



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES
AND SAFEGUARDING)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON MONDAY 6TH MARCH, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor June Burns (in the Chair)
Councillor Spencer (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Danny Burns, Carlin, Hardman, Lloyd-
Johnson, McKee, Murphy and Prendergast

ALSO PRESENT: Ms. J. McCarthy, Archdiocese
Ms. C. Swainbank, Parent Governor Representative
Councillor Doyle – Cabinet Member – Children's
Social Care
Councillor Roscoe, Cabinet Member – Education
Councillor Lynne Thompson
7 members of the public

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Wilson and Maurice Byrne, Healthwatch.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

50. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

A proposal to amend the Minutes by the addition of wording to reflect that it had been agreed at the previous meeting that Committee Members would be provided with the Minutes of the Improvement Board, was debated. A vote took place and the proposal was lost by 3 votes to 6.

A proposal to amend the designation of the Commissioner for Children's Services, was put forward.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) subject to the following amendment to Minute No. 41, the Minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023, be confirmed as a correct record:

The replacement of the words "independent Improvement Board Chair" with the words "Commissioner for Children's Services"; and

- (2) the dissent of Councillor Murphy against the decision to agree the Minutes as being a correct record, be recorded.

51. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMISSIONED HEALTH SERVICES UPDATE

The Committee considered the report and presentation of the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board, Sefton Place. The report provided an overview of the performance of children and young people commissioned health services delivered by Alder Hey Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, including:

- Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) assessment and diagnostic service
- Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)
- Speech and Language Therapy (SALT)
- Other therapy services: Continence, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy

It was anticipated that a detailed CAMHS/mental health update would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee on 6 June 2023.

Peter Wong, Children and Young People Commissioning Lead, Sefton, gave a presentation that outlined the following:

- Children and Young People: Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- Children and Young People: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- Specialist CAMHS
- Therapies

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- Work being undertaken on early interventions and anxiety associated with certain conditions.
- Increased publicity and communication regarding the useful information available on CAMHS.
- The use of rapid response vehicles for adult mental health triage and the difficult transition to adult services.
- Delays associated with speech and language therapies.
- Pathways to be followed by 18-year-olds.
- Numbers of children and young people waiting over 18 weeks for CAMHS appointments.
- Plans to try to increase assistant practitioners within the speech and language service.
- The practice of paediatricians going into specialist schools to undertake assessments.
- Regional and national comparisons with Sefton's waiting times.
- The diagnosis rate for ADHD and the new ASD/ADHD digital referral platform being piloted with education.
- Difficulties faced by parents with more than one child following assessment pathways.

RESOLVED:

That the children and young people commissioned health services performance update be noted and accepted.

52. SEFTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (SSCP) ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Quality Assurance and Safeguarding) on the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership (SSCP) Annual Report 2021-22. Detailed within the Sefton SCP annual report 2021-22 was the work undertaken by the Sefton Safeguarding Children Partnership, whose purpose was to safeguard children and work together with a collective aim to better improve the outcomes for children and young people.

The Sefton SCP Annual Report 2021-22 was attached to the report and outlined the following:

- Introduction
- Covid 19
- Voice of the Independent Chair/Scrutineer
- Child Death Overview Panel (CDOP)
- Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews (LCSPRs)
- Multi-Agency Quality Assurance and Audit Activities
- Multi-Agency Training and Development
- Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Conclusion

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- Additional detail on changes required within the partnership culture.
- Reasons for waiting for 12 months to obtain qualitative data regarding lack of escalation activity across the partnership and possible actions to address.
- The limited partnership challenge to drift and delay.
- Multi-agency training and the impact of SSCP training.
- A request was made for the Police and other Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team members to report to the Committee in future.
- Was training and development sufficient to address concerns regarding lack of escalation and how was the effectiveness of training measured? A report presented to the Improvement Board on the matter could be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.
- Reasons why training was not compulsory.
- The definition of expected and unexpected deaths.
- Reasons for the relatively high number of child deaths and the impact of the pandemic.

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- Issues associated with the transient nature of the social care workforce.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) representatives of the Police and other Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team members be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee; and
- (3) the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Quality, Assurance and Safeguarding) be requested to submit the report presented to the Improvement Board on training and development to a future meeting of the Committee.

53. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education updating on progress made against the Children's Services Improvement Plan and providing an overview of quality assurance activity.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Improvement Plan
- Youth Engagement Toolkit
- Quality Assurance Framework

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- The possibility of front-line practitioners accessing training within the Academy.
- Data on the quality of case audits and reasons why the data had not been submitted previously to the Committee. A proposal was made for data on case audits to be a regular standing item on future Committee agendas.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made and the priorities for the next quarter be noted; and
- (2) the Assistant Director (Quality, Assurance and Safeguarding) be requested to submit data on the quality of case audits to future Committee meetings on a regular basis.

54. EDUCATION SCORECARD

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The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education presenting the Education Scorecard.

The Education Scorecard was attached to the report and set out statistics on:

- Pupil absence
- Pupil exclusions
- Education, Health and Care Plans
- Early Years Foundations Profile
- Phonics
- Key Stage 1
- Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 4

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- The possibility of including a category of English as a second language in future. Different factors could be considered.
- Formatting issues within the Education Scorecard. A revised version would be circulated to Committee Members.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the data contained in the Education Scorecard be noted;
- (2) the Assistant Director Education be requested to consider the possibility of including a category of English as a second language in future Education Scorecards; and
- (3) the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to circulate a revised version of the Education Scorecard to Committee Members.

