

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Children Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 2 September 2013 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Horabin (Vice-Chairman), M. Bradshaw, E. Cargill, P. Hignett, K. Loftus, Logan and Woolfall

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Cassidy, Fraser, C. Plumpton Walsh and L. Lawler

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: S. Clough, T. Coffey, M. Grady, A. McIntyre, S. Nyakatawa and M. Simpson

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2013 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

(NB: Councillor Dennett declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item due to being Chairman of the Management Committee for the Pupil Referral Unit)

CYP12 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board received a report which contained the minutes relating to the Children, Young People and Families portfolio, which had been considered by Executive Board Committee since the last meeting of the PPB.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CYP13 SSP MINUTES

The minutes of the Halton Children's Trust meeting held on 23 July 2013 were submitted to the Board for information.

In relation to Minute No. 1.5, unannounced inspection, it was noted that Officers were more aware of how the new inspection would be approached. Inspectors would be looking for more detailed evidence and expectations had been raised.

In respect of Minute No. 1.3, performance monitoring model across children's and adults services, Members suggested the possibility of sharing the model with colleagues from other agencies.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CYP14 ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an analysis on complaints processed under the Children Act 1989, Representation's Procedure.

The report outlined 4 categories to the representation process and the Annual Report from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. Members were advised that there were 45 Statutory Complaints made to the Local Authority in 2012/13 which was 4 more in comparison to last year, an increase of 10%. This was still fairly low number in relation to the number of services provided. It was further noted that the increase in complaints could indicate the procedure was being assessed and those using services felt able to express their views which was positive.

The Board was further advised of the types of complaints made and who they were made by; the outcome of closed Stage 1 complaints; information regarding Stage 2 complaints; Stage 3 Review Panel; the Local Government Ombudsman and timescales.

In relation to compliments it was reported that 113 compliments had been received in 2012/13 details of which were outlined in the report for information.

The report further set out information regarding Learning and Service Improvement and detailed improvements for 2012/13, which were influenced by

learning from complaints.

Arising from discussion of the report, Members queried the Stage 3 Review Panel and requested further information regarding this be circulated to the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The report be accepted as the mechanism which the Local Authority is kept informed about the operation of its complaints procedure;
- 2) The Annual Report will evidence how feedback from service users have been used to improve service delivery; and
- 3) Information regarding Stage 3 Review Panel be circulated to the Board for information.

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CYP15 OFSTED INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED OF HELP AND PROTECTION AND CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an update on the new single inspection framework that was due to be launched from November 2013.

Members were advised that Halton was last subject to a major Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services in February 2011, the Safeguarding and Looked After Children Inspection (SLAC). The outcome was 12 grades of Good and 10 of Outstanding.

It was reported that this was replaced in 2012 and following initial replacement with a Council based Safeguarding Inspection with a view to introducing a multi-agency inspection framework from September 2013. It was noted that this had been aborted following a number of pilots, and at the express instruction of the Head of Ofsted.

It was further noted that in April 2013, Ofsted announced plans to inspect local authority arrangements for services for children in need of help and protection, and children looked after and care leavers, under a single combined framework that included local authority fostering and adoption options.

The Board was advised that the new framework

would be rolled out over a 3 year period from November with every local authority inspected within that time. The report further set out the methodology of the latest Inspection process, the stages of the child's journey to be evaluated, the scope that would be included and the new 4 point judgement scale.

It was noted that in July 2013 Halton received an unannounced visit of a multi-agency team in order to realistically test Halton's state of readiness for the new Inspection Regime. Sixteen inspectors came to Halton over a four day period and nearly 100 cases were assessed, inspectors also met with looked after children to obtain feedback. It was further noted that the findings from the review would inform planning for the Inspection. Project plans were being developed to frame the work for each planning group

Arising from discussion of the report Members discussed the multi-agency children's Board, where various agencies met together to address issues and help to better meet the needs of Halton's children and young people. The Board requested that updates from the multi-agency children's board meeting be reported to the PPB on a termly basis. Members also suggested the possibility of attending the meeting in order to observe the discussions.

The Board raised concerns with problems in the past with the Carefirst system in relation to ICT and it was noted that work was being carried out with colleagues in ICT in order to correct faults with the system.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The report be noted; and
- 2) Members are supported through briefing and training events planned in preparation for the review.

