

# **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 4 September 2019**

### **Present:**

Councillor Stone – in the Chair

Councillors Sameem Ali, Hewitson, T Judge, Kilpatrick, Lovecy, Reeves, Reid, Sadler and Wilson

### **Co-opted Voting Members:**

Ms Z Stepan, Parent Governor Representative

### **Co-opted Non Voting Members:**

Mr L Duffy, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools

Julia Stephens-Row, Former Independent Chair of Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB)

Superintendent Rebecca Boyce, Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

Nicola Marsden, Assistant Director, Children's Community Health Services

Jenny Lewis, Head of Health Visiting, Central Locality Area

### **Apologies:**

Councillors Alijah, Cooley and Madeleine Monaghan

Dr W Omara, Parent Governor Representative

Mr A Arogundade, Parent Governor Representative

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

## **CYP/19/32 Minutes**

A Member updated the Committee about the visit which had been arranged to the South Youth Justice Office, as requested at the 17 July meeting. She reported that the Members who had attended the visit had been very impressed and felt that the service had made progress over the last few years. She informed Members that staff listened to the young people and used a range of interventions, with the focus on enabling them to be able to engage effectively with adults and organisations, give them identity and a sense of purpose and get them onto a different pathway. She expressed concern that the caseloads appeared to be quite high for some teams. She also highlighted conversations that had taken place about child criminal exploitation and the need to ensure that those involved in exploiting young people were not able to visit them when they were in custody. She recommended that the Committee visit Wetherby Young Offenders Institute (YOI) and Barton Moss Secure Care Centre.

## **Decisions**

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2019.

2. To arrange a visit for Members to Wetherby Young Offenders Institute (YOI) and Barton Moss Secure Care Centre and to note that the former will take place once the new governor is embedded in their role.

### **CYP/19/33 Annual Report of Manchester Safeguarding Children Board April 2018 - March 2019**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services and Julia Stephens-Row, the former Independent Chair of Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) which provided an overview of the MSCB Annual Report for the period from April 2018 - March 2019. The full report was appended.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background information;
- Business priorities; and
- Future challenges and improvement.

Julia Stephens-Row informed the Committee that the report would be submitted to the Health and Wellbeing Board at the end of October and that the Committee could provide its comments for that meeting.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- That this was a good, comprehensive report;
- To ask whether there had been any prosecutions in Manchester in relation to Female Genital Mutilation (FGM);
- Work to address neglect and child obesity;
- The importance of partnership working, particularly in relation to tackling "county lines" (where vulnerable young people from the city were exploited by criminal gangs to transport and sell drugs in other areas), given the way this crossed borders into other local authority and police areas;
- The importance of consistent, effective training for teachers and other professionals on recognising signs of neglect or other safeguarding concerns; and
- The work of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), who managed allegations against adults who worked with children.

Julia Stephens-Row informed Members that there had only been one successful prosecution for FGM in the country, which had not been in Manchester. She reported that she had attended a conference on FGM where the North West Chief Crown Prosecutor had outlined the challenges in pursuing prosecutions for FGM but that she had been reassured that the Crown Prosecution Service would pursue prosecutions as necessary. She advised Members that, in her view, the key focus of work in this area, was to encourage women and girls to come forward and ensure that they were supported and protected.

Julia Stephens-Row reported that the MSCB had refreshed the Neglect Strategy and

was continuing to fully roll-out the use of the neglect tool, which had already been used in a number of cases. She informed Members about a range of work to address child obesity, primarily lead by the Population Health Team. She advised Members that this included a refresh of the Obesity Strategy which linked into the MSCB's Neglect Strategy. The Strategic Head of Early Help reported that early intervention was the best approach to tackling obesity so, in addition to learning from serious cases, work was taking place to reduce obesity through the Early Help Offer.

Julia Stephens-Row reported that work to address county lines required good links between organisations across the country as young people were being moved across borders. The Strategic Head of Early Help informed Members about the 'Trapped' campaign against child criminal exploitation and outlined some of the work taking place to address this problem through policies, training and complex safeguarding operations. She reported that it had been recognised that young people going missing from home was a significant risk factor so the established processes for dealing with children who went missing from home were now being used to enable early identification and intervention. The Executive Member for Children and Schools recommended that the 'Trapped' video be circulated to Members of the Committee, to which the Chair agreed.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services informed Members about the work of the Education Safeguarding team and how they worked with clusters of schools. He offered to provide further information on this in a future report. The Executive Member for Children and Education Services commented that partnership working and a change of culture were central to a lot of the issues raised during this item and suggested that, when the Committee received future reports on locality working and safeguarding arrangements, officers should include more information on these aspects.

