

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

**WEDNESDAY, 13 MARCH 2019**

PRESENT:- Councillors Barbara Parry (Chair), Steve Allsopp, Alan Bishop, Matthew Courtliff, Fay Howard, Nick Martin, Paul, Roger Smith, Caryl Sydney-Smith and Nadine Watts and Spencer Allen (Swindon Association of Primary Headteachers) and Jacquie Watt (Swindon SEND Families Voice).

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carol Shelley and Steve Colledge (Swindon Association of Secondary Headteachers), Steve Henderson (Equality Advisory Group), Alison Paul (Association of Swindon Special Schools Headteachers) and Carol Willis (Healthwatch).

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

## **35. 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 in respect of Agenda item 39 (Children's Performance Summary) on the grounds of her employment by the Ridgeway School.

Councillor Matthew Courtliff made a personal, non-prejudicial declaration of interest to Agenda item 39 (Children's Performance Summary) as his wife was a teacher at Kingsdown School.

## **36. Public Question Time**

No public questions were asked or submitted for this meeting.

## **37. Minutes**

Resolved -That the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2019 be confirmed as a correct record.

## **38. Children's Health, Social Care and Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee sub-group**

The Director of Children Services referred to the discussions held by the sub-group at their meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2019 and advised members of the key challenges and issues addressed.

Resolved – (1) That the minutes of the sub-group's meeting be noted.

(2) That the sub-groups' minutes be included with these minutes.

The Performance Lead, Children Services, submitted a report providing an update on the performance of Swindon Children's Early Help and Social Care services based on the provisional year to date position at the end of December 2018. The report captured the key headlines from the most recent performance dataset and provided additional service contexts and aspects of performance information which should be considered when reflecting on the overall direction of travel for Quarter 3 of 2018/19. The Performance Manager drew particular attention to the reasons for the reduction in the number of Children in Need and on Child Protection plans since the last quarter and referred to the review undertaken to determine the reason for the increase in re-referral rates from the previous quarter.

In response to challenges and questions by Members, the following information was provided:

- a) The successful work being undertaken by health visitors in seeing children under reception age, with visits at their highest since 2017/18 was noted.
- b) As a result of the increase in additional social worker capacity and the focused improvement work across social care and early help, the number of Children in Need requiring a social worker but not subject of a Child Protection plan or Looked after, had decreased.
- c) The Local Safeguarding Board would be publishing the Serious Case Review (SCR Q) report once all court proceedings had been concluded.
- d) The successful recruitment of ten staff including Health Visitors, Early Years Practitioners and Staff Nurses for the Healthy Child Programme has helped stabilise the staffing position, and increase capacity in the health visiting team. This will enable the detailed risk assessment to be reviewed to continue to capacity is targeted according to need and prioritise.
- e) In collaboration with schools, pupils missing education are quickly identified and arrangements implemented to help them return to education.
- f) The reasons for school exclusions and the actions taken by schools, in collaboration with Children's Services to address this. This includes support by the Fair Access Panel to ensure pupils' re-integration into schools.
- g) The difference in terminology between contacts and referrals was explained and effective partnership working between the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and partner agencies was noted.
- h) The spread of work undertaken with the Housing Department to identify, procure and commission residential placements to meet children's specific needs was discussed and information on current placements presented.
- i) The Board recognised the energy put into the foster carer recruitment drive had resulted in the recruitment of fifteen foster parents, with twelve currently going through the Foster Care Panel process.
- j) The link between the completion of statutory assessments and the number of compliments and complaints received was explained.
- k) The impact of tailored support being provided by the Support in Employment team together with the Care leavers team for those not in education, employment or training was discussed. It was noted that Ofsted commented favourably on this during the recent focused visit.
- l) The success of the apprenticeship scheme where an increase in care leavers was successful in gaining employment is part of the initiative.
- m) The 2019/20 increase in budget allocated to Children's services would enable the department, together with its partners, to deliver its priorities.

- n) The actions and outcomes of Practice Management to determine effectiveness of services in safeguarding children.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Performance Manager be requested to circulate the following information:

- a) The current number of children under reception age visited by Health Visitors as compared to the last quarter figures.
- b) A link to the Serious Case Review by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board to be circulated after it was published.
- c) The number of visits undertaken by health visitors covering new born to twelve month old babies.
- d) The number of completed Education and Health Care Plans.

