

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

WEDNESDAY, 25TH NOVEMBER, 2020

PRESENT: Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors H Bithell, P Drinkwater,
B Flynn, A Forsaith, C Gruen, C Howley,
A Hussain, J Illingworth, W Kidger,
J Lennox, A Marshall-Katung, K Renshaw
and R. Stephenson

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)

Mr E A Britten - Church Representative (Catholic)
Mr A Graham - Church Representative (Church of England)
Ms J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
Ms K Blacker – Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative
Ms H Bellamy – Teacher Representative
Ms D Reilly – Looked After Children and Care Leavers

39 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents

There were no appeals.

40 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public

There were no exempt items.

41 Late Items

There were no late items.

42 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

43 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

There were no apologies.

At this point in the meeting, the Chair highlighted to the Board that, due to other work commitments, Emma Holmes had taken the decision to step down as the Board's Young Lives Leeds (YLL) representative. It was agreed that the Chair would write to Emma to thank her for the contribution she has made to the work of Scrutiny Board. The Chair explained that the Board is awaiting details of a nominated representative to fill the YLL position.

44 Minutes - 7th October 2020

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

45 Future in Mind: Leeds Strategy Refresh

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented information surrounding the refresh of the Future in Mind: Leeds Strategy.

The following were in attendance:

- Councillor Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Councillor Julie Heselwood, Deputy Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Julie Longworth, Deputy Director of Children and Families
- Val Waite, Head of Learning Inclusion
- Karen Jessup, Principal Educational Psychologist, Children and Families
- Dr Jane Mischenko, Strategic Lead Commissioner, Children and Maternity, NHS Leeds CCG
- Jess Evans, Senior Commissioning Manager, Children's Mental Health and Wellbeing, NHS Leeds CCG

The Executive Member for Children and Families introduced the report, recognising the need to prioritise development trauma services as highlighted by the impact of the pandemic on child and adolescent mental health. The Executive Member welcomed Members input on the development of the Future In Mind Strategy moving forward.

The Strategic Lead Commissioner provided an outline of the strategy refresh and gave a particular explanation surrounding the proposed 7 priority areas and the 6 key underlying principles on which the work carried out must be founded. The Board was also advised that the Leeds strategy is not a single agency strategy and begins at conception, continues throughout childhood, and a child's transition to adulthood, to ensure that people are consistently supported throughout stages of their lives, avoiding gaps of provision.

The Senior Commissioning Manager then delivered a PowerPoint presentation on how the future healthcare needs of children in relation to

mental health have been impacted by changes made to meet COVID-19 demand. Members were advised that fewer referrals were made during the initial lockdown period, but have now increased back to normal levels and the majority of services have been re-established to respond.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Crucial role of schools in identifying social, emotional and mental health needs.* Members recognised the importance of schools in ensuring that issues are identified early and the relevant support is provided, and a need for continued focus on encouraging school attendance.
- *Partnership working and cluster support.* In response to a query, Members were advised that alongside schools, and during periods of school closure as a result of the pandemic, specialist services within cluster partnerships have continued to identify mental health issues within families, and the strength of the multi-agency response throughout the pandemic was noted in both identifying wellbeing needs and working restoratively with families. Related to this, it was noted that non-statutory services, including youth work and third sector support services, are often more accessible to and trusted by families, particularly minority groups, and are key to contributing to the multi-agency response to young people's mental health.
- *Engaging with young people and their families.* Members noted the importance of communicating effectively with young people and their families to reduce stigma and raise awareness of services and resources. Members were advised that a number of social media campaigns have taken place during the pandemic to reach out and let people know that services are still available, as well as ongoing work with the MindMate ambassadors to identify barriers to access.
- *Improving transition from child to adult mental health services.* Members sought more information on the work ongoing to improve transitions, and were advised a working group has been set up to focus on transition data to understand the activity across the system, initially prioritising crisis services.
- *Referral waiting times.* In response to a query, Members were advised that there are 2 week and 12 week time scales, depending on services required, however, resources are made available online for all to access during waiting periods.
- *Exam stress.* Members noted the increase in heightened anxiety around exams, with earlier onset than usual, and sought assurance that services are planning for an increase in referrals of this nature ahead of the exam season. Members were advised that details of service plans for exam stress will be circulated following the meeting.

At the end of the discussion, the Chair thanked everyone for their valuable contributions and confirmed the Scrutiny Board's endorsement of the 7 priority areas identified as part of the Future In Mind Strategy refresh. The Board also agreed to schedule a further update in 12 months' time to monitor

progress and reflect on the ongoing partnership approach, particularly with the third sector and other key services such as the youth service.

RESOLVED –

- a) That the contents of the report, along with Members comments, be noted;
- b) That the Scrutiny Board endorses the 7 priority areas identified as part of the Future In Mind strategy refresh;
- c) That the additional information requested, as set out above, be provided.
- d) That a progress update be added to the Board's work schedule for 12 months' time.

Co-opted Member Andrew Graham left the meeting at 11:30 a.m. during discussion of this item.

46 Work Schedule

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

The Principal Scrutiny Adviser noted that during the last meeting, Board Members requested that the Scrutiny Board Chair and the Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment send a joint letter to the Department for Education and Ofqual relaying their views and concerns surrounding plans for statutory pupil assessments during 2021. It was noted that a copy of this letter was appended to the report and a response letter received by Ofqual this week had been shared with Board Members in advance of the meeting. While acknowledging that the Board was still awaiting a response from the Department for Education, the Chair proposed that an update on this matter be scheduled for the Board's next formal meeting.

RESOLVED – That the work schedule be updated to reflect the requests made by the Board during today's meeting.

47 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Wednesday, 6th January 2021 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.45 am)