

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

WEDNESDAY, 4 JULY 2018

PRESENT:- Councillors Barbara Parry (Chair), Fay Howard, Nick Martin, Carol Shelley, Tim Swinyard, Nadine Watts, Steve Weisinger and Robert Wright.

Spencer Allen (Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers), Caroline Devlin (Swindon SEND Families Voice) and Alison Paul (Association of Swindon Special Schools Headteachers).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Courtliff, Roger Smith and Caryl Sydney-Smith and Steve Colledge (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers), Elaine Poulter (Parent Governor), Liz Townsend (Church of England Diocese) and Carol Willis (Healthwatch).

Also present: Councillor Mary Martin, Cabinet Member for Children and School Attainment.

1. Appointment of Vice Chair

Resolved – That Councillor Caryl Sydney-Smith be Vice-Chair of this Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19.

2. 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 Fay Howard made a non-prejudicial personal declaration of interest in respect of Agenda item 7 (Children's Performance Summary) on the grounds of her employment by Virgin Care.

Councillor Barbara Parry made a non-prejudicial personal declaration of interest in respect of Agenda item 7 (Children's Performance Summary) on the grounds of her employment by the Ridgeway School.

Councillor Carol Shelley made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest to Agenda item 7 (Children's Performance Summary) in her capacity as governor of Swindon Academy.

3. Public Question Time

No public questions were asked or submitted for this meeting.

4. Minutes

Resolved -That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

5.

SEND Local Area Inspection

The Head of Education submitted a report updating the Committee on progress made in preparation for the new joint local area SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) inspection and gave a presentation (attached to minutes) regarding the progress being made transferring statements of special educational needs into Education, Health & Care Plans (EHCPs). The Head of Education explained that the Children & Families Act 2014 introduced significant changes to the approach in meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities, giving families and children/young people a stronger voice in the process of assessing and determining their needs, at individual and strategic level. He elaborated on the areas to be inspected by Ofsted and together with the Commissioner, Education, gave details on the work being undertaken for each area.

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

- The importance of joint working between schools within a climate of reduced funding.
- The need for a conversation between schools and health partners regarding timely diagnoses of patients.
- The recording and accountability of EHCPs for the benefit of the student.
- The need for a debate on funding for students on EHCPs.
- The involvement of the Parent Carer Forum in supporting the work by the Local Authority (LA) and the Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) by helping parents achieve the best for their child.
- Joint working by the LA with the Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure better outcomes for students on EHCPs.
- The outcomes of the recent self-evaluation exercise and the resource implications of items identified as needing to be addressed.
- The provision being provided for 20 to 25 year olds needing Special Educational Needs support by the LA.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Education be requested to submit an update to a future meeting of the Committee.

6.

Appointment of co-opted members

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Law and Democratic Services regarding the appointment of co-optees to the Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Municipal Year 2018/19.

Resolved - (1) That this Committee confirms the appointment of the following voting co-opted representatives:

- (a) Liz Townsend as the Church of England Diocese representative.
- (b) Elaine Poulter as a Parent Governor Representative.

(2) That it be noted that a single nomination of a voting co-opted representative was awaited from the Catholic Church Diocese.

(3) That the appointment of the following non-voting representatives be confirmed:

- (a) Alison Paul (Swindon Association of Special School Headteachers).

- (b) Dan Clarke (Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers).
- (c) Steve Colledge (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers).
- (d) Steve Henderson (Equalities Advisory Forum).
- (e) Jacqui Watt (Swindon SEND Families Voice).
- (f) Carol Willis (Healthwatch).

7. Children's Performance Summary 17/18 Outturn Position

The Performance Lead, Children Services, submitted a report providing an update on the performance within all services commissioned for 2017/18. The report indicated that some measures would alter slightly when the final dataset would be validated and submitted at the end of July 18 and that comparator data for 2017/18 will be available nationally in autumn 2018.

The Committee noted that details for the performance overview were attached as Appendix 1 and the report captured the key headlines from the appendix. The data from the children's social care benchmarking group included the following areas:

- a) The number of social care referrals to date,
- b) The number of children in need (Section 17),
- c) The number of children on Child Protection Plans,
- d) Children Looked After,
- e) The number of Troubled Families Claims,
- f) The Placements of Children Looked After,
- g) The rate of care leavers in education, employment or training,
- h) The re-offending rates from the Youth Offending Teams,
- i) The percentage of pupils with Special Education Statements or Educational Health Care Plan,
- j) The percentage of pupils who were not in education, employment or training,
- k) The number of fixed term exclusions and
- l) The number of pupils educated at home.

