

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, 20 February 2012 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chairman), Horabin (Vice-Chairman), M. Bradshaw, A.Cole, Fraser, Fry, Hodge, P. Lloyd Jones, K. Loftus, J. Lowe, N.Plumpton Walsh and Miss L. Lawler

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Bennett, V. Buchanan, S. Clough, H. Coen, A. McIntyre, G. Meehan, S. Nyakatawa, M. Simpson and E. Taylor

Also in attendance: C. Pollard

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP43 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2012 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP44 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

CYP45 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

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

In relation to ES64 Members queried the number of children who were in Independent Fostering Agencies. It was reported this information would be sought and subsequently it had been reported that there were 5 children in Independent Fostering Agencies which had reduced from 11 compared to last year.

Board Members also discussed the Free School

referred to in EXB78 and were informed that the land that was the proposed for the Free School was already reserved for a Primary School. Members raised concerns regarding children attending secondary schools out of the Borough. In response it was noted that the number of pupils accessing out of Borough secondary provision had significantly reduced. Members were advised that the current figures of children accessing out of Borough provision would be circulated for information. The Board requested that the reports relating to EXB78 and from February's Executive Board EXB98 be circulated for information.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the minutes be noted;
- 2) current figures of children accessing out of Borough secondary education be circulated; and
- 3) reports from EXB78 and EXB98 be circulated to Board Members for information.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

CYP46 SSP MINUTES

The minutes of the Halton Children's Trust meeting held on 10th January 2012 were submitted to the Board for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CYP47 CHANGES TO SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children, Young People and Enterprise which informed Members of the changes to arrangements for supporting young people in education and training.

It was reported that there had been a number of infrastructure changes affecting financial and other support mechanisms available to young people in Halton since 2010. The report set out a brief statement on changes affecting 14 – 25 year olds, including information of any new arrangements that had been established in Halton.

The Board was informed that in response to the changes, the Council had completed an overview of provision for 14-19 year olds (and up to 25 for those with a learning difficulty or disability), which would enable the Borough to take account of the changes and shape

provision by identifying gaps, supporting new provision and developing the market. Priorities had been identified and were outlined in the report for information.

It was noted that the 14 -19 Strategic Commissioning Statement was coherent with the purpose of positive activities for young people supporting them with their health, lifestyle and career aspirations and enabled them to achieve their full potential in their transition into adulthood.

The changes to support for young people were outlined in the report for information and headed as follows:

- Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA)
- 16 – 19 Bursary Scheme
- Hardship Funding
- Aimhigher
- Higher Education Provision
- Riverside College
- Work Related Working
- Information Advice and Guidance; and
- Apprenticeships.

Arising from the report the Board discussed the early breakfast provision in colleges, teaching standards in Riverside College and clarity was sought regarding level 3 apprenticeships and monitoring and evaluation of apprenticeships.

It was further noted that a report would be brought to a future meeting in relation to how the changes have affected services and the progress of Not in Education or Training (NEET).

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be endorsed;
- 2) a report regarding how the changes have affected services be brought to a future meeting.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

CYP48 CHILDREN IN NEED CONTACT, REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT ANALYSIS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which provided Members with the opportunity to scrutinise referral and assessment activity and provided an update on issues impacting on current performance within the Children in Need (CiN) Service. The

report focussed on the performance in relation to the first two quarters of 2011/12.

The Board was informed of the importance of Members having a good understanding of the performance for Children In Need 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 the failure to scrutinise safeguarding practices and the poor understanding of issues impacting on performance.

It was further reported that Children's Social Care was made up of a number of services. 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 Permanence Team provided services to children in care who had a plan of permanence and the Young People's team provided services to care leavers and Children in Need who were 16+. The Fostering Team and Adoption Team undertook family finding and recruitment of carers.

The report provided information on the following services:-

- Referrals;
- Contacts;
- Completion of Assessments;
- Inspection of Contact Assessment and Referral;
- Caseloads and Social Work Capacity;
- Management Capacity;
- Child Protection Plans and S47 Inquiries;
- Work Flow;
- Performance/Data; and
- Summary.

Appended to the Report for information was the terms of reference for the Halton Safeguarding Children's Board. In addition to supporting data tables for contacts referrals, initial assessments and core assessments and a Children in Need population.

Members were further advised of a 2 day unannounced inspection of Front Door Services by Ofsted, the results of which were positive and a number of strengths had been identified. There were 11 areas that met statutory requirements and some areas where flagged for further development. It was reported that an action plan had been

devised to address these issues.

Arising from the report Members discussed the variety of caseloads for social workers, teething problems with the Care First 6 system going live and the capacity of the server and recruitment and retention of managers.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board continues to scrutinise and support the work of the Children's Trust in relation to the development of Team around the family and early help services; and
- 2) an update report on end of year performance be presented to the Board in six months time including action taken and impact in reducing Social Workers' Caseloads.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

(NB: Cllr Fry declared a personal interest in the following item due to being the Chair of Halton Autistic Family Support)

CYP49 MULTI-AGENCY TRANSITION PROTOCOL

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which set out the revised Transition Protocol and provided the Board with the opportunity to comment on the protocol.

