

Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

9 July 2018

Present: Councillor M Thirlaway (Chair)
Councillors L Bell, P Brooks, J Cassidy, K Clark, C Davis,
J Kirwin, M Madden, A Newman and P Oliver.

Rev. M Vine Church Representative
Mrs M Ord Parent Governor Representative

CES01/07/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S Brockbank and S Phillips.

CES02/07/18 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor S Phillips.

CES03/07/18 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

CES04/07/18 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 March 2018 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CES05/07/18 Work Programme 2018-19

The sub-committee received a report which detailed its proposed work programme for the 2017/18 municipal year.

The sub-committee was informed that the process of establishing the 2018-19 work programme had begun in March 2018 when a press release was issued seeking the views of members of the public as to what services should be the subject of a scrutiny review. Following that the Senior Leadership Team had discussed the overview and scrutiny work programme to identify key policy areas for focus and as a result a list of key plans and strategies has been referred to the Chairs and Deputy Chairs of scrutiny sub-committees for discussion with relevant Cabinet Members. This list included the following plans and strategies that related to the remit of this sub-committee:

- Children and Young People Plan
- Education in North Tyneside
- Employment and Skills Strategy

- Prevention and Early Help
- Anti-social Behaviour Tool Kit (as it relates to young people)

In addition, a senior officer within the Children, Young People and Learning Service identified a range of scrutiny activities for the year ahead and members of the committee were also requested to put their suggestions forward.

As a consequence of this work a draft work programme with a range of scrutiny activities and topics for monitoring for the year ahead had been developed and discussed with the Chair and Deputy Chair and submitted to the sub-committee for approval.

In addition, the Chair and Deputy Chair had agreed that an option for an in-depth investigation by the sub-committee was Collaborative Working and a draft remit was presented with a request for volunteers to serve. The sub group would review the collaborative working practices of the Authority to ensure they were improving outcomes for children and their families with a focus on the most vulnerable and in need. The topic was timely; would allow Members to contribute to new policies and strategies in this area; and provide the opportunity to improve the service available to the borough's children and their families.

Councillors Cassidy, Davis, Kirwin, M Madden, Oliver and O'Shea volunteered to serve on the sub group and it was agreed that the first meeting would not take place until after the summer holidays.

Agreed (1) to approve the proposed work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year; and (2) to establish a sub group to review the collaborative working practices of the Authority to ensure they improved outcomes for children and their families with a focus on the most vulnerable and in need.

CES06/07/18 Children and Young People's Plan 2014-18

The sub-committee received an end of year report on the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan and the process for refreshing the Plan. The Children and Young People's Plan provided the strategic framework for the integrated planning, commissioning and delivery of children's services in order to improve the lives of children and young people in the borough.

The Plan was structured around three priorities which were:

1. Ready for School

- a) A healthy early childhood.
- b) Children are ready to start school.

2. Ready for Work and Life

- a) Narrow the gap in educational outcomes.
- b) Ready for employment.

3. Safe, Supported and Cared For

- a) The most vulnerable children and young people are protected.
- b) Improved outcomes for looked after children.
- c) The right support for children and young people with disabilities and additional needs.

The Policy and Performance Manager attended the meeting to present the report and answer any questions.

The sub-committee's attention was drawn to specific areas from each priority. Under Ready for School, the sub-committee was informed that clear progress was being made with children achieving a "Good Level of Development at Foundation Stage". This had improved every year of the Plan and was in line with the national data. However the percentage of Reception aged children with excess weight remained at 25%, the national rate was 22%. All very overweight children were contacted about the National Child Measurement Programme and recruitment onto the Healthy for Life programme had been successful. In addition, schemes such as Active North Tyneside continued to promote physical activity for children and families.

Under Ready for Work and Life, North Tyneside was performing significantly better than other areas for Key Stage 2 reading, writing, maths and combined RWM at the Expected Level. The Primary team had created an action plan focussed on supporting and challenging schools when there was an area where data was significantly below expectation, or intelligence showed a potential vulnerability. Disadvantaged pupils were broadly in line with emerging national disadvantaged for all subjects, but high aspirations to bring attainment into line with non-disadvantaged were at the heart of the plans. There were now five trained Pupil Premium (PP) reviewers on the school improvement service team and there was a focus on supporting schools to review best practice for PP children. There was also a focus on catching pupils earlier at key transition points so that they were less likely to fall through gaps. Research based interventions in reading, writing and maths continued to support pupils to narrow gaps.

