

# Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

19 March 2018

Present: Councillor P Oliver (in the Chair)  
Councillors J Cassidy, K Clark, M A Green, K Lee,  
A Newman, M Reynolds and A Waggott-Fairley.  
Rev. M Vine Church Representative  
Mrs M Ord Parent Governor Representative.

## **CES58/03/18 Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Thirlaway and F Weetman.

## **CES59/03/18 Substitute Members**

There were no substitute members reported.

## **CES60/03/18 Declarations of Interest**

In relation to CES63/03/18, SEND Peer Review, Councillor P Oliver declared a non-registerable personal interest as a member of her family received support from the Authority's SEND service.

## **CES61/03/18 Minutes**

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

## **CES62/03/18 North Gosforth Academy**

The sub-committee received a report from the Assistant Director for Education, Learning and Skills on the transition of Seaton Burn College to North Gosforth Academy.

The report detailed the timeline of North Gosforth Academy's conversion from October 2015 when Seaton Burn College was found inadequate by Ofsted until its conversion in January 2018 to North Gosforth Academy; the school's assets; its admissions process and catchment area; the recent increase in exclusions; the financial implications for the Authority; the local authority's responsibilities; and what services would be offered to the Academy.

The sub-committee was informed that when Seaton Burn College converted from a foundation school to an Academy school, the Secretary of State made a Direction requiring the College's land to be transferred from the Learning Trust to Gosforth Federated Academies. Gosforth Federated Academies were the Academy Trust for North Gosforth Academy.

When a school with a deficit such as Seaton Burn joined an Academy Trust of an external

sponsor and opened as a sponsored academy, the deficit remained with the Local Authority. The Authority had worked closely with the school throughout its period of deficit to minimise the impact to the Authority and once the Interim Executive Board was appointed met with a representative on a monthly basis until the conversion took place to discuss a range of matters including finance. At the start of 2017/18 the initial forecast outturn estimate was a deficit of £668,000, the autumn monitoring position did not indicate any change to this. The Authority was required to finalise the deficit position of the school within four months of the transfer taking place and officers were currently working through the details; the finalised position would be communicated to the sub-committee.

Gosforth Academy would be given the opportunity to purchase a full range of service level agreements including School Improvement from the Authority however it was anticipated that some services would be provided through Gosforth Federated Academies such as Human Resources and Finance.

Local authorities had an overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area, regardless of the types of educational settings they attended so should the Authority have a concern about safeguarding arrangements or procedures these concerns would be raised to the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

In response to questions it was clarified that the school had been challenged on its deficit position but a balance had to be struck with the provision of education for the young people at the school; in addition the drop in roll and the loss of its sixth form had contributed to the deficit due to the associated loss of funding. The school's behaviour policy had been changed in January 2017 which had led to an increase in the number of fixed term exclusions.

The sub-committee was assured that the Authority was working well with the Acting Head teacher at North Gosforth Academy and he remained a "member of the family" as the children in the school were North Tyneside children and everyone wanted to ensure the children in that part of the borough got the best possible education. The cross borough working which might be possible as a result of the creation of the North of Tyne Combined Authority had been discussed with Newcastle City Council counterparts.

The Assistant Director for Education, Learning and Skills was thanked by a Wideopen ward councillor for keeping her and her colleagues well informed throughout the whole conversion process and for their continued interest in the school.

It was **agreed** to note the information on North Gosforth Academy.

### **CES63/03/18      SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Peer Review**

A national accountability framework had been established in 2014 to examine whether a local area identified and met the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities aged 0 to 25 years. This meant an inspection would examine the local authority, health commissioners and providers to ensure partners were working together. As part of the work being undertaken to ensure the Authority met the requirements and was ready for the SEND Local Area Inspection a Peer Review had been requested.

The sub-committee received a presentation from the Senior Manager for SEND on the Peer Review of SEND support and services in North Tyneside.

The review took place from 15-17 January 2018 and was conducted by a team comprising people with experience from across the education, care and health sector who had been selected to conduct the review from a pool of officers across the region in a reciprocal arrangement with the support of the Local Government Association. The team for North Tyneside included the Strategic Director for Care, Wellbeing and Learning at Gateshead Council, the Assistant Director for Children's Services from Stockton on Tees Council, health workers and support from Newcastle City Council.

The presentation delivered information on the areas assessed; a summary of its findings for each of the areas; strengths and development; and next steps.

Strengths included:

- a) strong local authority leadership;
- b) good early identification / intervention in the early years;
- c) a high level of commitment from the Authority; and that
- d) the local authority knew itself well.

Areas for development were:

- a) stronger engagement from health and social care;
- b) strategic commissioning to be better informed;
- c) the Local Offer website as it was not accessible or user-friendly;
- d) understanding of Early Help Assessments; and
- e) health data

Nothing suggested for improvement had not already been identified by the Authority and included in the Self-Evaluation Framework but it had sharpened focus for next steps and quick wins and had also provided assurance.