It was reported that the Strategic Transition Group oversaw the implementation of the Multi- Agency Transition Strategy for Young People aged 14 – 25. The Board endorsed the strategy on 21st February 2010. It was reported that the Strategy set out the domains in the transition from Children's to Adults Services what the Council was doing already and how the Council could improve.

It was further reported that the implementation of the Transition strategy was supported by an Action Plan and an important aspect of which was the need to revise the transition Protocol. The Protocol set out in more detail the critical milestones in transition and the procedure to be followed by all of the key agencies. The protocol also clarified the wider operational governance arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the revised Transition Protocol be endorsed.

CYP50 YOUNG CARERS SCRUTINY TOPIC

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which provided an update on the progress made regarding young carers since the topic last came to the Board on the 31st October 2011.

It was reported that the topic for young carers had been a subject of scrutiny between September 2010 and July 2011. This had been chosen as young carers were a vulnerable group given their family circumstances, and they could be defined as “children in need” as defined within the Children Act 1989, especially when their caring role inhibited the experience and usual development of childhood.

Members were advised that the scrutiny process consisted of Members and Officers within Children and Families Services, and findings of the scrutiny process were highlighted within the report brought to the Board in October and included information regarding:-

- Current staffing arrangements and structures regarding young carers;
- Commissioned services for young carers;
- Governance arrangements;
- Performance issues; and
- Partnership arrangements between Children’s and Communities Directorates.

The Scrutiny Group process had highlighted a number of positive factors, which were set out in the report for information, and the process also raised a number of areas for further development; being service provision, strategy and participation.

The report also detailed the progress made to date, a young carers model up to 18 years and the draft Young Carers Strategy for Halton January 2012 to 2014.

Members suggested that the implementation plan and strategy be taken to Area Forums to expand the consultation process and endorsed the plan and the strategy. It was also noted that an update report would be brought back to the Board in 12 months time.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the report, strategy and action plan are noted;

Strategic Director
- Children and

- 2) the new Young Carers Strategy and action plan be endorsed as a piece of work that reflected the issues raised during the scrutiny process and views of young carers; and
- 3) the issue of young carers be brought back to the Board in 12 months to review progress and any further developments.

Enterprise

CYP51 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY MID-YEAR PROGRESS REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which provided information on the progress in achieving targets contained within the 2011 – 2016 Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton.

It was reported that the SCS for Halton was the central document for the Council and its partners which provided an evidence-based framework through which actions and shared performance targets had been developed and communicated.

It was further noted that the previous SCS included targets which were also part of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and that the coalition Government announced the ending of government performance management of local authorities through LAAs. However, the Council and its partners needed to maintain some form of effective performance management framework in order to measure progress towards the Council's own objectives for the improvement of the quality of life in Halton and to meet the Government's expectation that the Council would publish performance information.

Members were advised that although this strategy was until 2016, it would be re-visited regularly and updates and amendments required would be added to the strategy, as continuing changes within the public sector emerged.

It was further noted that selected measures and targets for Children and Young People in the Halton Community Priority were summarised and attached to the report at Appendix 1. It was noted that Officers used a Halton corporate template, designed for the purpose of bringing together all relevant items of performance information in relation to national, regional and statistical neighbours.

The Board also considered a mid-year progress

report from 1st April to 30th September 2011 which detailed how performance had improved against the same period of time from last year as shown in Appendix 2. Members were advised that there were a few key challenges arising from the mid-year progress report, which would be taken forward with partners.

Arising from discussion of the data, Members noted the terminology used in relation to improved identification of Special Educational Needs at School Action and School Action Plus and how the descriptions were used. (Measure CYP12) The Board also suggested that examples alongside the descriptions for this measure would assist with easier understanding of the document. In response, it was noted that this could be changed.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the wording and terminology used in the improved identification of Special Educational Needs be simplified.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

(NB: Councillor Dennett declared a personal interest in the following item due to being a Member of the Pupil Referral Unit Management Board.)

CYP52 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR QUARTER 3

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director Policy and Resources on the performance monitoring report for quarter 3, 2011/2012.

Members were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of the Performance Management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends – comparisons and factors affecting the services etc. for:

- Children and Families Services Department;
- Children's Organisation Provision; and
- Learning and Achievement.

In particular the following points were noted:

- In relation to the current progress when annual figures were reported, Members suggested this be

highlighted in the report;

- With reference to the online forum where parents posted comments with regards to their school, Members raised concerns around the possible negativity that could be portrayed of that school. In response, it was noted that Ofsted would ensure that checks and balances were put in place to prevent the system being abused and the data would only be available to view once a large enough sample had been collected. Therefore, data could not be accessed until it had reached a certain level of responses. This would aim to get a more representative sample across the school.
- With regard to performance indicator NI063 – Stability of placements of Children in Care: Length of placement. Members queried whether the stability of the placements of children who were adopted were included in this figure, as when children were adopted this was a positive result. Under the Statutory definition, it was noted that all moves counted in a negative manner (except adoption which was excluded) even though for the child it may be a positive move e.g. moving from a children's home into foster care. Information would be circulated stating which children had moved to adoption rather than moving to other placements than what was planned.
- For the DWP/ESF work around troubled families, Members noted that the contract had been awarded to Reed in Partnership who would deal with the families with less severe problems and the Council would deal with the more troubled families.

RESOLVED: That the third quarter performance management reports be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.50 p.m.