

# Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 6 January 2011

## PRESENT:

Councillor Wildy, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Stephens, Vice Chair.

Councillors Browne, Mrs Foster, Haydon, Mrs Nicholson, Roberts and Tuohy.

Co-opted Representatives: Jenny Evans, Kerry Whittlesea and Alderman Pauline Purnell.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Delbridge and Stark and Mr Kevin Willis.

Also in attendance: Claire Oatway – Head of Performance and Quality, Mary Brimson – Head of Service Young People in Care, Maggie Carter – Assistant Director Learner and Family Support, Jayne Gorton – School Organisation and Pupil Access Manager, John Searson – Principle Adviser 0 – 19 Achievement, Heather Ogburn – Primary Adviser, Paul O’Sullivan – Director of Joint Commissioning NHS Plymouth, Cate Simmons – Interim Director of Operations NHS Plymouth.

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 1.05 pm.

*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.*

## 59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Name		Minute	Reason	Interest
Councillor Foster	Mrs	Minute 64 and 65	Adoption Panel Member	Personal

## 60. MINUTES

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

## 61. CHAIR’S URGENT BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed Alderman Pauline Purnell as co-opted representative to the Panel.

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

Chair gave feedback from the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to the Panel. It was reported that –

- (a) all actions from the previous Panel meeting were approved;
- (b) Budget Scrutiny is taking place on 12 and 17 January 2011.

63. **QUARTERLY SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Chair handed out to Panel members an amendment to the Quarterly Scrutiny Report. The Quarterly Scrutiny Report was agreed subject to the following changes:

- (a) photos of Panel members to be included in the report;
- (b) a section to be included in the report, 'could we do better'. This section to include the amendments handed out to Panel members. The text in the amendment was unanimously agreed. This section also to include the need to develop clear protocols and workstreams with the Children & Young People's Trust;
- (c) changes to be made to the attendance section of the report to more accurately reflect Panel members attendance at meetings.

64. **OFSTED ANNUAL PERFORMANCE LETTER**

The Chair thanked to the previous Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Chair and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People for this achievement.

Agreed that a report be given to the Panel at the next meeting on Pupil Referral Units.

(Order of the agenda moved to facilitate good management of the meeting).

(Councillor Mrs Foster declared a personal interest in the above item).

65. **BUDGET UPDATE**

Mary Brimson, Head of Service Young People in Care gave an update on Independent Foster Placement. It was reported that –

- (a) payment for skills introduced to in-house foster carers to enable more in-house fostering provision;
- (b) a number of strategies were set-up and a resource panel meet regularly to look at alternative ways of providing care;

- (c) reviews take place on all current independent placements to see if care could be brought back in-house.

In response to questions raised, it was reported that –

- (d) £807 is the average weekly cost for independent provision and the average weekly cost of in-house fostering is £200;
- (e) the children that are placed in independent provision have behavioural problems or a complex disability. All options are carefully assessed before a placement is made;
- (f) the commissioning team explores and negotiates the cost with providers, the agreement on placing a child is made by the Assistant Director Children's Social Care and a preferred list of providers used;
- (g) a peninsula wide commissioning process determines the cost of provision across the south west. The peninsular wide commissioning team constantly review the providers looking at value for money, standard of service provider etc;
- (h) the needs of the child are matched with what the residential provider can provide. Social workers regularly visits the establishment to ensure the needs of the child are met;
- (i) placements are not long term and would address the immediate needs of the child. The provider would be able to stabilise the child and address some of the problems to enable the child to move back to in-house provision;
- (j) payment for skills introduced in 2009 to foster carers dealing with children with very complex needs. A recent recruitment campaign proved disappointing and there is a national shortage of foster carers across the country.

Agreed that –

- (1) Independent Foster Placement Costings to be reviewed by the Panel on a regular basis;
- (2) every effort be made to recruit more foster carers. The Chair asked the press for help on this matter.

(Councillor Mrs Foster declared a personal interest in the above item).

66. **SCHOOL TRANSPORT**

Jayne Gorton, School Organisation and Pupil Access Manager updated the Panel on School Transport. It was reported that –

- (a) there has been an increased in the number of passengers requiring assistance with a number of children requiring 1:2 support;
- (b) staffing issues have contributed to the costings;
- (c) ambulances are used to transport children with severe medical needs because they are unable to recruit trained medical staff to escort children by taxi;
- (d) increasing costs for servicing and parts due to the ageing PCC fleet of mini buses.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (e) children that receive free school meals and are in attendance at their nearest school would be provided with transport;
- (f) significant savings would be made on the non- statutory services provided. In terms of future provision there would be no further provision;
- (g) bus companies do have a one zone bus pass and this is a proposal being put forward;
- (h) just over 1000 children receive concessionary fares;
- (i) tender negotiations taking place with procurement for taxis and minibuses;
- (j) greater liaison needed between early years provision and the school transport team. There is a need to look at schooling to minimise the routes.

A minority recommendation made by Councillors Wildy, Haydon and Tuohy that the Concessionary Transport plan regarding removal of concessionary fares from children in receipt of free school meals was rescinded in that this would have a disproportionate affect on low income families. This was not agreed by the whole panel so is a minority recommendation.

