

Lancashire County Council

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 20th April, 2016 at 4.30 pm in Cabinet Room 'C' - The Duke of Lancaster Room, County Hall, Preston

Present:

County Councillor Gina Dowding (Chair)

County Councillors

Mrs S Charles	C Dereli
D Lord	J Gibson
M Devaney	Dr M Hassan
G Gooch	S Pryn
L Beavers	G Driver
M Otter	

Co-opted members

Terri Hacking, Children's Services Manager - Action for Children
Debra Wilson, Lancashire Care Foundation Trust
Elaine Shinks, Community Rehabilitation Company

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Alice Marquis-Carr. County Councillor Munsif Dad and Sarah Barraclough. County Councillor Geoff Driver attended in place of County Councillor David Smith.

The Chair welcomed Micah Bimson, Youth Council representative to the Committee and the following presenting officers:
Emily Roche, Newton Consultants
Brendan Lee, Head of Service Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Barbara Bath, Head of Service Adoption, Fostering and Residential YOT
Bob Stott, Director of Education, Schools and Care

2. Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of interest in relation to matters appearing on the agenda.

3. Minutes from the meeting held on 9 March 2016

Resolved: That the minutes from the meeting held on 9th March 2016 be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. Newton Consultants

Emily Roche, Newton Consultants led the Committee through a presentation on the Children's Pathways Review and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities findings (SEND).

The presentation included the findings from assessments completed on the Children with Disabilities (CwD) and Integrated Assessment and Monitoring (IAM) teams within the Special Education Needs and Disabilities service.

Emily discussed the findings from the ticksheet exercise, caseload variations, assessment duration and transitions for the Children with Disabilities Team. It was identified that in relation to the caseload information, there was a need to have a single source to determine an accurate picture of the data, and where the majority of the assessments were completed within the final week of the statutory deadline, this highlighted that potentially the processes currently available were not sufficient to support staff.

Children with Disabilities social workers were reported to have a mix of cases and would likely work with a child on a Child in Need plan long term depending on the nature of the disability. Children with moderate learning difficulties would be managed under Children's Social Care if required and not Children with Disabilities.

Referrals into this service were received from Contact and Referral Team (CART), Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and from a variety of partner agencies such as Police, schools, special schools and health.

The Committee were informed that the threshold for children with severe mental health problems resulting in a disability was flexible and other services where required would be provided to support. The new Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans would assist with this to bring these services together.

Emily then outlined the findings from the ticksheet exercise, caseload variations, assessment duration and transitions for the Integrated Assessment and Monitoring Team.

The ticksheet results indicated that only 4% of time was spent with the child/family. The challenge was then to identify how the amber time could be reduced and to test this to ensure a successful outcome.

Data showed a significant caseload variation and Emily confirmed that further work was required around this caseload data to weight by complexity for a more comprehensive understanding of this data.

Work to improve the level of understanding for staff using the LiquidLogic Children's System was actively taking place. Training for staff was also taking place around the recording of information onto the IT systems.

In addition, with the introduction of EHC plans, the SEND service has sent a request to LCS to identify a simple and efficient IT platform for EHC plans to assist with the delivery of this element of the service.

Brendan confirmed that a FACE (Functional Analysis of Care Environments) assessment tool and Yoga tablets had been purchased to use out in the field for assessments. Testing of the algorithm behind this tool was ongoing to ensure the thresholds were set as agreed. In addition, the Local Offer for SEND (which identifies what is available in the local area) would also be uploaded as a further information source for families.

The Committee was advised that in relation to the assessment duration, capacity was further complicated by partner agencies such as health, and in particular the challenges working with the six Clinical Commissioning Groups in Lancashire. To assist with the timescales within this process, two designated Medical Officers for Lancashire have been agreed.

Resolved: The Committee noted and commented on the presentation

5. Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Brendan Lee, Head of Service Special Educational Needs and Disabilities provided a brief overview on SEND and three key areas of work for the Committee to consider as a focus for the sub group.

The Committee was advised that there were five distinct services within SEND which includes Education Psychology, Integrated Assessment and Monitoring, Children with Disabilities, Social Work and Specialist Inclusion Support Service.

Brendan informed the Committee that most or all of these services could be involved with a child depending on the level of disability and the support structures around the child (family situation, safeguarding issues etc). All of these services would work together to ensure the right outcome for that child.