55. EDUCATION, HEALTH AND CARE PLANS

Further to Minute No. 42 (4) of 31 January 2023, the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education) reported verbally on children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), including the following:

Nursery to reception - achieved by 15 February 2023 deadline, 47 children, 45 placed for September 2023, 41 named in line with parental preference (2 children continued placement not impacted by deadline).
Year 6 to Year 7 - achieved by 15th February 2023 deadline, 141 children, 102 placed for September 2023, 91 named in line with parental preference (39 continuation of placement not impacted by deadline).
Year 11 to Year 12 - no data yet as deadline would be 31 March 2023.
Number of assessments completed in February 2023 - 87 plans were finalised in February, which was the highest number of plans completed in

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a single month since the Performance Indicator tracker was created in 2019.

Outstanding assessments - decreased from 186 to 93.

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- The anticipated date for confirmation of Reception places.
- Waiting times beyond 20 weeks for EHCPs.
- The estimated completion timescale.
- The appeals process for high schools.
- The number of preferences parents were able to indicate for high schools.
- The number of academies in Sefton.

RESOLVED:

That the information provided on Education, Health and Care Plans be noted.

56. OFSTED INSPECTION REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Children's Services (Education) updating on recent Ofsted Inspection Reports and the work of the School Improvement Team.

The following schools had been inspected and reports received during the Autumn term of 2022:

- Our Lady Queen of Peace Primary School
- Savio Salesian College
- St. Mary's Catholic Primary School
- St. Andrew's Academy
- King's Leadership Academy Hawthorns
- Thomas Gray Primary School
- Norwood Primary School
- St. Michael's High School
- St. Oswald's CE Primary School
- Hatton Hill Primary School
- Formby High School

A Summary of Ofsted Outcomes and Support during Autumn 2022 was attached to the report.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

57. LGA TRAINING PROPOSALS AND FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

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The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (Strategic Support) outlining proposals for the Local Government Association (LGA) to provide training for Members of the Committee and for all Members in relation to corporate parenting.

The report also sought approval for the Committee to return to its normal pattern of five meetings per year.

The report outlined information on:

- LGA Proposals
- Dedicated support for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)
- All Member Corporate Parenting Briefing
- Support for Members of all Overview and Scrutiny Committees
- Support for the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)
- Support for all Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs
- Frequency of Meetings during 2023/24

Members of the Committee asked questions/raised matters on the following issues:

- Whether further training would be provided in the event that the dedicated support for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) identified further training requirements.
- Concerns regarding the proposed frequency of meetings for 2023/23 and the possibility of Members not receiving sufficient information. Additional ad hoc and informal meetings could be held at the Chair's discretion, if deemed necessary.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposals for training by the Local Government Association be endorsed; and
- (2) the Committee return to the normal cycle of 5 meetings per municipal year.

58. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer submitting the most recent update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care, and the Cabinet Member – Education, whose portfolios fell within the remit of the Committee.

The Cabinet Member update report – Children's Social Care, attached to the report at Appendix A, outlined information on the following:

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- Children's Social Care
- Youth Justice Service:
 - Performance
 - Youth Justice Partnership
 - Prevention Projects
 - Education

The Cabinet Member update report – Education, attached to the report at Appendix B, outlined information on the following:

- Attendance
- Exclusions
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- School Improvement
- Early Years
- Virtual School
- Educational Psychologists
- Alternative Provision

Councillors Roscoe and Doyle attended the meeting to present their reports and to respond to any questions or issues raised by Members of the Committee.

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- The resignation of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education.
- Additional Assistant Director posts within the Children's Services function and the stability they offered to the Service.
- Concerns that a new Executive Director could change recent developments within the Service.
- The possibility of external candidates for the Executive Director position and their access to the Children's Services Improvement Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the update reports from the Cabinet Member – Children's Social Care and the Cabinet Member – Education be noted.

59. WORK PROGRAMME KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer seeking to:

- review the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2022/23;
- identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan;

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- receive an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and
- note the information provided in the separate report on the “Education Scorecard” and to consider the possible re-establishment of a Working Group to review the topic of Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A - Work Programme for 2022/23;
- Appendix B – the latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to the Committee.

Since the agenda for the meeting was published, a further Key Decision Forward Plan had been produced and the Committee was invited to identify any items for pre-scrutiny, as set out in the supplementary agenda at Appendix C.

Members of the Committee raised the following questions/issues:

- Consideration of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). A detailed CAMHS/mental health report was anticipated for the next meeting on 6 June 2023, and further consideration could be given following submission of the report.
- A vote on the re-establishment of a Working Group to review the topic of Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group indicated that the consensus was not to re-establish the Working Group.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be noted, along with any additional items to be included and agreed;
- (2) further to Minutes numbered 52 (2) and (3) and 53 (2) above, the following items be added to the Committee’s Work Programme for 2023/24:
 - (a) representatives of the Police and other Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team members be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee;
 - (b) the Assistant Director of Children’s Services (Quality, Assurance and Safeguarding) be requested to submit the report presented to the Improvement Board on training and development to a future meeting of the Committee;
 - (c) the Assistant Director (Quality, Assurance and Safeguarding) be requested to submit data on the quality of case audits to future Committee meetings on a regular basis; and

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- (d) further consideration be given to Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) during 2023/24;
- (3) the Key Decision Forward Plan for the periods 1 March – 30 June 2023 and 1 April – 31 July 2023, be noted;
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (5) the information provided in the separate report on the “Education Scorecard” be noted and a Working Group to review the topic of Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group, be not established.