



MEETING: CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING PARENT/CARERS
SUB-COMMITTEE

DATE: Tuesday 17th September, 2024

TIME: 12.30 pm

VENUE: Birkdale Room - Southport Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport, PR8
1DA

Member

Councillor
Councillor Hardman (Chair)
Councillor Danny Burns (Vice-
Chair)
Councillor Evans
Councillor Richards
Councillor Christopher Page

Substitute

Councillor
Councillor Corcoran
Councillor Harrison

Councillor Pugh
Councillor Catie Page
Councillor Spring

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Laura Bootland
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If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.

We endeavour to provide a reasonable number of full agendas, including reports at the meeting. If you wish to ensure that you have a copy to refer to at the meeting, please can you print off your own copy of the agenda pack prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are requested at a meeting where a disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest arises, which is not already included in their Register of Members' Interests, to declare any interests that relate to an item on the agenda.

Where a Member discloses a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, he/she must withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest, except where he/she is permitted to remain as a result of a grant of a dispensation.

Where a Member discloses a personal interest he/she must seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or staff member representing the Monitoring Officer to determine whether the Member should withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest or whether the Member can remain in the meeting or remain in the meeting and vote on the relevant decision.

3. Minutes

(Pages 3 - 4)

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2024.

4. Attendance of Parents/Carers - Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD).

The Sub-committee members hope to learn from parents and carers about:

- The difficulties that children affected by FASD face
- Their experiences of the level of awareness of these difficulties among social workers, teachers and others
- Their opinions about how any gaps in knowledge and skill could be filled.
- Their views of the services they have accessed for their children and whether these have been appropriate and adequate.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND SAFEGUARDING PARENT/CARERS SUB-COMMITTEE



MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM - BOOTLE TOWN HALL,
TRINITY ROAD, BOOTLE, L20 7AE
ON TUESDAY 16TH JULY, 2024

PRESENT: Councillor Hardman (in the Chair)
Councillor Danny Burns (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Leo Evans, Carol Richards
and Christopher Page

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. ATTENDANCE OF PARENT/CARERS - COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

Members of the Sub-Committee considered verbal representations from parents/carers about the Council's complaints procedure, specifically in relation to Children's Social Care and Education.

The Chair advised that following the receipt of a petition regarding complaints at the 4th June Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding), it was agreed that the first meeting of this sub-committee would be dedicated to hearing from parents and carers about their experiences when making formal complaints to Sefton Council.

The Sub-Committee heard from representatives of the Sefton Parent Carers Forum and the Voice of the Families Group.

Points were made around the following issues:

- There should be a way for parents/carers to express dissatisfaction and it be logged and dealt with before something becomes a formal complaint.
- General information about the complaints process / how to complain was not easy to find.
- It would be useful if all complaints were acknowledged and an anticipated timescale for a resolution provided, along with the ability to track complaints in "real time".
- Although a specific complaints route for SEND had been established there was still room for improvement.

Agenda Item 3

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- Parents and Carers often felt singled out by Children's Services staff if they had previously raised a complaint.
- No improvement to services was seen after a complaint had been made.
- Complaints were often referred to the staff member being complained about to provide an explanation, rather than an independent member of staff conducting an unbiased investigation.
- At times, a complaint was investigated but not upheld, but the evidence about why the complaint was dismissed was not provided back to the parent/carer.
- Sefton's complaints procedure does not currently allow for "class actions". Even if several parents had experienced the same problem, they each had to raise a separate complaint about it.

RESOLVED: That

1. The Sub Committee thanked parents/carers for attending the meeting
2. Comments would be fed into the ongoing scrutiny review on the complaint's procedure.