

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
15 SEPTEMBER 2016

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 15 September 2016

PRESENT: Councillor Andy Dunbobbin (Vice-Chair in the Chair)

Councillors: Paul Cunningham, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Hilary McGuill, Dave Mackie, Mike Reece, Ian Smith, David Wisinger, and Matt Wright

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillors Arnold Woolley (for Veronica Gay) and David Williams (for Ray Hughes)

APOLOGIES: Councillors: Carol Ellis, Adele Davies-Cooke and Dave Healey.

CONTRIBUTORS:

Cabinet Member for Social Services, Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning, Senior Manager Children's and Workforce Services, Team Manager Children's First Contact, and Service Manager (Social Services)

IN ATTENDANCE:

The Social & Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator and Committee Officer

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

27. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 21 July 2016 had been circulated to Members with the agenda.

RESOLVED:

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

28. CORPORATE PARENTING AND FOSTERING STRATEGY UPDATE

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report to provide an update on the Corporate Parenting and Fostering Strategies. He introduced, Karen Edwards, Team Manager Children's First Contact, and Janet Bellis, Service Manager, to the meeting. The Chief Officer referred to the Authority's commitment to develop a unified Corporate Parenting Strategy and advised that the starting point would be to establish what was important to looked after children. He also advised that the Welsh Government (WG) had endorsed a principle to develop a national framework for the delivery of fostering services to ensure the best quality foster care placements are available to all children and young people who need them. He explained that

the approach to developing a National Fostering Framework recognised the benefit of delivering some fostering services on a national and regional level whilst retaining the advantages of localism and local accountability.

The Chief Officer invited the Senior Manager Children and Workforce to give an overview of the main considerations as detailed in the report. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce reported that during the Autumn the Authority would work with the Participation Forum to develop a range of approaches to establish what looked after children expect from their Corporate Parents and how they would like this to be delivered. He said that Members would be invited to attend a Task and Finish Group in early 2017, as Corporate Parents themselves to input directly into the development of the content of the Strategy document.

The Senior Manager Children and Workforce referred to the positive inspection of Flintshire's fostering service which had taken place in 2015 and advised that whilst Flintshire does well to attract foster carers there are challenges in ensuring a sufficient number of skilled foster carers to support older children and teenagers, including those with challenging behaviour. He explained that Flintshire was proactively working at a local, regional, and national level to maximise the number of foster carers to meet local need. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce explained that as part of the strategy to increase foster carers proposals are being developed for Flintshire County Council to become a 'Foster Friendly Employer'. He also commented on the collaborative work being undertaken between the 6 North Wales authorities to develop joint working between Local Authority fostering services. Referring to the WG principle to develop a National Fostering Framework, the Senior Manager Children and Workforce explained that a national briefing note was appended to the report which set out the aims, and work programme for 2016-17.

The Chairman invited Members to raise questions.

Councillor Hilary McGuill asked what training and support would be provided for people interested in fostering older children. She also commented on the need to provide information and support to older children to prepare them for independent living and cited money management and employment 'skills' as examples. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce acknowledged the points made and advised that the ICF fund had been extended to include children with complex needs. He also referred to the joint work with Wrexham Local Authority to commission a comprehensive service for older children that works with Health, and Social Services to support Foster Carers and children. Jane Davies reported on the range of learning opportunities available through college based courses and e-learning to inform and support foster carers and older children.

In response to the further question from Councillor McGuill concerning the need to recruit foster carers in Flintshire the Senior Manager Children and Workforce reported on a range of initiatives in place and the development of the Authority's 'Foster Friendly Employer' project.

Councillor Dave Mackie expressed praise for the work of the fostering team and suggested that 'active marketing' of all businesses in Flintshire took place to increase the number of enquiries to local authority fostering teams.

