

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 20 September 2012

PRESENT:

Councillor Bowie, in the Chair.

Councillor Sam Leaves, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Beer, Browne, Sam Davey, Jordan, Mrs Nicholson, Rennie, Singh, Kate Taylor and Tuohy.

Apologies for absence: Councillor Stark and Alderman Purnell.

Also in attendance: Councillor Williams – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Maggie Carter – Assistant Director for Learner and Family Support, Julie Roantree – Transport and Allowances Officer, Michelle Thomas, Operations Director and Dan O'Toole, Finance Director from Plymouth Community Healthcare, Jayne Gorton – Senior Organisation, Access & Services to Schools Manager and Amelia Boulter – Democratic Support Officer.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 11.30 am.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

21. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, the following declarations of interest were made, as follows –

Name	Minute	Reason	Interest
Councillor Mrs Beer	Minute 25 – Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy	Chair of Plumtree Children Centre	Personal
Councillor Sam Leaves	Minute 26 – Special Educational Needs (SEN) Transport	Husband Councillor Martin Leaves is a taxi driver.	Personal.

22. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 July 2012 were approved as a correct record.

23. CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS

There were no chair's urgent business.

24. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

It was reported that tracking resolution were either progressing, completed or covered later in the agenda.

Regarding Parent Governor Representatives, it was reported that the election process was underway and three parent governors had put themselves forward.

Regarding Young Person Representative, Matthew Currie had resigned from the panel. Discussions were taking place with the youth service to find a replacement to sit on the panel.

25. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY/FUNDING**

It was reported that following a discussion between Councillors Mrs Aspinall, Bowie, Williams and Maggie Carter, Interim Assistant Director for Learner and Family Support a decision was made to withdraw the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy at this stage. The strategy would be brought back to the panel at a future meeting.

Maggie Carter, Interim Assistant Director, Learner and Family Support gave an update to the panel on Special Educational Needs (SEN) Performance against national indicator 103. It was reported that –

- a. the process for completing a statement for a child was a complex and bureaucratic process. It requires information to be collected on the child and family to ascertain the educational needs of the child;
- b. it was crucial for the family to be involved in the assessment process. By working with the family it ensured that a statement was produced that the family would feel comfortable with;
- c. there was a statutory timescale for a statement to be completed and there were issues with staffing as well as delays in receiving professional advice from health colleagues;
- d. it was better to reach a negotiated agreement with the family which meant that cases going before an SEN Tribunal were low;
- e. health colleagues were now attending multi-agency meetings.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- f. the school would review the statement on an annual basis. The statement would be rewritten if a child came from another local authority;

- g. if the school felt a child needed a statement then they can apply for a statutory assessment to be undertaken. If a parent disagrees they can meet with the Parent Support Adviser (PSA) or meet a member of the team for support and advice;
- h. a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) would be a key point of contact for parents for support as well Parent Support Advisers and the Educational Psychology Team. They would provide the family the support throughout the statutory assessment and ensure the right resolution was agreed;
- i. roughly 75 per cent of schools employed a PSA either wholly as a PSA or amalgamated with another role;
- j. the parent would be asked to contribute information on their child's needs and they have to respond within a set period of time. A PSA would be available to help them make their submission. If they don't provide the information then a further reminder letter would be sent. This would not delay the process for the child as information was received from other professionals;
- k. SENCO and the Parent Partnership would help and support parents that were literate and assist with the completing of any forms;
- l. children in early years would be identified by the health visitor. Early years settings have the equivalent of a SENCO and if a young child had significant needs they would already be receiving an assessment;
- m. timely access to reports was important. A senior medical officer now sits on the single multi agency panel and this had made a significant difference in gaining access records.

Agreed that –

- 1. Special Educational Needs (SEN) Strategy to be brought back to a future panel meeting;
- 2. figures on the current number of Parent Support Adviser (PSA's) within Plymouth schools to be emailed to panel members.

26. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRANSPORT**

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- a. a child that previously attended residential education but was now attending a mainstream school would now require transport;
- b. if a child had autism or behavioural difficulties they would require space around them which meant 2 people would be needed to transport that child to school;

- c. the level of need to assist children and young people to school was reviewed on a continual basis;
- d. bursaries were administered by John Bale, 14 – 19 Team to all schools in the city;
- e. children would either be re-assessed in YR10 and YR11 or dependent on provision would be assessed on a more regular basis. They were currently working to review the assessment process to be included as part of the SEN statement. Reviews would then take place on an annual basis;
- f. they were looking to actively encourage where possible for young people to travel independently;
- g. families that had specially made vehicles could be paid an allowance to transport their child to school.

Agreed that –

- 1. a briefing on bursary payments to be brought back to the panel in November.
- 2. a briefing paper on the number of children and young people that are transported to school to be emailed to panel members.
- 3. an invitation to the Travel Summit taking place in October to be sent to panel members.

27. **CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH TASK AND FINISH UPDATE**

Michelle Thomas and Dan O'Toole from Plymouth Community Healthcare gave an update to the panel. It was reported that –

- a. their aim was to see young people within 18 weeks. Young people were being seen more promptly within an average of 8 weeks of being referred;
- b. there were a number of reasons why young people were seen later such as non-attendance at appointments;
- c. the waiting time starts as soon as the referral was received. Information received was reviewed and if the information was inadequate then would request more information to ensure that the right treatment;
- d. they were looking at reducing the number of missed appointments by employing a choosing Book Scheme which allows the patient to book an appointment with the specialist when seeing the GP.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that -

- e. the common assessment framework (CAF) process requires parental consent which then gives consent to share information relating to the young person with all agencies;
- f. the current access routes to CAMHs services was complicated and were looking to give families a more coherent access route and to have a more joined up service;
- g. mental health issues can be linked to exam stress and a lot of research had been undertaken on the links.

Agreed that the panel receive a further update on CAMHs from Service Managers which incorporate information on links to exam stress.

28. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The panel noted the work programme.

Agreed that Primary and Secondary School Attainment to be deferred to January, to allow for the panel to receive a fuller report on the results achieved.

29. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.