Following the Performance Leads' introduction of the report, the Head of Education together with the Performance Lead, the Principal Officer – Health and Wellbeing & Interim Service and the Service Manager - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) responded to the members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The reasons behind the increase in demand for early help and social care services in Swindon.
- The number of social care contacts by parents that progressed into referrals compared to other LAs.
- The support being provided to parents and young people where referrals did not meet the LA's criteria.
- The range of initiatives being undertaken by schools, in discussions with the LA, to continue reducing the number of permanent exclusions.
- The assessments undertaken by the LA of home educated students.
- The placement of children looked after within the LA's in-houses and with foster carers.
- The recruitment and training of foster carers.
- Guidance for school where a student does not meet the threshold for support following a MASH assessment.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Education be requested to circulate information on the number of permanent exclusions to members of the Committee.

8. MASH Referrals, Assessment and Threshold

The Service Manager, Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Assessment and Child protection Team, submitted a joint report updating the Committee on the MASH and Threshold's process in determining which children receive statutory services and at what level. The report introduced the findings and recommendations of the Focussed OFSTED visit in April and provided a brief outline of the improvements that were required in order to support children and families at the right levels. The Service Manager explained that MASH was able to demonstrate improvements in the key areas identified by OFSTED. This was achieved through the Improvement Plan generated following the visit and areas of improvement covered included:

- Timeliness: MASH was progressing all work within 24 hours.
- Thresholds: All staff are using the 'Threshold Document' (Continuum of Need Framework),
- Management oversight and scrutiny: The introduction of a new MASH Model has ensured that Management oversight and scrutiny is applied at the screening and signing off points.
- Early Help pathway: The Early Help Hub is now established and early help pathways were being considered at Level 2.
- The quality and timeliness of case recording and planning for children: The introduction of a Contact Analysis Grid to gather initial information on cases that go into MASH.
- The poor quality of information from partners: Referrals from partners that were received which do not provide sufficient detail and accurate information to enable the presenting concerns to be understood.
- Embedded practice development consultants within MASH & Assessment Team: Working together alongside managers, learning inputs and audits to validate decision making and integrate a life learning model.
- Increased staffing expertise and capacity.
- Increased the capacity of the Designated Officer role and its business support. There was now a full-time LADO available at all times and an improvement plan was in place to ensure improved management oversight, effectiveness of the arrangements, quality assurance and audit activity.

Following the Service Manager's introduction of the report, the Head of Education together with the Service Manager - Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) responded to the members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The importance of having active and timely communication flows between the Local Safeguarding Children's Board, MASH and schools.
- The work undertaken between MASH and the Early Year Hub.
- Staffing of MASH.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Service Manager, Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) be requested to organise a training session for Committee members on the work of MASH.

9. Early Help Hub, Troubled Families and Early Help Offer

The Principal Officer, Health and Wellbeing & Interim Service Manager for Early Help, submitted a joint report updating the Committee on the Troubled Families and Early Help programmes of work that encompassed information on improvements, performance and future work planned by the department. The report had been structured to provide information on the Troubled Families Programme and the Early Help Offer and Early Help Hub, and also highlighted the partner agencies work with families with complex needs to ensure more effective, early intervention leading to better, sustainable outcomes for the families.

Following her introduction of the report, the Principal Officer, Health and Wellbeing & Interim Service Manager for Early Help, responded to members' questions and comments on the following issues:

- The Troubled Families task force supported all troubled family members, resulting in a multi-agency approach.
- The "team around the school" model being piloted by the Swindon Academy that supports students and their families.
- The support to be provided to schools regarding troubled families.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Principal Officer, Health and Wellbeing be requested to re-circulate guidance regarding troubled families to schools.

10. Work Programme

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Law and Democratic Services on the results of the work programme consultation and the suggested priorities for the work for the Municipal Year, 2018/19.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the work programme be updated to include items recommended by the Committee.

(3) That the Committee thanks all the contributors who had suggested topics for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme for the Municipal Year, 2018/19.