Recommended that –

- (1) all proposed actions to be reviewed carefully, prior to implementation;
- (2) a greater deal of liaison required between the early years providers and school transport team;

- (3) the Development Department to ensure that any used mini buses passed onto the school transport team are in good condition, to minimise on-going maintenance costs.

Agreed that –

- (4) costs of sickness absence for school escorts for the past 12 months to be provided to the Panel;
- (5) concessionary transport to be kept under regular review by the Panel.

67. **REPORT ON YOUNG PERSONS ENGAGEMENT WITH SCRUTINY**

The Panel noted the report.

68. **EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY**

Paul O’Sullivan, Director of Joint Commissioning and Cate Simmons, Interim Director of Operations, NHS Plymouth gave an update to the Panel on the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy. It was reported that the strategy encourages healthy development of emotional wellbeing from an early age.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (a) the Children Trust findings of Tellus survey reported that children are unhappy. This clearly is not black and white and varies from child to child;
- (b) children across the UK are the unhappiest in Europe;
- (c) the voluntary and community sector is very much engaged with pulling together a network to help deliver the strategy and key services;
- (d) TaMHS (Targeted Mental Health in Schools) is a national pilot funded for 2 years. TaMHS is an area to be supported;
- (e) CAMHS grant is no longer ringfenced but we need to determine what sum is available how the grant is utilised.
- (f) the Chair thanked Paul O’Sullivan and Cate Simmons for their attendance.

Agreed that the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Strategy be kept under review by the Panel.

69. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS**

Maggie Carter, Assistant Director Learner and Family Support updated the Panel on Special Educational Needs (SEN). It was reported that –

- (a) this is a national indicator we are required to report on;

- (b) in Plymouth time is taken to work with families to get the statement right;
- (c) parents receive support from the Parent Partnership;
- (d) if parents are unhappy with the decision they can take the local authority to a Special Educational Needs and Disability SENDIST tribunal. In Plymouth we have very few because of the approach we use working with parents.

## 70. **TACKLING BULLYING**

Maggie Carter, Assistant Director Learner and Family Support updated the Panel on Tackling Bullying. It was reported that –

- (a) the bullying strategy group on-going work includes specific training targeted to particular groups;
- (b) with regard to cyber bullying advice given to parents such as new phone and change access to computers. Governor's receive very good training on cyber bullying;
- (c) information on tackling bullying is available in a range of formats;
- (d) CAMHS are they linked into the strategy. It is about developing a child's resilience.

Agreed that –

- (1) a copy of the Anti Bullying Toolkit and Strategy to be put into members rooms;
- (2) at least one copy of the Anti Bullying Toolkit to be available in each school and a list of all outlets of where the toolkit is available.

## 71. **KEY STAGE 2 ATTAINMENT**

John Searson, Principal Adviser 0 – 19 Achievement and Heather Ogburn, Primary Adviser gave an update to the Panel on Primary Attainment. The Chair reminded members that this had come to the Panel because of concerns raised from the development session over Key Stage 2 Attainment. It was reported that –

- (a) key stage 1 is a top priority;
- (b) 28% of school boycotted the SATs. This has had an affect on the overall key stage 2 figures;
- (c) neighbourhood trends looked at to whether we are narrowing the gap.

In response to questions raised it was reported that –

- (d) a long term strategy is in place to narrow the gap;
- (e) there is uncertainty of where science sits as it is no longer part of the trio. Science is high on our agenda and the LSP Wise Theme group picking up science and technology as part of the on regeneration of the city;
- (f) every child counts funding runs until the end of the summer term, funding will then be paid direct to the schools. We are working with the schools to prioritise the key educational infrastructure essential for moving into the future.

Agreed that –

- (1) neighbourhood data should be used to ensure that resources were targeted towards areas where attainment was below national average;
- (2) the Panel should receive a regular update on progress and milestones of the long term strategy.

## 72. **UPDATES FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

The Panel noted the update received from the Corporate Parenting Group.

## 73. **COMPLIMENTS, CONCERNS AND COMPLAINTS REPORT**

The Panel noted the Compliments, Concerns and Complaints report. If any Panel member has any questions in relation to this report, please email Amelia Boulter, Democratic Support Officer who will forward questions onto the relevant officer.

## 74. **TASK AND FINISH GROUPS**

- (a) Young Carers in Plymouth

The Chair thanked the panel members that sat on the Young Carers in Plymouth task and finish group.

Agreed that –

- (1) recommendation 12 to include ‘as part of the adult care plan’;
- (2) the Young Carers in Plymouth Report be recommended to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

- (ii) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People in Care

The Panel were informed that the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Young People in Care task and finish group did not take place due to the weather conditions. The Democratic Support Officer would be exploring new dates for January 2011.

75. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel discussed its 2010/11 work programme.

Recommend to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board that the following items be included on the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel work programme:

- (1) Post-16 attainment;
- (2) Pupil Referral Units;
- (3) provisional panel date in April to be moved to March.

76. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.