There was a 34% achievement gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers achieving Basics (A* - C in English and Maths) at Key Stage 4. Changes to methodology made direct comparison impossible but it appeared clear that the gap had widened this year. Progress had been made with the numbers of young people in education, training or employment. The percentage had reduced from 4.3% at the start of the Plan to 2.4% last year. The rate of the 16-17 cohort participating in Education and Training continued to improve and faster than the national rate of improvement. 16-17 year olds in North Tyneside participated in work based learning, training, apprenticeships and employment with training to a far greater extent than their national peers but participated in full time education to a lesser extent than the national rate.

Under Safe, Supported and Cared For there had been reductions in the number of young people who were on a Child Protection Plan and who were Looked After. Robust decision making at the Front Door ensured that thresholds were applied appropriately; this was recognised by the awarding of a "Good" grading in the 2017 Ofsted Single Inspection for services to children in need of help and protection.

The Children and Young People's Plan had a four year cycle and the development of the new Plan had been discussed at the Children, Young People and Learning Partnership meeting in March. The Authority's Our North Tyneside Plan was also in the process of being renewed and the Children and Young People's Plan would reflect the priorities for children and young people in the Our North Tyneside Plan and the priorities of the Police and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) as well which included early years, mental health, young carers, keeping children in school and support for vulnerable families. The new Plan would be developed and be presented to the sub-committee.

Members were concerned that the childhood obesity rate was high and stagnant at 25% and enquired as to what schools had adopted the Daily Mile programme which was a social

activity where children ran or jogged, at their own pace, in the fresh air with their class for a full 15 minutes; children run in their school clothes and no special kit or equipment was required making it very easy to implement. As the Policy and Performance Manager was not based in education or public health she was unable to answer the question but assured the sub-committee that she would enquire and provide the response to the sub-committee.

A query was raised with regard to the use of free school meal entitlement as a determining factor as to whether a child was seen as disadvantaged or not as it would not include the working poor and the introduction of universal benefit and the associated changes had reduced the number of families entitled to claim free school meals. It was acknowledged that the changes might have an impact on the figures and the methodology might need to be changed for future plans.

In response to further questions the sub-committee was informed that a key part of the Ready for School priority was that children in Reception were potty trained and out of nappies; it was still happening and families were supported but no studies had taken place into it. The full Plan detailed the steps to be taken to meet all the targets in the Plan, the sub-committee had received information on the progress to meet the targets not how the targets would be met.

Agreed to note (1) the information on the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan 2014-18; and
(2) that the additional information requested above be provided and circulated to the sub-committee.

CES07/07/18 Signs of Safety

At its meeting on 17 July 2017 the sub-committee had received a report which introduced Signs of Safety, a practice model for children in need of a statutory assessment being adopted within North Tyneside Local Authority and partner agencies. The report had provided a basic overview of what Signs of Safety was; how it would be implemented; and the current position in respect of training (minute CES15/07/17). The sub-committee had then received an update at its meeting on 20 November 2017 which included Members undertaking an exercise to help them understand how practitioners used the model (minute CES35/11/17).

The Safeguarding Manager attended this meeting to provide Members with a further update on the progress in implementing Signs of Safety and also to provide new members of the sub-committee the opportunity to learn about the model.

The sub-committee was informed that on 8 June 2018 members of the Authority's Signs of Safety Delivery Group had met with the designated Signs of Safety Consultant to review the implementation of the model. Key messages from the review included:

- Strong, committed and visible leadership must continue and was of vital importance.
- The contribution of Practice Leads (workers across services with additional training in modelling Signs of Safety in practice) needed to be strengthened.
- In order to consolidate the progress made the Authority should consider 'slowing down' the range of implementation activities.
- Signs of Safety Forms on Liquidlogic needed to be simplified and refined to ensure that practitioners had confidence in the model.

