

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, 29 January 2018 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Dennett (Chair), Logan (Vice-Chair), Cassidy, P. Hignett, Horabin, P. Lloyd Jones and Rowe

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Edge, Parker and J. Stockton

Absence declared on Council business: None

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

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CYP27 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2017 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CYP28 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

CYP29 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

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

Clarity on the following was made:

EXB63 – the Schools Forum was the decision making body in respect of the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.

EXB78 – Edinburgh Road Children's Home had been de-registered by Halton Borough Council, not Ofsted.

EXB 81 – a small number of schools would see a reduction in funding in 2018/19. Most of these reductions were due to falling pupil numbers. Other funding factors that have had an impact in school funding had been the increase in funding for low prior attainment and change to funding for deprivation.

RESOLVED: That the minutes are noted.

CYP30 SSP MINUTES

The minutes of the Halton Children's Trust meeting held on 23 November 2017 were submitted to the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes are noted.

Councillor Horabin declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business.

CYP31 CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE (PRESENTATION)

The Board received a presentation from the Operational Director for Children and Families which provided Members with an overview of the key service developments.

Information on the following was included:

- Caseload breakdown;
- I-CART activity;
- Contacts;
- North West Profile;
- Assessment Timescales;
- Children in Need;
- Children in Care;
- Placement Stability; and
- Current activity and developments within the service.

Following the presentation Members raised the following queries:

Why were children sometimes moved around?

This could be for a number of reasons but generally: the child goes missing; the foster carer gives notice; or it could be a social worker decision following a review.

Have there been any serious case reviews lately?

Not since the one two years ago following a teenager having an acute life-threatening event.

Would it be possible to have the child protection figures by Ward?

Yes this and other relative data would be arranged into Ward profiles and sent to Members.

How many children do foster carers usually have?

This depends on their accommodation i.e. number of bedrooms. It also depends on the carer themselves as to how many they wanted. Children over the age of 10 also have to have their own bedroom, so this was taken into consideration as well.

Members welcomed the information provided and agreed it was very helpful, to the extent that they would like even more detail in future.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the contents of the report and presentation.

Director of
Children's Services

CYP32 NEGLECT STRATEGY

The Board was presented with Halton's Neglect Strategy 2017-18, a copy of which was appended to the report.

The Neglect Strategy (the Strategy) had been developed under Halton Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) and was a multi-agency document which outlined the definitions and responses to neglect and the background and prevalence to neglect in Halton. The Strategy was accompanied by a multi-agency action plan which detailed how agencies and partners should identify and respond to neglect and how HSCB would scrutinise and monitor the impact and effectiveness of the Strategy.

The six classifications of neglect that had been identified were discussed: medical neglect, nutritional neglect, emotional neglect, educational neglect, physical neglect and lack of supervision and guidance. It was highlighted that neglect affected children of all ages, not just small children and that there was usually a contributing factor to neglect, as discussed in the Strategy.

The following queries were made during consideration of the paper:

Was there a definition of 'good enough care' or an 'eccentric family'?

There is clear evidence about what constitutes good enough care; in assessing a family who may be 'eccentric' the issue was what the impact was on the child and if their basic needs were being met.

Taking cultural values into consideration could be difficult?

Yes, however social workers used tools to assist them when dealing with cultural differences, plus they received equality and diversity training. It was important though that a social worker was able to challenge a family with a different cultural background, if they felt a child's basic needs were not being met.

What was being done in schools to recognise neglect?

The HCSB ran courses for Governors of schools and i-cart offered support to them as well. Recently some funding was made available to recruit two experienced staff whose job it was to assist schools and offer support and guidance in cases of suspected neglect. A document had been produced around recognising neglect and this would be sent to Members.

RESOLVED: That the Board receives and endorses the Strategy.

Director of
Children's Services

CYP33 BUSINESS PLANNING 2018 -19

The Board received the proposed priorities for the Children, Young People and Families elements of the Council's Single Business Plan for approval.

It was reported that since 2015 a Single Business Plan had been developed for the Local Authority (LA) as a whole. This plan had focussed on the key medium term issues rather than providing extensive narrative of every area of work of the LA. To ensure that the LA was producing a Business Plan that enabled it to meet the priorities identified within the Corporate Plan, the information from each Directorate would be set out under the Council's priority headings:

- Children and Young People;

- Employment, Learning & Skills;
- Safer Halton;
- Healthy Halton;
- Environment and Regeneration; and
- Corporate Effectiveness and Efficiency.

It was noted that each directorate was compiling their contribution to the Council's Single Business Plan and would seek approval for their priorities from their respective PPBs. The information would then be compiled into a single Business Plan which would be presented to Executive Board in March 2018.

The Board were presented with the following six proposed priorities for the Children and Young People's element of the plan as follows:

1. Keeping children and young people safe by improving practice;
2. Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective multi-agency early intervention;
3. Improve progress and attainment across all key stages and diminish the difference between vulnerable groups and their peers;
4. Raise achievement in early years;
5. Improve the offer for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND); and
6. Improve participation and skills for young people to drive Halton's future.

Members discussed the priorities presented before them and it was noted that if agreed, more details of the priorities would emerge and more detail could be provided over time with careful monitoring. It was also agreed that all six were as important as each other and that to prioritise the priorities would not be appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the contents of the report; and
- 2) approves the priorities for the Children, Young People and Families elements of the Council's Single Business Plan.

CYP34 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2017/18

The Board received the Performance Management reports for quarter 2 of 2017-18 (1 July to 30 September 2017) and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of these.

It was noted that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2016-17 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.

The following were highlighted:

- A children and young people's speech and language therapy service had started on 1 September 2017, jointly commissioned between HBC and the CCG;
- The schools categorisation letters were sent to headteachers and chairs of governors in Halton in September 2017; the purpose of these was explained to Members;
- Halton had been awarded capital funding to invest in the provision for children and young people with SEND, an amount of £500,000 would be provided over 3 years;
- Consultation had begun on the relevant sections of the Children and Social Work Act 2017; and
- The number of permanent exclusions in Halton rose to 53 for 2016-17.

Members discussed the new protocol in place for schools when dealing with a pupil who had been identified as having challenging behaviour. Schools were expected to use the protocol which was aimed at helping them support pupils with challenging behaviour, encourage consistency across schools and avoid exclusion. There was a discussion about the more academic curriculum and greater emphasis on progress and the impact this may be having on pupil behaviour and increased exclusions.

RESOLVED: That the performance management reports for quarter 2 of 2017-18 be received.

Meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.