Julia Stephens-Row reported that work had been done to raise the profile of the LADO role, although some organisations were better than others at referring cases. She informed Members that the LADO provided advice to organisations on dealing with allegations and that not all cases progressed to investigations.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools and the Chair thanked Julia Stephens-Row for her work as the Independent Chair of the MSCB.

## **Decisions**

1. To note the publication of the Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) Annual report 2018–2019.
2. To recognise the need to promote the importance of safeguarding of children and young people across the Council and in the services that are commissioned ensuring that safeguarding is at the heart of all that is delivered.
3. To request that the 'Trapped' video be circulated to Members of the Committee.

4. To request that an extract of the minutes for this item be provided to the Health and Wellbeing Board when they discuss this report.

### **CYP/19/34 Child Sexual Exploitation**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided the context to the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and an update on progress that had been made against areas identified for further development.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- Background information, including the independent assurance exercise, commissioned by the Greater Manchester Mayor, to explore the current and future delivery models across the region in response to CSE, which had yet to publish its findings;
- Findings of the LGA Peer Challenge; and
- Progress since and in response to LGA Peer Challenge findings.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- That the publication of the Greater Manchester findings on CSE had been delayed and how this was impacting on the work;
- Whether the practices referred to in the report under section 5 were working well; and
- Record-keeping, including how the implementation of the new case management system Liquid Logic was progressing.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services informed the Committee that it was not yet known when the Greater Manchester report would be published. He advised that this was a retrospective review of how CSE had been dealt with 15 years ago; however, regardless of when this was published, the Council, GMP and partner agencies would continue to work together to address current CSE. He outlined how current practice on CSE was reviewed and challenged through multi-agency safeguarding audits via MSCB, through Operation Phoenix peer support and challenge and through ad hoc peer challenges, such as the recent LGA Peer Challenge. He also recognised the role of scrutiny in challenging the work on CSE.

The Strategic Head of Early Help informed Members that the introduction of the Achieving Change Together Model and Clinical Psychology Case Formulation had improved understanding of young people, their vulnerabilities and resilience and different areas of their lives. She reported that the Peer Challenge findings had emphasised the importance of the balance between building relationships with young people and ensuring effective plans were put in place and that mechanisms such as My Safety Planning meetings were being used to achieve this.

Superintendent Rebecca Boyce from GMP informed Members about an ongoing investigation into CSE involving multiple offenders and multiple victims, reporting that this had recently resulted in the successful prosecution of four offenders. She

reported that this had been achieved through multi-agency working via the Complex Safeguarding Hub. The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services reported that practice was now intelligence-led rather than complaint-led, which had been the historical approach. He suggested that Members visit the Complex Safeguarding Hub, to which the Chair agreed.

The Strategic Director of Children and Education Services informed Members that the implementation of Liquid Logic had been successful but that moving to a new system did present some challenges which the Deputy Director of Children's Services was working with staff to resolve. He advised the Committee that this would have some impact on data reporting over the next few months and that Ofsted had been informed of this. He suggested that the Committee receive a report on this at its next meeting.

## **Decisions**

1. To receive a further update report, including the impact of the identified actions within the annual Complex Safeguarding Report 2019/20.
2. To request that a visit to the Complex Safeguarding Hub be arranged for Committee Members.

## **CYP/19/35 Early Years Service**

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director of Children and Education Services which provided an overview of the Early Years Offer in the city and the outcomes from the Early Years Delivery Model (EYDM) and the Healthy Child Programme.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Strategic Priorities and Governance Arrangements;
- The EYDM;
- The Use of the Ages and Stages Questionnaire 3 (ASQ3) in the Model;
- The Sure Start Core Purpose;
- The Healthy Child Programme;
- Health Visitor pressures impacting on performance;
- ASQ3 Developmental Review outcomes;
- Communication and Language Pathway;
- Support for parenting; and
- Summary of impact.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- The importance of Early Years for a child's brain development and school readiness;
- What progress was being made in recruiting to Health Visitor roles, following the additional funding secured from Manchester Health and Care

Commissioning (MHCC) to provide some additional Health Visitor training places;

- The uptake of the offer of the free childcare places for two and three-year-olds; and
- Concern about the number of children with a delay in the development of their language skills.

