

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

20 January 2020

Present:-

Councillors R Hannaford (Chair), D Sellis, S Aves, F Biederman, J Brazil, C Channon, G Gribble, J Hawkins, L Hellyer, R Hosking, T Inch, A Saywell and P Sanders

Apologies:-

Councillors M Squires, A Connett and Mrs C Mabin

Members attending in accordance with Standing Order 25

Councillor J McInnes

* **154** **Items Requiring Urgent Attention**

There was no matter raised as a matter of urgency.

* **155** **Public Participation**

There were no oral representations from members of the public.

* **156** **Scrutiny Committee Work Programme**

RESOLVED that the following be added to the Work Programme:

- Readiness for School (speech/language development, toilet training) – SOG agenda.

* **157** **Eclipse Implementation**

(Councillor McInnes attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee)

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Commissioning Children's Services (CS/20/03) on the implementation of the new Eclipse case management system, which went live in January 2019 following the Council entering into a developmental partnership with OLM to design and implement the new system.

A Mobilisation Board was set up in June 2019 between the Council and OLM to support the joint working, which had managed the prioritisation of key development areas and issues that needed to be resolved following data migration.

It was reported that with good progress having been made in resolving complex issues during the autumn of 2019, it was expected to be in a 'business as usual' position by March 2020, with a review of the implementation of Eclipse in summer 2020 and lessons learnt shared.

Members' discussions points with Officers included:

- lessons having been learned, additional resources had now been added and staff training extended out to localities;
- work was continuing on a set standard for compatible Court form templates;
- additional hot desking hubs had now been made available and that all staff should be aware of the mobile functionality of Eclipse;

- that visits to social work offices would be arranged for Members after March 2020, when the system would be fully operational, with a report to Committee thereafter.

* **158** **Special Guardianship Task Group recommendations - progress update**

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Children's Social Care (CS/20/04) and noted the progress against the recommendations made by the Special Guardianship Order Task Group, as agreed by the Committee on 10 June 2019.

The Report highlighted that there continued to be a lot of attention paid to Special Guardians at both local and national level and an increasing awareness of the importance that Special Guardians play.

Discussion points with Members and Officers included:

- the Cabinet Member for Children's Services had raised nationally the issues highlighted by the Task Group through his capacity as Chair of the F40 Group;
- training courses with Special Guardians had been piloted and would now be provided regularly, with delivery on a geographical basis – feedback received from Special Guardians on this had been positive;
- there were regular support group meetings for Special Guardians, and it may be possible for some Members to attend one of these meetings;
- the monitoring of legal advice costs, which were an increasing pressure on the budget, due to legal aid not currently being available for Special Guardians; and
- there would be two trained Special Guardian Peer Guides working in each area.

An update would be provided to a future Committee meeting.

* **159** **Children's Contracts - progress review**

The Committee received the Report of the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Head of Commissioning for Women and Children (CS/20/01), which provided an update on the progress of Children and Family Health Devon in the delivery of their new contract, setting out the background to the contract; the Commissioner Assurance Processes; and Provider Progress.

The Report concluded that following a significant change in provider arrangements for the majority of Devon, good progress was being made, albeit slower than originally anticipated. Relationships between providers and commissioners were strong but appropriately robust in terms of challenge, performance and expected service improvement. The health wellbeing and safety of children was known and continually monitored by the provider.

Members' discussion points with Officers included:

- Contract clarity – it was a 0-18 contract covering community services in occupational therapy; speech and language therapy; physio; specialist school nursing; learning disability, autism and CAMHS;
- CAMHS was currently a challenging environment and national funding was being utilised at local level to expand the CAMHS workforce, with pilot teams going into school settings – currently in the Eastern area and Torbay – to be rolled out across Devon later this year;
- funding had been secured for training and support of a new workforce to work with children and young people at an earlier age;
- referrals to CAMHS were triaged on a daily basis and a written response sent within a 24-hour target timeframe;
- Members raised concern at the waiting times for CAMHS referrals across the County;
- Focus groups were working around delivery of Early Help for Mental Health services, which would be supported by successful bid funding; and

- the Children and Family Health Devon website ([here](#)) provided further information on specific services, including referrals, which anyone was able to access.

* **160** **Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) Task Group recommendations - progress update**

(Councillor McInnes attended in accordance with Standing Order 25(1) and spoke to this item at the invitation of the Committee)

The Committee received the Report of the Head of Education and Learning (CS/2002) noting the progress against three of the recommendations made by the Education, Health and Care Plan Task Group, presented to the Committee on 10 June 2019. The other Task Group recommendations were included within the Written Statement of Action which was presented to the Committee on a quarterly basis.

Discussion points with Members and Officers included:

- the number of pupils with EHCPs was continuing to grow and with the shortfall in funding, put greater pressure on teams – this was a national issue;
- the most significant areas of growth were in post-16 children and the Early Years;
- there was a nationally set threshold for assessment at six weeks;
- quality assurance checks and monitoring now took place on a regular basis, using learning to improve plans going forward;
- Module training had been rolled out this week for all new and existing staff to take up;
- EHCPs were formally reviewed every 12 months with any significant amendments to a plan being made then (although smaller tweaks could be made before the review);
- SENDCO briefing forums were completely voluntary; had been well received with high attendance; feedback was taken back to partner schools and newsletters circulated; and
- that both maintained and independent special schools were at present managing to recruit and retain high quality support staff.

An update would be provided to a future Committee meeting.

* **161** **Children's Standing Overview Group**

The Committee received the Report of the Scrutiny Committee Standing Overview Group (SOG) which outlined the topics covered at its December meeting, highlighting the key points raised during discussion and listing the agreed actions.

Future suggested items for SOG included:

- Visit to MASH teams
- Public Nursing recruitment – look at in 6 months' time.

***DENOTES DELEGATED MATTER WITH POWER TO ACT**

The Meeting started at 2.15 pm and finished at 3.55 pm