

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, 14 June 2021 in The Bridge Suite, Halton Stadium,, Widnes

Present: Councillors Logan (Chair), Abbott, Bramwell, Goodall, V. Hill, Jones, Loftus and Teeling

Apologies for Absence: Councillors C. Plumpton Walsh, Carlin and Ratcliffe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, T. Coffey and A. Leach

Also in attendance: One member of the press

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CYP1	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CYP2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CYP3	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	The minutes relating to the Children, Education and Social Care Portfolio, that 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 be noted.	
CYP4	ANNUAL REPORT 2020/2021	
	On behalf of his predecessor Councillor Dennett, the Chair presented the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board's Annual Report for 2020 - 21. 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 2020-21 Annual Report be received.

CYP5 NEW MEMBERS BRIEFING

The Board received a presentation, which outlined the structure of the People Directorate and provided a summary of the key areas of responsibility for the Children and Families and the Education, Inclusion and Provision Departments.

Following the presentation Members raised the following queries.

Have there been any increases in referrals during the Covid-19 pandemic?

No, in fact they had dropped and were still not at pre Covid levels today. There had been a slight increase in Children in Care (CIC) referrals – this was attributed to 11 asylum seekers accommodated at the Daresbury Hotel claiming to be under 18, so had to be taken into care.

There had also been a slight increase in non-accidental injuries to children below 4 years of age. Due to the impacts of Covid restrictions, such as family and friends support being cut off, some parents had struggled to cope with being isolated with small children during lockdowns.

Despite the pandemic there had been a significant amount of prevention work carried out remotely. Also the Council's day care centres had remained open throughout all lockdowns, providing crucial support for parents.

What was the current status with the 'troubled families' programme?

This was now known as the 'supporting families' programme and was continuing throughout the pandemic to support families to help them meet the required outcomes as was integrated into our early intervention locality teams.

Are our social workers working from home?

There were small numbers in the office but they have been visiting and supporting families all through the pandemic and kept track of all children. Each child known to the service had an individual covid risk assessment to inform the type of frequency of visits. This included physically attending children's homes where necessary. Staff have been

supported as well with additional training, provision of Covid risk assessments and provision of PPE. Also staff had been working in bubbles so the level of infections had been low.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received.

CYP6 PEOPLE DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN 2021-22

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – People, which provided Members with an overview of the People Directorate's element of the Council's Business Plan for 2021-22.

It was reported that following a review by the Council's Management Team, the continuation of the approach to the development of a single Business Plan for the 2021-22 financial year was endorsed. Attached as Appendix 1 was the People Directorate's element of that Business Plan for the Board's information. It was noted that Members of the Board were required to review the Directorate's Plan at future meetings on a quarterly basis.

The report set out how the Plan was structured and it was explained that it would form the foundation of the quarterly monitoring reports that were provided to the Council's Management Team, Executive Board and each of the Policy and Performance Boards.

Officers highlighted some emerging issues that would be taking place over the coming months –

- Ofsted inspections returning to normal, these would be focussed visits that could happen at any time, with 10 days notice being given;
- Changes to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 in relation to harm to children and those who witness abuse;
- Changes to the rules around the age assessment of unaccompanied asylum seekers (below 18 years old);
- a review into support for children with SEND; and
- changes to the high needs funding formula.

RESOLVED: That the report is received and the Board notes the requirement to receive quarterly updates on progress against the action plan.

Councillor Aimee Teeling declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item as she worked in a SEND school in Liverpool, where some pupils from Halton attended.

CYP7 HALTON LOCAL AREA SEND STRATEGY 2021-25

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – People, advising on the outcomes of the consultation on the proposed local area SEND Strategy for 2021-2024, and how it would be implemented.

It was noted that following the SEND Partnership Board's approval of the draft SEND Strategy for 2021-25, consultation took place during March and April 2021. This was hosted on the Halton Local Offer and was widely publicised both prior to and during the consultation phase. The draft SEND Strategy, SEND Strategy Governance and consultation responses were attached to the report as appendices one, two and three.

The report provided the Board with detailed information on the involvement of stakeholder events and the consultation responses, providing some examples of feedback received.

The Board was advised that the Strategy would be ratified tomorrow at the Strategic Partnership meeting.

The following queries were raised:

What support did children get when transferring into mainstream schools?

Placement decisions were made through a panel process. Provision and Placement Panel would make their recommendations, taking into consideration any preference made by the parents. A decision to transfer a child with SEND to a mainstream schools is taken by the Local Authority (LA) in accordance with the Code of Practice. Halton Borough Council's scheme of delegation makes the Divisional Manager 0-25 Inclusion ultimately responsible for placement decisions.

Not all children would go into mainstream schools as some would always remain where they were due to their requirements and the Council would support a child to be as inclusive as they wanted to be.

Will they get one to one support in a mainstream school?

Decisions about one to one support were based on the needs of the child or young person, not the type of school they attended. There was no reason why not if this was required.

What part does a mainstream school play in accepting a child to their school?

The SEND Code of Practice sets out the requirements on local authorities to consult with schools before making placement decisions. It also sets out the importance of parental or young person preference. In Halton schools were consulted with prior to any decision being taken by Provision and Placement Panel.

There was an annual review process in place to ensure that the provision and setting remained appropriate for the child or young person. This review could be brought forward at any point where there was a significant change of circumstance or concern. Where there was a strong family preference for a particular school and this school was not named in an EHCP, the LA must clearly demonstrate why not. Parents have the right of appeal to the SENIST tribunal (an arm of the family courts) if they disagreed with a decision taken by the LA.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

CYP8 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2020/21

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 4 of 2020-21 (1 January 2021 to 31 March 2021).

It was noted that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2020-21 were agreed by Members and included in the Local Authority's Business Plan, for the various functional areas reported to the Board as follows:

- 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. Members were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

Due to the absence of one officer due to self-isolation, it was agreed that any questions relating to the performance monitoring for both services would be emailed to the relevant officer or Clerk for a response.

Operational Director Education, Inclusion and Provision - and

RESOLVED: That the Quarter 4 Performance Management reports be received. | Director of Children's Services

Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.