

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, 12 June 2017 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chair), Logan (Vice-Chair), Cassidy, Edge, C. Gerrard, P. Hignett, Horabin, P. Lloyd Jones, Parker, Rowe and J. Stockton

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. McIntyre, A. Jones, T. Coffey and M. West

Also in attendance: One Member of the public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2017 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP2 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

CYP3 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The minutes relating to the Children, Young People and Families Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board, were attached at Appendix 1 for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes are noted.

CYP4 ANNUAL REPORT 2016-17

The Chair presented the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2016-17.

He wished to place on record his thanks to Members and Officers for their commitment, support and hard work carried out throughout the year.

RESOLVED: That the 2016-17 Annual Report be received.

Councillor C Gerrard declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item as she was employed as a Social Worker in Lancashire's Children's Service.

CYP5 THE CHILDREN AND SOCIAL WORK ACT 2017 - PRESENTATION

The Board received a presentation which informed of the changes to statutory duties to children and young people and the reform of social work outlined in the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The presentation focussed on the key areas as follows:

- Corporate parenting principles and children in care duties;
- Education duties to previously looked after children;
- The expansion of care leaver duties;
- The abolition of the Safeguarding Children's Board;
- Further regulation of social work; and
- Compulsory relationship and sex education in schools.

The changes introduced by the Children and Social Work Act 2017 were discussed in the report. It was noted that statutory regulations that outlined in more detail the impact and implementation of the specific changes would be published later in the year, for consultation before formal implementation of the relevant parts of the Act.

Members raised the following points after the presentation:

Was it possible to have stability in corporate parenting principles, one example would be the same one social worker throughout a child in care's life?

Yes it was possible although extremely challenging. On average a social worker stayed in their job for only 7 ½ years, probably due to the nature of the work, high caseloads and the demands of the job. They were a young workforce with a high turnover. It was noted that local

authorities needed to do more to support them with these difficult aspects of the job.

Will the introduction of the accreditation help improve the quality of the workforce?

It was too early to tell if the accreditation would add any value as the results of the pilot had been vague.

It was suggested by Members that the accreditation should be mandatory to avoid having two tiers of qualified social workers.

Clarity between the 3 safeguarding parties was queried and if for example a child was out of Borough, how would this relationship work?

This would not be clear until the regulations had been published. At the moment the children would still be monitored by the Safeguarding Board. If a child was being looked after in Halton they would be treated as Halton's child.

Members raised concerns over the cost to the Authority that these statutory changes would bring with them, and that many schools were already in financial trouble

There was no reference to the changes in the Funding Formula and it was understood that the cost of qualified social workers may rise. It was important to note that until the regulations were published there could be no clarity over this.

With regards to the compulsory relationship education – would parents be given the opportunity to opt out for their child?

This would be applied to all schools and did not give exceptions at the moment, although it is expected that there would be some.

What control does the LA have over privately owned children's care homes and the staff they employed?

Ofsted are the body responsible for managing twice yearly inspections and had the power to close down a home that failed an inspection. It was noted however, that if the LA had any concerns over a particular care home, they could forward these to Ofsted.

Members were also advised that a provider network was in place and that the LA did its best to influence the practice of providers. It was confirmed that other LA's were required to notify Halton if they placed one of their children in a private care home in Halton.

As the safeguarding arrangements are to come in place by 2018, will the regulations be out in time for the 3 safeguarding parties?

They should be but this was not confirmed.

Was there scope for Halton to have a variation of its own Safeguarding Board?

Yes Halton would have the same model but with different chairing arrangements. It was commented that without a statutory power partners may not engage in the same way with the three safeguarding parties.

How were Halton doing with regards to its corporate parenting principles – it would be nice to hear feedback?

These have been refreshed after consultation with the care leavers. Members would be advised of consultation responses and presented with the revised charter.

The Chair requested that reports are submitted to the Board as the Act progresses.

RESOLVED: That Members note the changes to statutory duties.

Councillor Edge declared A Disclosable Other Interest in the following item as she was temporarily employed at Woodview Child Development Centre.