Nicola Marsden, Assistant Director of Children's Community Health Services, reported that stages one to five of the eight-stage delivery model had been rolled out and that the contacts made were broadly in line with the national picture. She outlined the contacts made with and support available to mothers and their children under the age of five. She advised Members that recruiting Health Visitors was more of an issue than funding for posts.

Jenny Lewis and the Strategic Lead (Children and Young People's Population Health) outlined the work to recruit to Health Visitor posts and investment in Health Visitor training. The Strategic Lead reported that, to become a Health Visitor, candidates needed to be a qualified nurse and then undertake a one-year training programme. She reported that increasing the starting salary for trainees had led to an increase in high quality applicants as nurses had previously been deterred from undertaking the training as it had meant taking a pay cut.

The Early Years Strategic Lead reported that a recent childcare sufficiency audit had shown that there were enough childcare places across the city as a whole but that some areas had a small shortfall and that the Council was working with providers and agencies to address this. She informed Members that there had been a national decrease in the take-up of the two-year-old childcare offer, primarily due to changes in the benefit system, but that in Manchester the take-up of places was at 70%. She advised Members that take-up of the three-year-old offer was at 96% in Manchester.

The Strategic Head of Early Help informed Members that targeted work was taking place to help parents to develop their child's language skills. Nicola Marsden reported that children who required additional support in speech and language development were identified at the two-year-old review and were referred to commissioned services.

## **Decisions**

1. To request a report in respect of the outcome and findings from the Local Government Association Peer Challenge in the Early Years and the Quality Assurance arrangements.
2. To support the Health Visitor requirement for additional staffing and for the pay for training to become a Health Visitor to be commensurate with other nursing roles.
3. To request that further information on take-up of the two-year-old offer be incorporated into a future report.

4. To note that the Ofsted Subgroup would also be considering reports and carrying out visits in relation to Early Years, and that this included all Early Years settings, including childminders.

#### **CYP/19/36 Update on National School Absence 2017/18 and Autumn Term 2018/19, Manchester's Provisional Absence Data for HT1-5 2018/19 and School Attendance Statutory Action**

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which provided an update on school absence for the academic year 2017/18 comparing Manchester's school absence data with national data. It also reported on the national absence data for the autumn term 2018/19 for primary and secondary schools and Manchester's provisional school absence data for half terms one to five in 2018/19.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- Overall absence data;
- Persistent absence data;
- Absence data for pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND);
- Absence data broken down by other pupil characteristics;
- School attendance statutory action; and
- Key priorities.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome this report and recognise the hard work of all involved in achieving these figures, which compared favourably with other Greater Manchester authorities, statistical neighbours and the national average;
- To thank Tracey Dunn, Lead for School Attendance and Education Other than at School (EOTAS), who was leaving the Council, for her work in this area;
- How was the education of children recorded as being home educated monitored; and
- Concern that rewards for good attendance could disadvantage pupils with low attendance due to medical conditions.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools informed Members of the role the Early Help Hubs were playing in helping families to improve school attendance. The Lead for School Attendance and EOTAS reported that partnership working between the School Attendance Team and the Early Help Hubs had significantly reduced the number of parents being prosecuted over their child's attendance, while achieving improvements in their attendance.

The Head of Schools Quality Assurance and Strategic Lead SEND reported that the Council had always had a robust approach to ensuring that children in Elective Home Education (EHE) were safe and receiving a suitable education. She advised Members that the national government had recently strengthened its stance and that the Council was reviewing its policy in light of the government's new guidance.

The Lead for School Attendance and EOTAS informed the Committee that schools were encouraged to recognise pupils who had made progress in improving their attendance, not just those who had 100% attendance.

### **Decision**

To request that the Committee receive a report on Elective Home Education (EHE) once the Council's policy has been updated in light of the government's guidance.

### **CYP/19/37 Overview Report**

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

### **Decision**

To note the report and agree the work programme.