

Lancashire County Council

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 6th December, 2017 at 2.00 pm
in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Andrea Kay (Chair)

County Councillors

N Hennessy	A Gardiner
I Brown	D Howarth
A Cheetham	H Khan
S Clarke	J Rear
B Dawson	D T Smith

Co-opted members

Councillor Stella Brunskill, Children's Partnership
Board - Hyndburn, Ribble Valley, Rossendale

County Councillors Stephen Clarke and Bernard Dawson replaced County Councillors Joe Cooney and Loraine Cox respectively.

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from County Councillor Matthew Tomlinson, Councillor Gail Goodman, Councillor Gail Goodman, Councillor Zara Khan, Councillor John Harbour and the Youth Representative.

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

None were disclosed.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 18 October 2017

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on the 18 October be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Secure Accommodation

The Chair welcomed Sally Allen, Head of Safeguarding. Inspection and Audit and Andy Smith, Safeguarding Manager, to the meeting.

The report presented provided an overview in relation to secure accommodation, including the criteria and reasons why children might require placement in a secure children's home. It also highlighted some of the challenges when placing a child in secure accommodation and how it was vital to meet the needs of these children and young people.

Members stated that partnership working with other health providers was important in relation to CAMHS. It was confirmed that health partners were a key partner and instrumental in meeting the needs of the young people who were worked with.

The Safeguarding Team acknowledged the challenge of identifying the availability of placements and that there was a national shortage of beds. The Committee was informed that a paper was going to Cabinet around residential placements and whether Lancashire should have its own secure accommodation unit.

Forensic psychological testing for young people was put forward for recommendation by the Committee. Members also requested more information on forensic psychological assessments.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report presented be noted.
- ii. Forensic psychological testing be available to every young person entering secured accommodation as required.
- iii. A request be made to Cabinet to further investigate the possibility of secure accommodation in Lancashire.

5. Recruitment and Retention - Children's Social Care

The Chair welcomed Tracy Poole-Nandy, Head of Service Children's Social Care – Central; and Aasiyah Gurjee, Social Worker, to the meeting.

The report presented stated that the Retention and Recruitment Strategy within Children's Social Care had been implemented to proactively recruit within this field motivated, and where possible experienced social workers to work across the areas of childcare social work in Lancashire. There had been a number of improvements made in the way Lancashire now recruit by means of recruitment events across the county outside of ordinary working hours to enable those in employment to attend and learn about the positive opportunities available.

Members were informed that to ensure that social work staff were adequately supported as part of their induction, the service had now developed a social work academy which supported new staff in gaining all of the pertinent training, equipment and knowledge of policies, procedures and structure to help them in their transition into this role.

It was important to improve the retention of good social work staff and in order to do so there had to be the appropriate management support in place and guidance from experienced managers. In addition, career pathways for social workers was identified as an area for further work to enable them to remain within practice as well as the working environments.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report presented be noted.
- ii. The Recruitment and Retention Strategy of social workers in Lancashire be noted.
- iii. The Social Work Academy Programme which forms part of the retention strategy be noted.
- iv. An update on the Recruitment and Retention Strategy be reported to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee in six months' time.

6. Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Work Plan 2017/18

The work plan for the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee for the 2017/18 municipal year was presented. The topics included were identified at the work planning workshop held on 21 June 2017.

It was reported that Members would be given the opportunity to give their views on the current financial position, the Medium Term Financial Strategy and initial budget proposals following on from the Cabinet meetings in November and December 2017 with a view to developing an initial list of risk areas. County Councillor Susie Charles and Neil Kissock, Director of Financial resources would be attending the meeting in January to discuss the budget and any queries Members might have.

Regarding the progress of the Supporting Children at School with Medical Conditions Task Group, County Councillor Ian Brown informed the Committee that David Graham, SEND Senior Manager, would send a list to all the Members, of the schools that needed visiting. These schools would be advised of the visit by the attending County Councillor. The next meeting of the Task Group was on 31st January.

Resolved: That;

- i. The report be noted; and
- ii. Reviews undertaken across children's services be added to the work plan for the March meeting.

7. Urgent Business

There were no items of Urgent Business.

8. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Scrutiny Committee will take place on Wednesday 6 December at 2:00pm in Cabinet Room C (The Duke of Lancaster Room) at the County Hall, Preston.

I Young
Director of Governance, Finance
and Public Services

County Hall
Preston