

SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)

THURSDAY, 15TH MARCH, 2018

PRESENT: Councillor S Bentley in the Chair

Councillors J Akhtar, D Cohen, J Elliott,
C Gruen, M Harland, M Iqbal, P Latty,
A Ogilvie, K Renshaw and B Selby

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)

CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative
Ms M Owen – Teacher Representative
Ms C Hopkins – Young Lives Leeds

75 Late Items

There were no late items of business.

76 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

77 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes

Apologies were received from Councillor Dawson. Councillor Harland attended the meeting as substitute. Apologies were also received from co-optees S Hutchinson and J Hazelgrave.

78 Minutes - 15 February 2018

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15th February 2018 be confirmed as a correct record

79 Leeds Safeguarding Children's Board - Transitional Arrangements

The report of the Independent Chair, Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, provided an update on the developments of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Leeds.

The following were in attendance:

- Mark Peel, Independent Chair, Leeds Safeguarding Children Board
- Phil Coneron, Assistant Manager, Evaluation and Analysis, Leeds Safeguarding Board
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Saleem Tariq, Deputy Director, Children and Families

The Independent Chair, Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, advised of the transitional arrangements for Leeds in response to the new safeguarding

arrangements to be established by September 2019 under the revised “Working Together To Safeguard Children (WTSC) 2018”, following the Wood Report, and changes to the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The key issues of note being:

- West Yorkshire Police, the Health sector and LCC Department of Children and Families will assume equal statutory responsibility for safeguarding children.
- Agreement had been reached to retain the LSCB Business Unit during 2018/19 to support the three agencies with the Independent Chair retaining his scrutiny role.
- A 4 year time span had been introduced for the office of the Independent Chair. Mr Peel expressed his own personal support of this action to ensure that independence was not eroded over time. He advised that his own tenure would end in September 2019.

Mr Peel reassured the Board of his intention to ensure that smooth transition for the Leeds Safeguarding Partnership which will be fit for purpose by September 2019. During the transitional year, work would be undertaken to assess the new review framework; negotiate funding arrangements and secure parity for the three statutory bodies within the partnership. Additionally, he referenced the current working arrangements between Leeds and Kirklees Councils, to reassure the Scrutiny Board that the management and leadership of children’s services in Leeds had not weakened

The key areas of discussion raised by the Board were:

- The necessary funding arrangements between partners.
- Arrangements between LSCB and Leeds Adults Safeguarding Board.
- Working arrangements with Kirklees MDC.
- The role of schools and educationalists within the partnership framework.
- The attributes required of a future Independent Chair.

Having considered the report of the Independent Chair of the Leeds Safeguarding Children Board, the Scrutiny Board

RESOLVED –

- a) To thank the Independent Chair for his presentation at the meeting
- b) To note the contents of the report and discussions at the meeting
- c) To support the new arrangements over the 2018/19 period
- d) To request the Leeds Safeguarding Children Partnership provide a further update on progress during the 2018/19 transitional year.

80 Youth Service - Review of Impact and Outcomes Since Service Reconfigurations.

Further to minute 73 of the meeting held 15th February 2018 when this matter was deferred, the Board considered a report providing a summary of improvements to Targeted and Specialist Youth Work practice and monitoring since reconfiguration of the service in 2013. The report outlined the changes

to the service in terms of budget; resources, reach; and impact and specifically the targeted youth work offer.

The following information was supplied with the report:

- Framework for Geographically Targeted Youth Work
- YoWAT Stars Assessment
- Youth Service Locality South/South East Quarterly Report July – September 2017
- Geographically Targeted Youth Work – A Summary for the City 1st April to 31st December 2017
- Youth Work Review – Consultation Feedback

The following were in attendance:

- Andrea Richardson – Head of Service, Learning for Life
- Jean Ellison – Youth Offer Lead
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor – Deputy Executive Member for Children and Families
- Saleem Tariq, Deputy Director, Children and Families

The following key issues were highlighted:

- The service reconfiguration in 2013 and the devolved Youth Activities Fund to Community Committees to support the universal offer
- The current review, to be implemented by April 2019
- Resources, provision and outcomes, noting the reduced overall Youth Service budget
- The use of case studies and the YoWAT assessment for individual case analysis to provide quality assurance

The key areas of discussion raised by the Board were:

- How young people were identified as recipients of targeted youth work
- Partnership working between the Youth Service Officers and relevant agencies, such as West Yorkshire Police, the anti-social behaviour teams and mental health practitioners
- The partnership working established between the service and Third Sector/Voluntary Sector providers to ensure the best possible value is made from available resources
- How provision is managed in areas where there are no voluntary or third sector providers, or there is little engagement.
- Provision and monitoring of the impact of the Information, Advice and Guidance service, noting a comment that this was inconsistent across the city.
- The development of relationships with secondary schools and education establishments
- The need to quality assure, monitor and evidence the output and impact of the service, particularly where there could be a correlation between the work of the service and the Authority's performance figures in relation to school attendance, under 18 alcohol related hospital admittance and teenage pregnancy.

Having considered the report of the Director of Children and Families, the Board

RESOLVED – To make the following recommendations:

- a) To thank officers for the work undertaken by the Youth Service and to note the ongoing service review with implementation of the findings anticipated by April 2019
- b) Noted the comments made during consideration of the performance information
- c) Noted that further development of performance information will be undertaken to produce outcome and impact information.

