



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

REMOTE MEETING HELD ON  
TUESDAY 16TH MARCH, 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Murphy (in the Chair)  
Councillor Carragher (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors Bennett, Cluskey, Evans, Keith, Yvonne  
Sayers, Thomas and Webster

ALSO PRESENT: Mr. M. Byrne, Healthwatch Representative  
Mrs. S. Cain, Independent Advisory Member  
Ms. M. McDermott, Parent Governor Representative  
Ms. C. McDonough, Parent Governor  
Representative  
Councillor J. J. Kelly, Cabinet Member – Children,  
Schools and Safeguarding

**31. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Mr. Stuart Harrison, Diocese Representative.

**32. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**33. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

**34. PERFORMANCE REPORTS FOR KEY CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Further to Minute No. 53 of 17 March 2020, the Committee considered Integrated Performance Reports for Key Children's Services, submitted by NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group. The Integrated Performance Reports set out information on:

- Alder Hey Children's Mental Health Services;
- Improve Access to Children & Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMH);
- Waiting times for Routine/Urgent Referrals to Children and Young People's Eating Disorder Services;

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- Children and Young People new Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) referrals within 12 and 30 weeks;
- Children and Young People new Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) referrals within 12 and 30 weeks;
- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- % Referral to Choice within 6 weeks;
- % Referral to Partnership within 18 weeks;
- Children's Community (Alder Hey);
- Paediatric Speech and Language Therapies (SALT);
- Paediatric Dietetics;
- Paediatric Occupational Therapy (OT); and
- Paediatric Children's Continence Promotion Service.

Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG; and Martin McDowell, Deputy Chief Officer, NHS South Sefton CCG and NHS Southport and Formby CCG; attended the meeting to present the Integrated Performance Reports and to respond to questions/issues raised by Members of the Committee. Fiona Taylor indicated that representatives of Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust could be requested to provide an overview of services when the matter was next considered.

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

- How services and staff were commissioned, as some indicators appeared to vary. Representatives of Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust could be requested to provide an overview on the flexibility of services and staff at a future meeting.
- Any differentiations in diagnosis between boys and girls for ASD and ADHD. Would girls go undiagnosed? What age range were children diagnosed? Information would be sought from Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust.
- Reasons for the delay in the start of assessment of some children and young people for new Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) referrals within 12 and 30 weeks and actions being taken to rectify.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Integrated Performance Reports be noted;
- (2) the Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG be requested to:
  - (a) seek information from Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust on any differentiations in diagnosis between boys and girls for Autistic Spectrum Disorders (ASD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), including the age

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range of children diagnosed and the risk of girls being undiagnosed, the information to be provided to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee; and

- (b) consider inviting representatives of Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust to provide an overview on the flexibility of services and staff at a future meeting.

### **35. REVIEW OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER & SAFEGUARDING IN SEFTON - UPDATE ON ACTIONS BEING UNDERTAKEN**

Further to Minute No. 54 of 17 March 2020, the Committee considered a joint presentation by NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group and NHS Sefton and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group, providing an update on actions being undertaken since the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Review of Looked After Children and Safeguarding in Sefton. The presentation set out the following:

- Context;
- Process;
- Update;
- Lessons Learned; and
- Evidence of Impact.

Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG; and Helen Case, Designated Nurse, for NHS South Sefton CCG and NHS Southport and Formby CCG, attended the meeting to present the update and to report on the progress of actions.

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

- The Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) referred to within the presentation was the same as the JTAI referred to under Minute No. 37 below.
- The good progress made regarding health assessments was welcomed, particularly as certain practices were now considered to be good practice.
- The tracking and sampling technique adopted to follow the experiences of children where there had been safeguarding concerns or who were looked after.
- The good progress made by the team following the review was acknowledged, despite the number of children coming into care and the pressures due to the pandemic.

RESOLVED:

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That the joint presentation be noted.

### **36. HIGH NEEDS FUNDING UPDATE**

Further to Minute No. 30 (6) of 26 January 2021, and to Minute No. 89 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4 February 2021, the Committee considered the report of the Head of Education Excellence in relation to the financial position of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) High Needs Block Budget; actions to address ongoing in-year pressures; and longer-term sufficiency plans to meet increasing demand for specialist places, to improve processes and governance and balance the budget.

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

- The relationship of the local authority with schools, in relation to grants and budgets.
- The possibility of additional funding from the Department for Education (DfE), given the pressures of the pandemic.
- How the High Needs Block Budget was determined for each local authority.
- The demand pressures facing education, particularly in relation to the pandemic.
- Views on proposed initial changes to the High Needs National Funding Formula were currently being sought from the DfE and the link would be provided.
- Post-16 provision in relation to young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) and how best to promote the current strategy and approach.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Head of Education Excellence be requested to provide the link to the Department for Education public consultation on proposed initial changes to the High Needs National Funding Formula to the Senior Democratic Services Officer, for circulation to Members of the Committee.

### **37. PROGRESS OF JOINT TARGETED INSPECTION ACTION PLAN**

Further to Minute No. 6 of 22 September 2020, the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education on the progress of the delivery of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan (JTAI).

The report set out the background to the matter, indicating that between 23 and 27 September 2019, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), HMI Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, (HMICFRS) and HMI Probation (HMIP) carried out a joint inspection of the multi -agency

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response to abuse and neglect in Sefton. This inspection included a “deep dive” focus on the response to children’s mental health. At its meeting in January 2020, the Committee received the published letter and a presentation from the partnership in response to the inspection. The written Statement of Action was produced and submitted to OFSTED on 30 March 2020 and on 17 April 2020, correspondence was received stating that Ofsted, the CQC, HMICFRS and HMI Probation had reviewed the action plan and agreed that it demonstrated an accurate understanding of the areas of priority action and findings of the joint inspection team.