On 9 and 10 May 2018, Ofsted undertook a Focused Visit (Brief Inspection) of the Front Door arrangements of the Authority for responding to safeguarding concerns in relation to children and young people and commended the implementation of Signs of Safety, commenting that it was one of the strongest implementations that they had encountered.

Locality Teams now hosted weekly Group Supervision sessions in which 'stuck' Early Help cases could be brought and discussed using the Signs of Safety model. Over 40 Practice Leads attended a Signs of Safety facilitated Workshop on 26 June 2018 where the role and expectations of these additionally trained practitioners was explored including how they could model Signs of Safety in practice. Additional sessions would run throughout the year.

Three experienced Signs of Safety Practice Leads from the Authority attended a four-day boot camp to understand the philosophy, framework and skills of Family Finding practice. The officers learned and practiced the skills of Family Finding, developed a sense of confidence in their use of the skills and gained the understanding that Family Finding for most children, young people and families could be completed in a far shorter period than was commonly thought.

In order to support Signs of Safety in practice, the Authority procured Signs of Safety approved Forms for use on its new, state-of-art case management system, Liquidlogic. As early adopters a number of glitches and teething problems had been identified and reported to Liquidlogic and Signs of Safety, these issues would be addressed and resolved in partnership with the Authority.

Briefing sessions for agency partners would take place over the next six months. The one and a half hour sessions would be open to everyone working directly or indirectly with children, young people and families within North Tyneside and would help develop an awareness of Signs of Safety.

It was noted that the Authority considered it important to maintain the momentum behind the implementation and to continue use the model language and not slip into old ways of working whilst taking into account the advice from the Signs of Safety Consultant; feedback from families had been positive with one reporting that they had felt better supported and listened to than previously.

In response to questions it was clarified that the service had identified key groups to attend the briefing sessions which included legal advisors instructed by families and representatives from CAF/CASS (Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service) and that the practice model enabled a more effective working relationship with TyneGateway rather than conflicting with it. Work was ongoing with practice leads to strengthen contingency arrangements, known as the bottom line, after they had been criticised by Ofsted as often being confused and requiring clarity around expectations for families.

Agreed to note the information presented to the sub-committee on the Signs of Safety Practice Model.

CES08/07/18 Child Sexual Exploitation update

The sub-committee was provided with its regular update on the work being undertaken to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE) in North Tyneside. The report provided information relating to what work was being undertaken across the Authority and with partners since its last update in March 2018.

North Tyneside continued to second a social worker to the Sanctuary project and since March they had worked directly with a number of young people, given CSE advice to Social Workers, supported a student for a 30 day social work degree placement, developed resources for practitioners to use and submitted a proposal to deliver a presentation of the work undertaken by Sanctuary Project team at the Regional Children's Social Work Conference.

The Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Children's Services had undertaken a review of the CSE risk assessment tool together with the CSE/ Missing lead for Northumbria Police and the Sanctuary social worker with a view to adopting the CSE risk assessment tool used regionally by Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead to have consistency with Northumbria Police and neighbouring local authorities. The proposal to adopt the revised risk assessment tool would be taken to the Sexual Exploitation sub group meeting in July for consideration and approval for it to be ratified at the following North Tyneside Safeguarding Children's Board (NTSCB).

The Front Door Service Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and the Social Work Assessment teams had been subject to a two day Focused Visit inspection by Ofsted on 9 and 10 May 2018. In relation to CSE the Inspectors said:

"Child sexual exploitation is identified effectively. The child sexual exploitation screening tool is used in a timely way to evaluate levels of risk. The front door benefits from the co-location of the child sexual exploitation worker from Operation Sanctuary... who offers immediate advice and guidance to support assessment and decision-making and offers direct work with young people. A range of tools support creative and effective engagement with young people."

In May 2018 the face-to-face sexual exploitation briefings had been replaced with e-learning and since then 56 people had completed the training and 101 taxi drivers had completed their required training.

Officers had attended the NTSCB Annual Conference which had a focus on the impact of trauma on children and young people, including trauma linked to neglect and sexual exploitation.