Brendan then outlined the three key areas of work to the Committee for consideration:

1. Best Interest within the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) - this was reported to be a key area for the SEND service as it impacted across all areas and there was a need to identify what was the definition of best interest.
2. Service provision in Education Psychology – there continues to be a national problem in recruiting Education Psychologists and there are considerable vacancies in SEND. All EHC plans must have educational psychology advice (6500) in addition to their normal workload which is causing issues in service provision. As a result, work to identify what a high quality service would look like would be very beneficial.

3. Brendan reported that they are currently reshaping the Lancashire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF). From this work it has been identified that 95-98% of the services are to white British middle class which was reflected in the membership of the LPCF. As a result, there was a need to identify why this imbalance has occurred and what could be done to address this.

Resolved: The Committee:

- i. Confirmed and noted the members for the SEND sub group of the Committee
- ii. Considered which area of the SEND service to review through the sub group
- iii. Confirmed a review to be completed by the sub group on Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (Best interest)

6. Youth Offending Team

Barbara Bath, Head of Service Adoption, Fostering and Residential YOT provided an overview of YOT which was circulated to the Committee with the agenda papers and the three key areas of work for the Committee to consider as a focus for the sub group.

Barbara confirmed that the three areas of work highlighted related to the three national targets for YOT:

- To reduce first time entrants to the criminal justice system
- To reduce re offending
- To reduce the number of young people in custodial settings

1. Barbara reported to the Committee that there has been good progress in reducing the number of first time offenders. Previously YOT had received grant funding for a prevention service but now this element of the service must be sought through partner agencies. Barbara advised that there is a need to identify a more consistent process with good links directly into relevant services to help shape and influence.

2. The Committee was informed that there has been a slight percentage increase in the levels of repeat offenders and complexities of repeat offenders. Barbara confirmed that 177 young people were repeat offenders and within that cohort, 115 were medium-high or very high risk offenders (to themselves or to others). It continued to be difficult to deal with the behaviours for a number of reasons which included the need to address the more urgent needs rather than identifying the underlying issues.

3. Due to smaller numbers of young people in custody, Barbara reported that the establishments providing those services has reduced and as a result these services are now further afield which caused issues for the services and the families.

Wendy confirmed that she will contact both sub groups with further details of the requirements for the sub group work and the terms of reference will be established and agreed via email. The two meeting dates for June and July

could be used for the sub groups and reports to be tabled at the next meeting of the full Committee in September.

Brian Wood advised the Committee that representatives from the Youth Council could attend the groups if required.

Resolved: The Committee:

- i. Considered and agreed which area of the YOT service to review through a sub group of the Committee
- ii. Confirmed and noted the sub group members
- iii. Confirmed work to be completed by the sub group on the links to preventative services
- iv. To receive further information on the ethnic representation of the 177 young people who re-offend

7. Update from the Chair

The Chair provided an update on work which has taken place outside of the Committee by herself and CC Susie Charles.

At a recent meeting held with Tony Crane, independent Chair of the Improvement Board, it was agreed to meet quarterly and that any areas of work could be referred to the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee from the Lancashire Children's Services Improvement Board.

The link to the webpage which included details of the Board and the meeting summary notes was circulated for Committee Members to keep up to date with progress (see below):

[Lancashire Children's Services Improvement Board](#)

The Chair reported on the recent Salford Children's Scrutiny Panel attended and their ways of working which included:

- 'spotlight reviews' on services which have focused terms of reference
- pre-meetings which were held to formulate questions on reports submitted
- regular meetings with the Cabinet Member

A Scrutiny Chairs and Deputies meeting has been held with the chairs and deputies from all of the current Scrutiny Committees for discussion on:

- Training needs for the Committee Members
- Sharing work plans to ensure there is no duplication across the various scrutiny committees
- Combined annual review

Resolved: The Committee noted the update provided

8. Work plan

Wendy confirmed that any work completed by the Chair and Deputy Chair outside of the Committee meetings would be added to the plan. In addition, two further areas would be added to the work plan on challenging performance management and staffing structures.

Resolved: The Committee:

- i. Agreed the suggested additional areas for the work plan
- ii. Noted and commented on the report

9. Recent and Forthcoming Decisions

The Committee's attention was drawn to forthcoming decisions and decisions recently made by the Cabinet and individual Cabinet Members in areas relevant to the remit of the Committee, in order that this could inform possible future areas of work.

The Chair confirmed that they would be liaising with County Councillor Matthew Tomlinson to discuss areas for the Committee to focus on.

Resolved: Committee noted the report.

10. Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business declared.

11. Date of the Next Meeting

Next meeting of the Committee to take place on the 7th September 2016 at 4.30pm, Cabinet Room C, County Hall, Preston.

I Young
Director of Governance, Finance
and Public Services

County Hall
Preston