(Councillor Akhtar left the meeting for a short while)

81 One Adoption West Yorkshire

The report of the Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire provided a summary of the first 9 months of operation of the One Adoption agency operating and included an overview of the progress made since April 2017.

The report included the following documents:

- Practice Improvement Framework (Draft May 2017)
- Quarterly Performance Report July to September 2017

The following were in attendance:

- Julie Chew – One Adoption Yorkshire
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor, Deputy Executive Member, Children and Families
- Saleem Tariq, Deputy Director, Children and Families

The key areas of discussion raised by the Board were:

- The resources to support One Adoption and the impact of rationalisation of adoption panels through the establishment of One Adoption
- The number of households currently supported through the process
- Numbers of children for adoption are currently exceeding the number of potential adoptive families
- Clarity regarding the number of adoption arrangements breaking down
- Keeping the child(ren) as the focus, reviewing their needs alongside those of the adopting family, including health and social support throughout the adoption process. Support remains in place for 12 months afterwards and following review, from Adoption Support Services with formal intensive support withdrawn incrementally
- The take-up of the Pupil Premium by adoptive families

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the contents of the report and the discussions at the meeting
- b) To continue to support the work of One Adoption and the recruitment of adopter's in West Yorkshire.

82 Support for Foster Carers

The report of the Director of Children and Families outlined the range of support provided for approved foster carers and their families by the fostering service and key partners. The report included the document 'Child Friendly Leeds: Supporting Enrichment Opportunities for Foster and Kinship Families' produced by the Enrichment Team, detailing support to carers and their families.

The following attended the meeting:

- Jeanette Scott, Service Delivery Manager, Children's Social Work Services
- Marie Proctor – Leeds Foster Carers Association -
- Councillor Jonathan Pryor – Deputy Executive Member for Children and Families
- Saleem Tariq, Deputy Director, Children and Families

The key areas of discussion raised by the Board were:

- The Foster Carers allowance scheme; which was structured around competencies, skills and assessments with Level 1 carers being primarily kinship carers/supported lodgings providers and fell within a different assessment scheme
- The scope for Level 1 Foster Carers to receive an allowance subject to their personal development. Level 1 Carers undertook basic training which included modules on health and safety, child protection. Many did progress to Level 2 and 3, with some Level 3 Kinship Foster Carers acting as mentors for new carers
- The impact of the 'Bedroom Tax' and the work undertaken to enable prospective Foster Carers living in Council Housing to access larger homes to accommodate future foster placement.
- The successful outcomes from Kinship care.

The Board also heard from Marie Proctor, Leeds FCA who commented on the following:

- Recognition for the support available through Leeds FCA and the value of legal cover.
- Welcomed the fact that the Fostering Service recognised Foster Carers as professionals, although not every service/relevant agency did. The link between the Fostering & Adoption Service and West Yorkshire Police was identified as an area where further work could be done to build better relationships.
- The positive impact the establishment of Leeds Virtual School had on relationships between Foster Carers and education providers.
- The activities offer negotiated with LCC and external partners to Foster and Kinship Carers and looked after children.
- The decision making process and support available in the event of a placement breakdown.

RESOLVED –

- a) To receive and note the contents of the report
- b) To continue to support the work of the fostering service and it's approved foster carers

- c) To promote the best possible outcomes for fostered children and young people.

(Councillor Iqbal left the meeting at the conclusion of this item)

83 Ofsted - Outcome of the focused visit to Leeds City Council Children's Services, January 2018

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report on the outcome of a two day visit conducted by Ofsted 30 – 31st January 2018 reviewing the Authority's arrangements for the quality of matching placement and decision-making for children in care. A copy of the letter from Mr N Parks, HM Inspector, summarising the findings, to the Director of Children and Families was appended to the report.

The following attended the meeting:

- Councillor Jonathan Pryor – Deputy Executive Member for Children and Families
- Saleem Tariq, Deputy Director, Children and Families

The Board noted the two areas highlighted by the Inspector for consideration and the responses offered:

- The presentation of information in Performance Management reports. The Department had agreed to review the way material was presented.
- The variable quality of Personal Education Plans. The Headteacher, Virtual School was leading on work to address the comments of the Inspector which related to the way information was recorded and shared amongst relevant agencies.

The Chair reported comments made previously by the Representative of the Church of England, a Head Teacher, and his experience of the different approaches taken to PEPs and the supportive approach by Rochdale Children's Services.

In conclusion, the Chair thanked the Team for their work in this particularly challenging area and welcomed the Inspectors comments regarding staff turnover and the pride the social work staff took in their work.

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the findings of Ofsted as detailed in appendix 1, and the information presented verbally at the Scrutiny Board meeting.
- b) To recommend that the areas identified as requiring improvement during this recent visit be included in the next scrutiny review of progress against Ofsted improvement areas.

84 Work Schedule

The Head of Governance and Scrutiny Support submitted a report which invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

It was reported that the Annual Standards Report would not be available for the April Board meeting, but would be presented early in the 2018/19

Municipal Year. The Board agreed that a report on SEMH provision discussed at the June 2017 meeting, would now be presented to the April Board meeting
RESOLVED – That the work schedule be agreed following amendments as discussed.

85 Date and Time of Next Meeting

Thursday 26th April 2018 at 9.45 am. (with a pre-meeting for Board Members at 9.15 am).