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CYP16 OVERVIEW ON CHILDREN IN NEED/CHILD PROTECTION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an update on issues that impacted on performance within the Children in Need service (CiN) on a six monthly basis.

The Board was informed of the importance of Members having a good understanding of the performance for CiN Contact, Referral and Assessment analysis and

were satisfied that adequate strategies were in place to ensure that the children of Halton were safeguarded. Ofsted Inspections of Contact, Referral and Assessment processes in other local authorities had criticised Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs) and elected representatives for failing to scrutinise safeguarding practices and having a poor understanding of issues that impacted on performance.

Members were advised that children's social care was made up of a number of services and the CiN service provided contact referral and assessment services to children in need and those in need of protection including those children with a disability who required a social worker.

The report provided information on the following services:

- contacts;
- referrals;
- completion of assessments;
- child protection plans and S47 enquiries;
- court activity / children in care;
- performance / data;
- social worker capacity and caseloads; and
- practice review.

It was further noted that as of the date of the meeting there were currently 161 children in care in Halton. Social worker recruitment remained stable and all the social worker vacancies had been filled. With regards to managers it was noted that work was being carried out in recruitment, retention and development.

Arising from discussion of the information, Members commented on the number of caseloads officers were dealing with and were informed of the 'Step up Step down' process where cases were reviewed to ascertain whether they should be moved to the Team around Family using the common assessment framework.

RESOLVED:

- 1) the Board note the contents of the report and the levels of activity in the service;
- 2) Members support the establishment of the Investing in Halton's Children, Young People and Families Board and the action plan to deliver continued improvements in the service; and

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- 3) a further report be presented in 6 months on CiN activity, and the outcomes from the Board.

(NB: Councillor Dennett declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item due to being Chairman of the Management Committee for the Pupil Referral Unit)

CYP17 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which provided performance management information for Quarter 1 of 2013/14.

It was reported that key priorities and development for improvement in 2013-16 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:

- Children and Families services;
- Learning and achievement; and
- Children's organisation and provision.

Members were advised that departmental objections provided a clear statement on what services were planning to achieve and showed how they contributed to the Council's strategic priorities.

Arising from the report, the following points were highlighted / noted:

- In relation to 3.2 and the SEND reforms, a project manager had been appointed to families and young people, and would be at the centre of commissioning, assessment and planning. Government had indicated that funding would be available to help with this;
- With regards to 3.3, School Improvement Partnerships, funding had been withdrawn for this and some of the intelligence for schools rated 'good' and 'outstanding' was sparse. Schools would be visited on a regular basis in the future to collate information. Members requested that a report be brought to a future meeting presenting the new information;
- There were to be changes to the primary curriculum in September 2014 whereby the system of levels would be removed;
- In relation to the amalgamation of the Bridge School

and Pupil Referral Units, it was noted that Officers would work with the management team of the amalgamated PRU to ensure high quality provision was available for all excluded pupils from September 2013;

- The current anticipated demand for extended free entitlement of nursery places for 2 year olds was 493 and there was a current supply of 586; and
- The Board discussed the impact of the Academy and Free Schools with regards to whether schools 'bought back' services from Halton, in addition to action taken if those schools failed.

The Board was advised of the provisional education attainment results for 2013. It was noted that these figures had not yet been verified.

- Reading at Key Stage 2 at level 4+ was 86% (the national average was 87%)
- Writing at Key Stage 2 at level 4+ was 86% (the national average was 81%)
- Maths at Key Stage 2 at level 4+ was 86% (the national average was 84%)
- At Key Stage 4 62% of pupils achieved 5 x GCSE's graded A*-C in English and Maths, this was an improvement on last year which was 59%;
- 86.9% of pupils achieved 5 A*-C's in all subjects; and
- 23% of pupils achieved the English Baccalaureate.

Arising from discussion of the information Members noted the success of pupils from Ormiston Bollinbroke and asked for comparisons of the cohort from 5 years ago in terms of where pupils lived. In response it was noted that this piece of work could be investigated.

The Board wished to place on record its congratulations to pupils in Halton for their academic achievements.

RESOLVED: the Quarter 1 monitoring reports and comments made be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.58 p.m.