The JTAI Written Statement of Action was attached to the report.

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

- The proposal for the mental health triage car was welcomed and it was hoped that it would be progressed.
- Methods for children to interact with their social worker and other support staff.
- Scrutiny and challenge by other boards.
- Future inspections and follow-up actions.

RESOLVED:

- (1) the progress of the delivery of the action plan be noted; and
- (2) a further report on the progress of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan be requested in six months’ time or when it is completed, whichever is the sooner.

### **38. BI-ANNUAL REPORT AND REVIEW OF CHILDREN’S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT PLAN**

Further to Minute No. 49 of 17 March 2020, the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children’s Social Care and Education, summarising the progress in relation to the Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan for the last six months.

The Improvement Plan had identified five key objectives, as follows:

1. Assessment, planning and review
2. Achieving early permanence
3. Continuous practice development and a stable workforce
4. Ensuring good quality management oversight and supervision
5. Quality Assurance/Performance Framework- delivering improvement.

The Children and Young People’s Scorecard was attached to the report.

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

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- Clarification on the frequency of reporting the matter to the Committee.
- Good quality supervision remained an ongoing concern.
- Recruitment of social workers remained an on-going concern.
- Clarification regarding referrals and re-referral rates to Children's Social Care.
- Caseloads held by social workers remained an ongoing concern.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) bi- annual reports in relation to the progress of the Children's Social Care Continuous Improvement Plan be continued to be received by the Committee.

### **39. EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY**

Further to Minute No. 40 of the Health and Wellbeing Board of 10 March 2020, the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education presenting the new Sefton Children and Young People's Emotional Wellbeing Strategy 2021-2026. The final draft of the Strategy was attached to the report. The report outlined recent activity and the approach taken to refresh the content of the Sefton Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy, together with the next steps to be taken.

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

- Had the Wellbeing Toolkit been rolled out to schools and colleges and had any feedback been received? An overview could be provided to the next Committee meeting. Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust also had a good news item to report.
- The former Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Working Group had advocated emotional support in schools.
- The age range the Strategy was directed to, together with the organisations that would support the Strategy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to consider presenting an overview of the Wellbeing Toolkit rolled out to schools and colleges, together with any feedback received, to a future meeting of the Committee.

#### **40. CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ANNUAL ACTIVITIES REPORT 2020**

Further to Minute No. 51 of 17 March 2020, the Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education providing an overview of the activities of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board 2020. The overview related to all Board activities completed between January 2020 and December 2020. The Corporate Parenting Board – Annual Activities Report 2020 was attached to the report.

In line with local and national guidance and restrictions, in relation to COVID 19, meetings of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board had been facilitated via Microsoft Teams. Virtual attendance at meetings had not been affected by this.

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

- The positive contribution of the work of the Sefton Corporate Parenting Board and acknowledgement of organisations and individuals concerned, particularly the Making a Difference Group.
- An annual survey of all children in care took place.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

#### **41. CABINET MEMBER REPORT**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer in relation to the most recent report of the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Safeguarding for the period February – March 2021. The report outlined information on the following:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND);
- Emotional Health and Wellbeing Strategy;
- Capital Funding to Support Children in Sefton; and
- Announcement of Ofsted Focussed Visit.

Councillor J.J. Kelly, Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Safeguarding, attended the meeting to present his update report and highlight aspects of it. He suggested that the recruitment challenges in social work could be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

A Member of the Committee asked questions/raised issues on the following:

- Details of the Capital Funding to Support Children in Sefton.

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- The Ofsted Focussed Visit of Children's Services had taken place the previous week and the outcome would be shared with Committee Members in due course.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Cabinet Member update report be noted.
- (2) the Executive Director of Children's Social Care and Education be requested to share the outcome of the Ofsted Focussed Visit of Children's Services, that had taken place during March 2021, with Members of the Committee, once it became available.

### **42. WORK PROGRAMME KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN**

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer submitting the Committee's Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year 2020/21; reporting on progress of the Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group; reporting on progress of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group; reporting on progress of the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group; noting that there were no items for pre-scrutiny within the current Key Decision Forward Plan; and receipt of an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Work Programme for 2020/21 was set out at Appendix A to the report, to be considered along with any additional items to be included and agreed.

The report set out the outcome of the Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group that had completed its review; progress to date made by the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group; and progress to date made by the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group. The Chair of the Committee had agreed to serve on the latter Working Group that had been established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills).

There were no items for pre-scrutiny within the current Key Decision Forward Plan that fell under the Committee's remit.

The report set out an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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

- Preferred terms for referring to autism conditions and the rejection of the jigsaw piece as a symbol for autism.
- The Work Programme for the Committee for the 2021/22 Municipal Year and the possibility of holding a planning meeting with the Chair of the Committee.



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RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2020/21, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;
- (2) consideration be given to holding a planning meeting with the Chair of the Committee to discuss the work programme for 2021/22;
- (3) consideration be given to the inclusion of the following items within the 2021/22 work programme:
  - School sufficiency numbers;
  - Recruitment of social workers; and
  - Inclusion of representatives of Alder Hey and Mersey Care (ages 18-25) for future reporting of performance reports for key children's services;
- (4) the outcome of the Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group review and the fact that a six-monthly report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations will be received in due course, be noted;
- (5) the progress of the Secondary School Performance and Attainment Working Group be noted;
- (6) the progress of the Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People Working Group, established by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills), be noted;
- (7) the fact that there are no items for pre-scrutiny within the current Key Decision Forward Plan that fall under the remit of the Committee on this occasion, be noted;
- (8) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (9) the Senior Democratic Services Officer be requested to liaise with Ms. C. McDonough, Parent Governor Representative, regarding future references to autism conditions.