3) That the following items be added to the work programme for the next Municipal year:

- a) Healthy Child Programme.
  - b) The re-launch of the Early Help Strategy to monitor outcomes.
- 4) That the Performance Manager be requested to include the following information in her next report to the Committee:
- a) An analysis of re-referrals to determine if support and interventions were appropriate and sustainable.
  - b) The work being undertaken on the serious case reviews to prevent escalation.

#### **40.**

#### **Local Area SEND Inspection**

The Head of Education submitted a report updating the Committee on the outcomes of the Local Area Inspection of SEND (Special Education Needs and Disabilities) that took place between 19<sup>th</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018 and gave a presentation (attached to minutes) highlighting the key outcomes and recommendations of the inspection. He advised that a) Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) attended to judge the effectiveness of the local provision in implementing the disability and special educational needs reforms as set out in the Children and Families Act 2014, b) they were focusing on how well the various partners in Swindon identified, assessed and provided for the needs of children and young people; c) a written statement of action was reviewed by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector and that, d) with Swindon Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), the Department had until 14<sup>th</sup> April 2019 to respond to the key areas of weakness identified and submit the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) to Ofsted who will be returning after eighteen months to review progress, in October 2020.

Following the presentation, the Head of Education, responded to the members' questions and comments in respect of the following matters:

- The success of the sunflower lanyards launch at Great Western Hospital where children with hidden disabilities wearing the sunflower lanyards were immediately visible to staff.
- The pathways available for children and young people were being reviewed with the CCG to ensure better provision of service. This review was being undertaken over the next eighteen months.
- Due to the CCG's difficulty in recruiting consultant paediatricians to Swindon, an interim designated medical officer had been recruited to undertake some of the work.
- The recruitment of healthcare staff was a national issue and Swindon's successful national recruitment drive had been undertaken in January 2019.

- Experienced interim staff recently recruited in the SENAT team to support officers in the Department to meet statutory duties.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Head of Education be requested to submit a dashboard and performance report highlighting successes and challenges in implementing the written statement of action to a future meeting of the Committee.

(3) That the Head of Education be requested to circulate:

- a) a copy of the presentation.
- b) a copy of the written statement of action.

#### **41. Report on work of Youth Engagement Service, U-Turn Substance Misuse Service and Youth Offending Team**

The Director of Children Services submitted a report from the Youth Offending Team, Youth Engagement and U-Turn, to give greater insight into the work they do, how they work together and the outcomes they achieve both individually and collaboratively. The Service Manager, Restorative Youth Services, introduced the report and advised that the services worked in collaboration with social care services to achieve positive outcomes. He advised that the data presented in the report outlined the characteristics of children and young people they work with, the effectiveness of resources and practices utilised and how the various geographical areas across the Borough were supported.

In response to challenge and questions by Members, the following information was provided:

- a) The spread of work undertaken by services included a) provision of advice and guidance to parents of young people using drugs, b) pre-meetings with children and young people in a supportive environment to build up confidence and build up a relationship, c) participating in school assemblies, d) supporting local groups in raising awareness of the impact of drug taking, and e) with commissioner's support, undertake social services work including cognitive behavioural therapy.
- b) The distribution of resources are configured to target criminal exploitation in specific areas. This included using the expertise of the Community Safety Partnership Board and Local Safeguarding Childrens Board Members.
- c) The family background of the number of young people being supported by the Youth Engagement team, was discussed and patterns of need identified.
- d) The strong working relationship with the Police services, particularly with police community support officers (PCSO) was noted. Through the support of the Youth Engagement Team, the community was now able to benefit from PCSOs coaching and mentoring young people.
- e) Members challenged the processes undertaken by the departments to ensure out of reach and isolated young people were identified and helped.
- f) Clarification was sought on how funding was allocated. The Committee was advised that a feasibility study was being undertaken to amalgamate services to create a new Family Intervention and Support Service (FISS) ensuring that work was streamlined to the benefit of young people in Swindon.

Resolved – (1) That the report be noted.

(2) That the Service Manager, Restorative Youth Services be requested to circulate data on the number of young people supported by the Youth Engagement team as compared to previous years' figures.

**42.**

**Work Programme**

The Committee considered a report by the Interim Director of Law 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.