A workforce development officer had attended a Training the Trainers session with the aim of adding to the NTSCB training programme a course to enable its delegates to understand the impact of CSE on families, the benefits of a child and family centred approach to CSE, and the importance of including parents and carers as partners in tackling CSE. This work was being supported by PACE (Parents against child sexual exploitation)

In response to questions it was clarified that work had been done and would continue to be done with schools to help teachers and young people identify signs of sexual exploitation and to know who to ask for help; information on how third sector organisations respond to the issue of child sexual exploitation would be sought and provided to members.

Agreed to note the updated information on the work being undertaken to raise awareness of, and protect children from, sexual exploitation and the implementation of the recommendations from the sub-committee's Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Group.

CES09/07/18 Familial Sexual Abuse

In January 2018 Ofsted had introduced 'ILACS' (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) to replace the 'SIF' (Single Inspection Framework) inspection process by which services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers would be inspected. As part of the framework Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI) would continue initially focusing on two key areas, CSE and Domestic Abuse, followed by a focus on familial sexual abuse in September. In light of this the sub-committee had requested information on the subject of familial sexual abuse and the support available in the Borough for children, young people and their families.

The sub-committee was informed that the statutory guidance in relation to familial sexual abuse was *Working Together* which provided the definition of sexual abuse used by the Authority. Familial sexual abuse was a difficult and challenging subject but it was an area of work with which the Authority must engage under its statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the Borough. Familial sexual abuse was rare and when it did occur the Authority responded to safeguard the child working closely with Police and other agency colleagues. Support was provided to both survivors and perpetrators of abuse.

The report provided information on the difference between familial sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation (CSE); prevalence in North Tyneside (0.7% of children subject to a Child Protection Plan were subject to a Plan because the primary concern was sexual abuse and 6.9% of all children who became subject of an assessment for whatever reason had sexual abuse identified as a factor); the safeguarding response from the Authority and its partners; the support available to survivors and what work was undertaken with perpetrators to reduce the risk of them offending.

The sub-committee was reminded that if they were worried that they knew a child who may be suffering or likely to suffer familial sexual abuse to contact the North Tyneside Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub on Tel: 0345 2000109.

In response to questions it was confirmed that research still indicated that the majority of sexual abuse was perpetrated by people known to the family and this was one of the factors which contributed to the veil of silence which made it difficult for victims to come forward; victims could attend the offered support services for as often and as long as they needed; that adults reporting historical abuse normally disclosed to their GP and the GP referred them to the appropriate services for support; that Police were getting better at sharing information about relevant previous convictions if asked about an individual who had become involved in a family with children; and every effort was made to keep the family support consistent so that the victim only had to tell their story the minimum number of times, for example keeping the same social worker.

Agreed to note the information on the work being undertaken to prevent familial sexual abuse and the support available to children, young people and their families.

CES10/07/18 Transition from Children to Adult Services Sub Group Report

The sub-committee was informed that on 25 June 2018 Cabinet had agreed its response to the recommendations from the Transition Sub Group. The sub group had been established in January 2017 with the intention of reviewing the transition for young people with special educational needs and/or a disability (SEND) and make any recommendations to improve the process for the young people and their families.

Following discussions with officers from the local authority; parents; representatives from the Clinical Commissioning Group; and after seeking the opinion of young people who had been through the process, the sub-group had made eight recommendations to facilitate and progress improvements to the delivery of the service and the experience for the service users.

The recommendations included producing different assessment forms for young people transitioning to adult services to those used for adults entering adult services; improving communication with families during construction work on accommodation; and promoting and encouraging borough employers to employ young people with SEND.

The report had been submitted to Cabinet on 9 April 2018 (minute CAB162/04/18).

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning had thanked the Sub Group for the report and all of the eleven recommendations had been accepted. An Action Plan had been produced with timescales for when the recommendations would be implemented by (minute CAB09/06/18).

Agreed to note Cabinet's response to the Transition from Children to Adult Services Sub Group's report and receive an update on the implementation of the recommendations in the new year.