

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
3 MARCH 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Thursday 3 March 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Carol Ellis (Chair)

Councillors: Adele Davies-Cooke, Andy Dunbobbin, Veronica Gay, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Hilary McGill, Dave Mackie, Mike Reece, and David Wisinger

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Hilary Isherwood, Brian Lloyd, and Ian Smith

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Social Services, Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager Children's and Workforce Services, Children's Fieldwork Manager, and Senior Manager Integrated Services, Lead Adults

(for minute no.66) Mr. Rob Gifford, Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (Inspector CSSIW)

IN ATTENDANCE:

Social & Health Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor David Healey declared a personal interest in the following agenda item as he was a trustee of Home Start Flintshire.

Agenda item 6 – CSSIW Inspection of Children's Services in Flintshire Progress update

62. MINUTES

- (i) The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 11 December 2015 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.
- (ii) The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 January 2016 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

63. ROTA VISITS

The Facilitator advised that when the outstanding visits had been completed a new list would be circulated to Members.

64. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator introduced the Forward Work Programme of the Committee. She advised that a meeting of the Committee had been arranged for 22 April 2016 to consider the issue facing the Council about residential care, specialist nursing and domiciliary care. The Chief Officer suggested that representatives from the independent sector be invited to attend. Councillor Hilary McGuill suggested that representation from the residential and nursing homes sector also be invited to attend.

The Facilitator advised that the next meeting of the Committee would be a joint meeting with the Education and Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee to consider the following items:

- Corporate Parenting
- Educational Attainment of Looked After Children
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Report

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be noted.

65. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item as it was considered to contain exempt information by virtue of paragraph 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

66. CSSIW INSPECTION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES IN FLINTSHIRE PROGRESS UPDATE

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report on the strategic action plan in relation to the CSSIW Inspection into Children's Fieldwork Services which was carried out during May and June 2015. He advised that the report also focussed on the referral process in operation within Children's Services and highlights referral sources and trends. The Chief Officer referred to the key areas that were subject to scrutiny in the CSSIW Inspection Report. As a result of the CSSIW Inspection recommendations were made to the Council which resulted in a robust action plan being implemented. A copy of the action plan was appended to the report and the Chief Officer reported that a number of the recommendations had been completed and actions were being worked through. The Chief Officer invited the Senior Manager Children's and Workforce Services to report on the key actions contained within the plan which are instrumental in securing significant achievement in taking forward the themes from the inspection.

Senior Manager Children's and Workforce Services reported on progress concerning the implementation of a revised structure in children's

Services, developing the approach to assessment and implementation of a quality assurance framework. He drew attention to the proposed operation structure for Fieldwork and Resources services which was appended to the report and explained that it was intended to have in place by April 2016 to meet implementation of the Social Services Well Being Act.

The Children's Fieldwork Manager reported on the measures taken to reduce re-referrals as detailed in the report and referred to changes in the "front door" process which was accessed by the public and other agencies to make referrals into the department. He also commented on changes around the Early Intervention Services which are now integrated into Children's Services with Team Around the Family and the Family Information Service forming a part of the referral process. He highlighted data in the report to demonstrate that the issue over repeat referrals is starting to diminish and advised that it was anticipated that there would be further reduction following work completed on a regional basis with North Wales Police to look at the Police notification forms to determine what information is provided. The Senior Manager Children's and Workforce Services referred to the potential to tap into resources in Education Services and advised that work was currently being undertaken to see what can be done to enhance work before it becomes a referral to social services.

The Chair thanked the Chief Officer and his team for their presentations and invited Members to raise questions.

Councillor David Healey welcomed how the change was being managed and applauded the improved continuity of social worker input as he had been aware of issues with continuity in the past. He also welcomed the increased focus on other agencies. He expressed concern regarding the intervention in the early years and sought assurances that if the bulk of referrals came in from one geographical area this would not mean that other areas were neglected. Councillor Healey also sought clarification regarding the involvement of third sector agencies in delivering early intervention strategies and asked if these were coordinated to avoid duplication. Officers responded to the questions and concerns raised and it was agreed that further information could be included within the report due to be presented to the joint meeting of Social & Health Care and Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on 24 March 2016 around the contribution of third sector agencies to early years services.

Councillor Hilary McGuill welcomed the report and asked whether the vacant manager post had been filled. She welcomed the restructure to the 'front door' and asked for clarification around how contacts would be recorded and at what stage Social Services would intervene. The Children's Fieldwork Manager confirmed that all contacts would be recorded on the system and that if 3 contacts were received a referral would be automatically generated.

Councillor Hilary McGuill expressed the view that more support mechanisms were needed to support children leaving care and suggested that more feedback should be obtained from children who are care leavers to ensure robustness of the systems in place. She emphasised the responsibilities of Councillors as Corporate Parents in ensuring the best

possible outcomes for Flintshire children either in or leaving care. The Senior Manager Children's and Workforce Services referred to the draft improvement plan and a proposal to include a new indicator for Looked After Children and Care Leavers. In response to the further concerns expressed by Councillor McGuill around what support was available for young adults who were leaving behind the Care support services the Senior Manager Children's and Workforce Services referred to the Social Services Act to come into effect on 6 April 2016 in Wales and commented on how it was built around resilience. He advised that one of the new Senior Practitioner posts within the new structure had a Leaving Care remit. It was agreed that when officers had been confirmed in post the names would be circulated to the Members of the Committee.

Councillor David Mackie referred to the Children Services Forum and the benefits of being a member of both the Forum and the Social and Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee. He referred to the skilled and innovative ways the Participation Officer used to ensure the children were given every opportunity to have their voices heard. The Chief Officer welcomed the positive comments and reported that the Participation Officer and himself had attended a meeting of the Headteachers Association to raise further awareness of the Access to Action card.

Councillor Mackie reported that schools faced significant challenges concerning non-educational issues which affected the day to day running of schools and outcomes. He gave an example of children entering school who were not toilet trained and commented that whilst this was not an educational issue it had to be dealt with by school staff which could have a negative affect on all pupils concerned. Senior Manager Integrated Services, Lead Adults advised that continence issues in early years were within the remit of Health Visitors and suggested that this could be raised with BCUHB at the meeting of the Committee to be held in June 2016. The Chief Officer referred to a recent session held with multi agency partners and agreed that many issues had a significant cross-over between education and children's services. Senior Manager Integrated Services, Lead Adults referred to an initiative at Ysgol Merllyn which was now being progressed to other schools within Flintshire.

The Chair asked for data on current waiting times for Children in need referrals. The Children's Fieldwork Manager said he was pleased to report there were no unallocated referrals at the present time.

Councillor Cindy Hinds asked if the Authority had a good working relationship with North Wales Police. The Children's Fieldwork Manager confirmed that excellent working relationships were in place across both organisations. In response to a further question from Councillor Hinds regarding provision of services out of hours, The Children's Fieldwork Manager agreed that there was a need to look at Out of Hours and Emergency Duty Services to ensure resilience in the future.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee welcomes the progress made in response to the CSSIW inspection report, including progress in reducing and managing

repeat referrals, and progress made with the implementation of the new structure that was agreed at Cabinet on 16 February 2016; and

- (b) That the Committee requests a further progress report in 6 month's time.

67. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There were no member of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 11.25 am)

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Chairman