Councillor Arnold Woolley agreed that the reputation of the Foster Team was good, however, he said that the report suggested that the Service was not keeping pace with demand in relation to children with complex needs. The Chief Officer advised that during recent years there had been an increase in demand for placements for older children and young people which had led to an over supply of carers of younger children and under supply for the higher age group, however, work was being undertaken which should complement the targeted initiatives to recruit new foster carers for this age group. In response to the additional query from Councillor Woolley around resources the Chief Officer advised that the proposals in the report, citing 'Foster Friendly Employer' as an example, would not have an impact on resources..

The Chairman referred to kinship carers and asked if there was an interest from family members in undertaking kinship care duties. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce explained that kinship carers were treated the same as foster carers in terms of the training and support provided by the Service.

Referring to fostering recruitment events, Councillor David Williams suggested that it may be helpful if the events were held in different areas of the County so that the local Members were involved.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the commitment to recruit additional Foster Carers be endorsed; and;
- (b) That the proposals to develop a National Fostering Service and seek a report on the implications of the Service for Flintshire once these are known be noted.

29. CHILDREN'S SERVICE UPDATE TO INCLUDE REPEAT REFERRALS IN CHILD SERVICES

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report to provide an update on progress concerning the key actions in response to the CSSIW Inspection of Children's Services, including progress in reducing and managing repeat referrals. He invited the Senior Manager Children and Workforce to report on the main considerations.

The Senior Manager Children and Workforce referred to the four key actions planned in response to the CSSIW Inspection and progress to date. He confirmed, as detailed in the report, that a revised structure was now fully operational with an enhanced focus on early intervention, a new assessment

framework had been developed, re-referrals were reducing, and the quality assurance framework was being taken forward.

Councillor Hilary McGuill referred to paragraph 1.13 in the report and raised a query relating to the same incident being counted as a repeat referral. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce advised that steps were being taken to move away from the current process whereby the same incident was counted more than once. Councillor McGuill also commented on the need to strengthen communication links with schools around safeguarding children. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce advised that he would be attending a meeting of the Intervention Hub with the multi agency partners and he would raise the issue of improving communications between partners. The Chief Officer commented on the importance of early intervention and good communication links between Health, Education, Police and Social Services.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee is content with the progress made in delivering a response to the CSSIW Inspection Report including progress in reducing and managing repeat referrals.

30. IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2015/16 YEAR-END PROGRESS

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report to present the monitoring of progress for the fourth quarter/year end 2015/16 focusing on areas of under performance. The Chief Officer referred to the detailed sub-priority report which was attached as appendix 1 to the report. He advised that only one risk had increased slightly in significance during 2015/16 in concerning Living Well.

Councillor Paul Cunningham congratulated the Chief Officer and his team for the positive work being undertaken by Flintshire in developing 'dementia friendly' support services.

RESOLVED:

That the Quarter 4 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report be received.

31. PERFORMANCE REPORT 2015/16

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced a report to provide an analysis of the Council's progress towards the national indicators that are set by Welsh Government. He advised that initial indicators were positive and that the Annual Performance Report would be produced in September for Cabinet and Council approval. All national data will have been validated by this time and the Council's comparative performance position in Wales would be known.

The Chief Officer referred to the trend analysis from last year and reported on the progress against targets for the indicators relevant to the Committee which were appended to the report.

In response to the concerns raised by Councillor Arnold Woolley with regards to performance around Disabled Facility Grants the Chief Officer advised that this area of work came under the remit of the Community and Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the Performance Report 2015/16 be received.

32. ROTA VISITS

There were no reports on visits undertaken by Members.

33. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Social & Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme for consideration and referred to the items scheduled for the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 20 October 2016. It was agreed that the meeting of the Committee scheduled to be held on 22 December 2016 be cancelled and the item on Quarter 2 Improvement Plan Monitoring Report be moved to the meeting of the Committee on 13 December 2016.

Councillor Matt Wright suggested that a letter be sent to BCUHB to request a response to the outstanding issues raised by Members at the meeting of the Committee held on 9 June 2016.

RESOLVED:

That the Forward Work Programme be updated in accordance with the above.

34. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

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

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 3.35 pm)

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Chairman