The review had been a positive experience for the Authority as some very complimentary comments had been made by the reviewers and the feedback had enabled learning and preparation for the expected SEND Inspection.

It was noted that the sub-committee had also commented on the limitations of the Local Offer website at its meeting on 20 November 2017 and that no action appeared to have been taken in response to that. The sub-committee was assured that work had been undertaken in the background of the existing site and a new website was ready to be launched.

In response to questions on the problem with the health data it was confirmed that this information belonged to health colleagues and was not as rich as the education and social care data but the Peer Review comments provided the service with a reason to request it be improved to enable global targets and strategic decision making to be evidenced to the Inspectorate if requested.

Clarification was also sought on how parents and carers who did not engage with the Local Offer or the Parent Carer Forum could have a voice. It was acknowledged that the number of parents involved was small and examples of how to widen the involvement of different parent/carers in the SEND Strategic Board were given, including a Facebook poll, posters at surgeries and events for specific issues where parents, officers and service providers attended the same session.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation and attendance at the meeting.

It was **agreed** to note the information on the SEND Peer Review.

## **CES64/03/18 Corporate Parenting**

The sub-committee received a report on the leaving care outcomes for looked after children.

The sub-committee was informed that a looked after child ceased to be looked after when he or she turned 18 years old. On reaching their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, the status of the child changed from being looked after to being a young adult eligible for help and assistance from the local authority. In North Tyneside these young people were identified as 'Care leavers' and had a named Personal Adviser from the Leaving Care team.

The Leaving Care service was staffed by a team manager and six Personal Advisers. The Personal Adviser was introduced to the young person by their 17<sup>th</sup> birthday to allow the development of the relationship over a reasonable period of time, with the Personal Adviser taking case responsibility when the young person was 18 years old and retaining that until they were 21 years. Support would be extended to Care Leavers up until the age of 25 years and currently in North Tyneside care leavers were supported emotionally at any age.

All young people in receipt of Leaving Care support were helped to develop financial management skills. The local authority supported each young person with 'setting up costs' up to a maximum of £3000 to aid them to furnish their home. In addition, and until such time as the young person was in receipt of wages and/or benefits, they were provided with a personal allowance from their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and a plan to develop the skills needed to be able to manage their household finances as they matured.

In North Tyneside all but one of the Care Leavers were in suitable accommodation; the one that was not was as a result of a prison sentence. The accommodation offer to North Tyneside Care Leavers included support to remain in foster placement under the 'Staying Put' scheme which supported the continuation of the Foster Care until the young person was ready to leave home. This was recognised as being in the best interests of many young people and was actively promoted.

For those young people who had been looked after in residential care the Authority had developed a dedicated provision linked to the Children's Homes described as a 'Staying Close' provision. This allowed the continuation of relationships and support for young people as they took steps towards independence. This service was provided at Elm House on the Riverside Centre site and had 6 beds. There was also three supported accommodation services which provided an additional 15 beds to young people who required additional support to develop the skills and confidence required to live independently.

Currently, over 60% of the young people in receipt of Leaving Care services from North Tyneside were in education, employment or training. Young people were supported to remain in education to meet their personal academic goals and 11 of these young people (9.5%) were in higher education.

The sub-committee was reminded that Ofsted judged the experiences and progress of care leavers in North Tyneside to be 'Outstanding'. This grading was achieved when Inspectors found work of the highest quality which was delivering improved outcomes that exceeded expectations.

In response to questions it was clarified that care leavers were exempt from paying Council Tax until they were 25; that a personal advisor would not cut ties if the young person

moved outside of the borough; and that future planning had been undertaken to ensure that the accommodation offer as outlined above was sufficient to meet the number of care leavers in the next few years.

It was **agreed** to note the information on the leaving care outcomes for children who were looked after by the Authority.

## **CES65/03/18          Narrowing the Gap**

The sub-committee received a report from the Assistant Director for Education, Learning and Skills on the work being undertaken to narrow gaps in educational achievement for disadvantaged students.

The report included information on those eligible for Pupil Premium Funding; the use of Pupil Premium Funding; the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in 2017; the monitoring of Pupil Premium spending; and the work being undertaken to reduce the attainment gap between those categorised as disadvantaged and those who were not.

The method used to calculate the gap was the difference between those who were eligible for free school meals and those who were not eligible for free school meals for different measures at early years foundation stage, key stage one, key stage two and key stage 4. The gap in North Tyneside was 13.7%, 20%, 27% and 38% respectively. Whilst these gaps were unacceptable it was a pattern repeated nationally.

