 and that the need to recruit social workers was still high. To address this, a microsite/ recruitment and induction process has been developed to provide information to potential candidates. Additionally, an academy approach to recruitment and development of newly qualified social workers had been established and this helped them reach the standards required for their year of practice. Career progression scheme and aspiring manager's programmes had also been introduced. The Committee was informed that caseload management aided the delivery of effective social work and that dedicated recruitment would help reduce the number of children per social worker.

Following the introduction of the report, the Head of Children, Families and Community Health, with the Director of Children's Services and the Head of Education, responded to the Committee members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- Reliance on agency social workers to undertake the work.
- An update on the recruitment drive to employ new social workers.
- Engagement with other agencies to provide social services.
- The current number of vacancies, retention and turnover numbers of social workers.
- The recruitment of support staff to assist social workers in their work.
- Support through supervision being provided to social workers.
- The appraisal system for social workers.
- Review of work practices to reduce bureaucracy.
- An update on the graduate programme.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Children, Families and Community Health, advise members of the number of agency social workers currently employed by the Council and also the number of staff appraisals undertaken.

44. Joint Local Area SEND Inspection

The Head of Education submitted a report updating the Committee on progress made in readiness for the new joint local area SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) inspection. The Commissioner, Education, explained that from May 2016, all local areas in England were subject to a joint inspection from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC). This was to judge the effectiveness of the areas in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014.

The Commissioner, Education, explained that the report had been structured to highlight the strengths and challenges of the work that had been undertaken,

making specific reference to the recently updated self-assessment tool provided by the Council for disabled children. She advised that a joint improvement plan will be created with Clinical Commission Group, Swindon, that will provide targeted support to children and young people who have

Following the introduction of the report, the Commissioner, Education, responded to the members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- How academies were dealing with the increased number of fixed term exclusions in Swindon and the support being provided by the Local Authority.
- The alternative placement of excluded pupils.
- The number of schools actively engaging with the Parents Carer Forum.
- Parental involvement in inspections jointly undertaken by Health Department and the Local Authority.
- The use of the "early help" assessment tool and how this identified those needing a statutory assessment of special educational needs.
- The number of students undertaking internships who then went on to paid employment.
- Narrowing the attainment gap at Key Stage 3.
- Work being conducted at the North Swindon Learning Campus.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Education be requested to submit a report regarding exclusions in Swindon to a future meeting of the Committee.

45. Children's Services Performance Report

The Head of Children, Families and Community Health, submitted a report providing an update on performance within all service commissioning for the end of quarter three, to end of January 2017. She referred to the strengths and challenges of the work that had been undertaken, making specific reference to the increase in assessments undertaken and to the challenges to complete reviews and visits for children on child protection plans.

The Head of Children, Families and Community Health, advised that a high percentage of children looked after were in family placements and that the number of children coming into care as unaccompanied asylum seekers had also increased. It was noted that more statutory assessments were being completed as there was an increase of children on child protection plans and becoming looked after. However fewer children became the subject of a second or subsequent child protection plan. The Head of Children, Families and Community Health, explained that timely looked after children reviews continued to be a challenge for the department.

Following her introduction of the report, the Head of Children, Families and Community Health, responded to the members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The reduction of referrals through work being undertaken by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
- The make-up of the MASH team and the expertise all staff bring to their posts.
- An understanding of who represents parents at schools when an exclusion is being considered.

- The increase in the number of children in Swindon waiting to be adopted.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Director of Children Services and the Head of Education be requested to review the feasibility of creating a support officer post in the MASH team.

46. Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation (GM), Honour Based Violence (HBV) and (DA) Domestic Abuse Update

The Service Manager for Quality Assurance and Review Service submitted a report updating the Committee on progress made regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Violence (HBV) and (DA) Domestic Abuse. It was noted that following a successful bid to One Swindon for funding, leaflets on CSE had been produced and circulated to children, taxi drivers, hotels, leisure centres, bus drivers, parents and professionals. She advised that a CSE e-learning course was available and additional training had been developed through the Children's Workforce Development Team to enhance practitioners' skills.

The Service Manager explained that the Multi-agency Risk Panel (MARP) saw an increase in the number of referrals for children who were criminally exploited. She advised that MARP assessed children who are at risk of CSE, criminal exploitation and missing and its work entailed liaising with the Police to support vulnerable children.

Following the introduction of the report, the Service Manager, responded to members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- Lessons learnt from undertaking CSE work were transferrable to other areas of child exploitation risks.
- The new model for sharing police notifications.
- The collaborative work being undertaken by the police with schools.
- Expanding the work being undertaken to include other partner organisations.
- Assessing the work of a new project to provide a multi-agency support pathway for vulnerable women who lost a child to the care system in preventing a subsequent removal.
- The new data system being introduced for Looked After Children.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Children, Families and Community Health, be requested to include information on the number of "hits" on The Child Sexual Exploitation website (<https://www.swindon.gov.uk/cse>).

47. Work Programme Report

The Committee received a report from the Director of Law and Democratic Services detailing its updated work programme for the Municipal Year 2016/17. The Committee received a report from the Director of Law and Democratic Services detailing its updated work programme for the Municipal Year 2016/17.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That contributions received from Councillors and stakeholders for consideration for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme for the Municipal Year, 2017/18, be welcomed.