CYP6 REDUCING CHILD POVERTY AND IMPROVING LIFE CHANCES

Due to the absence of the presenting Officer, the Chairman requested on behalf of the Board, that this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Policy and Performance Board in September.

RESOLVED: That the item be deferred to the next meeting of the Board.

CYP7 NATIONAL FUNDING FORMULA AND HIGH NEEDS FUNDING

Members received a presentation that provided an overview of the changes proposed through the introduction of a National Funding Formula (NFF) and revised approach to funding High Needs.

It was reported that the Department for Education (DfE) had undertaken a two phase consultation on the introduction of a NFF and High Needs Funding. For the NFF to assist with the consultation, the DfE produced indicative budgets illustrating the estimated change to each schools individual budget in 2018/2019 and 2019/20. These illustrations showed that all Halton's secondary schools would lose funding and there would be a reduction in funding for 3 small primary schools. Concerns were raised over the impact that these losses would have over these schools and the communities that they served.

The presentation also discussed the current funding position in Halton and the future funding levels for the UK proposed by the Government. The High Needs Block and its funding factors were also discussed with Members and the fact that the costs of high needs in Halton were rising year on year as more schools were identifying children with special educational needs.

RESOLVED: Members receive a further update once the funding changes had been confirmed.

CYP8 SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY DATES

The Board received a report that set out the statutory requirements for the Local Authority in determining school term and holiday dates and set out some of the issues faced when seeking to determine term/holiday dates.

It was reported that under Section 32 of the Education Act 2002, the Local Authority (LA), being the employer, shall determine the dates when school terms and holidays are to begin and end for community and voluntary controlled schools.

The principles for term time setting were outlined in the report and noted and supported by Members. It was announced that the LA was proposing to consult community and voluntary controlled schools during Autumn Term 2017 on proposed dates for 2019/20 and if the schools valued this approach, it would be considered for subsequent years. It

was noted that although it would not be possible to satisfy all those that were affected by term dates; a consensus would be reached.

Further to Members' queries it was noted that free schools and academies were required to notify the LA of their holidays and to publish these in advance on their websites, which they did do. Members commented that this year's Christmas and New Year holiday dates were too early. It was reported that these could not be changed now, however, it was suggested that this could be avoided in the future.

RESOLVED: That the Board supports the principles for setting term times as set out in the report.

CYP9 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS - QUARTERS 3 & 4 OF 2016-17

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarters 3 and 4 of 2016-17 and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these. It was noted that Members had received quarter 3 reports in advance on 16 May 2017, as these were finalised in between the Board meeting schedule.

It was noted that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2016-17 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authorities Business Plan, for the various functional areas reported to the Board as detailed below:

- Education, Inclusion and Provision Services; and
- Children and Families Services

The reports detailed progress made against objectives and milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

The following points were made in response to queries by Members from the quarter 4 reports:

- A piece of work was being carried out to assess the level of young people missing from home. Consideration would be given for the arrangements of logging missing children and the return interviews undertaken by Catch 22, the commissioned provider.
- It was noted that persistent absence from school had

increased. As this appeared to be the case across the Liverpool City Region it presented the opportunity for a joint piece of work to be undertaken to explore how attendance levels could be improved.

- The number of exclusions in Halton had increased to 41. This was a concern. Members were advised that the Pupil Referral Unit was full; there was a shortage of good quality alternative provision; and the current In Year Fair Access Protocol was being revised. To contribute towards the costs of additional provisions the Local Authority had been able to deduct a lump sum and remove the value of the Age Weighted Pupil Unit (AWPU). The lump sum deduction was no longer permitted by the DfE.
- The Head Teacher of the PRU was currently working 2 days a week with the LA to establish undertaking a review on the provision for children with emotional, social and mental health issues. Once this review had been completed it would be shared with the Board.
- It was suggested that some of the issues discussed above could be due to poor parenting, lack of nurturing, attachment issues and the changes in benefits increasing the financial challenges for many parents.

RESOLVED: That quarters 3 and 4 performance management reports be received.

Meeting ended at 8.55 p.m.