The report then detailed the action taken to reduce this gap, which had included the Early Years and School Improvement Service seconding an experienced headteacher for 2 days a week from January 2018 to lead the work on narrowing outcomes for disadvantaged pupils; support and challenge visits to first, primary and middle schools with wide gaps and action plans developed; a headteacher briefing to promote the support available and identify any gaps in provision; and a conference 'Going the Extra Mile' to share best practice from this work stream and the *Keeping Children in School* work stream.

In addition a recently retired senior Inspector has been commissioned to undertake a review of all secondary schools' pupil premium strategies and to share best practice with headteachers and the Early Years and School Improvement Service had appointed a behaviour and attendance adviser in September 2017 who has been providing challenge and support to schools in tackling the attendance issues of disadvantaged pupils. A training programme and a resource pack was also being developed to support school leaders and governors.

It was hoped the above measures would see the gap narrow after the summer 2018 results with the full impact being seen in 2019.

Members sought clarification on whether the data indicated a difference between academies and local authority schools; what steps could be taken to ensure a more holistic approach to ensure each child was appropriately clothed and fed as that would also impact on attainment; and what the impact on the forthcoming changes from government on free school meals would have on the project.

The Assistant Director for Education, Learning and Skills informed Members that this project was closely aligned to the *Keeping Children in School* project and a holistic approach was encouraged. In addition data was being collected within the new Alteryx software programme which was a self-service data system which could prepare, blend, and

analyse data very quickly. The changes to the free school meal provision was a concern but it was too early to know what the implications would be.

It was **agreed** to note the information on the *Narrowing the Gap* workstream.

## **CES66/03/18 Child Sexual Exploitation update**

The Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Children's Services attended the meeting to provide the sub-committee with its regular update on the work being undertaken to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE) in North Tyneside. The report provided information relating to individual cases; training; and what work was being undertaken across the Authority and with partners since its last update in November 2017.

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.

The JTAI process included inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI (Her Majesty's Inspectorate) Constabulary and HMI Probation, plus data analysts and staff from Ofsted. This multi-agency inspection would seek to establish the quality and impact of assessment, planning and decision making in response to notifications and referrals; the partnership response at the point of identification; and the leadership and management of this work (including the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board). The inspection would include a deep dive of a selected number of cases with a focus on children and young people who were at risk of, or who were experiencing sexual exploitation; who were at risk, or experiencing criminal exploitation through association or involvement with gangs; and who had been missing from home, care or education.

A working group had been established to consider how children who were missing from education either by being home educated, excluded or poor school attenders, were seen and were safe.

Another new development included "County Lines" which was the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or "deal lines". It involved child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs used children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs established a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.

County Lines was a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons and the response to tackle it involved the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations. County Lines was being explored in all cases of missing episodes for children and young people and guidance has been posted on the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board's website.

The sub-committee was informed that eight young people were currently identified as high risk of CSE and were monitored through the Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) Panel, this was a multi-agency panel which was chaired by the police and vice

chaired by Children's Social Care. The panel reviewed the risk assessment and the risk reduction plans for the high risk young people.

Unusually one of the young people had been removed to secure accommodation for three months to allow an assessment of the level of risk and interventions to ensure the young person was not exposed to further harm; there was a multi-agency team around the young person being led by the police and social care.

When a case identified as having a risk of CSE was reported through the Front Door Service they were now all assessed through the multi-agency safeguarding hub to gather information from partners and determine the correct level of intervention.

A social worker was still seconded to the Sanctuary Team which gave greater insight into new risk, vulnerabilities and identifying networks and she worked with the 12 highest risk young people in the borough, schools, GPs and foster carers.

In response to questions it was clarified that child marriage was a safeguarding issue; how information was shared with other neighbouring authorities; and what support was available for children who had been victims of CSE.

It was **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.

### **CES67/03/18      Implementation of Recommendations on Elective Home Education**

The sub-committee received a report which updated it on the progress made against the recommendations from the Elective Home Education Sub Group report submitted to Cabinet on 12 June 2017.

The sub-committee was presented with a table setting out the actions Cabinet had agreed to take in response to the recommendations and details of the progress that had been made on their implementation.

Of the seven recommendations only one had yet to be implemented which was recommendation 2: "to establish a notice board page on the ...Council's website to allow parents to share advice and tips in relation to elective home education" which had been expected to be completed by October 2017. The implementation of this recommendation had been delayed due to the volume of work within the Customer Journey/web projects being implemented across the Council and was one of a number of priorities for the web team.

In response to questions it was confirmed that the Council had a statutory duty to ensure all children received a suitable education and had no automatic legal right of access to the home and that parents could choose to home educate their child for as short a time or as long a time as they wished; for example children are enrolled to enable them to take their G.C.S.E.'s or whilst they wait for a place to become available at their preferred school.

It was **agreed** that the work undertaken by the Council and its partners in response to the report and recommendations of the sub-committee be welcomed and noted.