

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
21 OCTOBER 2022**

PRESENT: COUNCILLOR R J KENDRICK (CHAIRMAN)

Councillors W H Gray (Vice-Chairman), S A J Blackburn, R J Cleaver, Mrs J E Killey, C Matthews, N Sear, T J N Smith, J Tyrrell and R A Wright

Councillor S P Roe, Executive Support Councillor – Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement, was also in attendance.

Officers in attendance:- Andrew Morris (Corporate Parenting Manager), Carolyn Knight (Head of Service Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker), Ethan Thorpe (Strategic Communications Lead), Heather Sandy (Executive Director – Children's Health and Commissioning), Linda Dennett (Assistant Director – Children's Services), Martin Smith (Assistant Director – Children's Education), Sheridan Dodsworth (Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)), Sarah Nardone (Assistant Director – Sector Led Improvement), Tara Jones (Interim Assistant Director – Children's Safeguarding), Thomas Crofts (Democratic Services Officer) and Tracy Johnson (Senior Scrutiny Officer)

31 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE / REPLACEMENT MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillors M A Whittington and Mrs P A Bradwell, Executive Councillor – Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement.

32 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTEREST

No declarations of Members' interest were made at this stage of the proceedings.

33 MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING
HELD ON 22 JULY 2022

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 July 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
21 OCTOBER 2022**

34 ANNOUNCEMENTS BY THE CHAIRMAN, EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES, COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PROCUREMENT AND CHIEF OFFICERS

In order to efficiently transact business from this reconvened meeting and the subsequent scheduled meeting, it was proposed and seconded that:

1. In relation to Item 8, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, consideration be given to an updated report as part of the agenda for 21 October 2022.
2. In relation to Items 9 and 10, Consideration of Exempt Information and Education Provision Planning, consideration be given to an updated report as part of the agenda for 21 October 2022.

The Chairman announced that at the meeting of the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee, 5 September 2022, a report on all ages obesity was considered, and it was agreed that a joint working group be established with the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee to investigate the issues and challenges around obesity in children and young people and adults. Volunteers were sought from the Committee's membership to take part.

The Chairman stated that he visited his divisional Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) club. He reported that it was well delivered and encourage all Members to attend their local HAF club when they were next available during the Christmas holiday break.

Councillor S P Roe, Executive Support Councillor – Children's Services, Community Safety and Procurement, announced that all district councils in Lincolnshire had been written to regarding the importance of corporate parenting and the obligations of all councillors to act as corporate parents, with an offer of training on corporate parenting responsibilities.

Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children's Services, welcomed Sarah Nardone as the new Assistant Director – Sector Led Improvement, and highlighted that the Council had received positive feedback regarding its How not to put your Foot in It working with SEND training.

RESOLVED:

1. That in relation to Item 8, Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, consideration be given to an updated report as part of the agenda for 21 October 2022.
2. That in relation to Items 9 and 10, Consideration of Exempt Information and Education Provision Planning, consideration be given to an updated report as part of the agenda for 21 October 2022.
3. That the Committee agree to take part in a joint working group on all ages obesity with the Adults and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.
4. That Councillors N Sear, Mrs J E Killey and R J Cleaver be nominated to take part in the all ages obesity joint working group.

35 UPDATE ON THE SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES
TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by Sheridan Dodsworth, Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) transformation work. The Committee was updated on progress made so far, which included the following matters:

- There was a need to strengthen the assessment process regarding Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) in mainstream settings. To address this, the Valuing SEND tool, which had now been digitised, and the inclusion toolkit, which set out the Lincolnshire standard, was introduced.
- Improvements had been made to simplifying the navigation process of the Local Offer – feedback had been positive.
- Phase one of the workforce development learning platform had been completed, with the third phase seeking to extend learning to parents and carers of children and young people with SEND as well as interested stakeholders.
- Work was underway to help mainstream schools provide for children with SEND – with 14 children having successfully transitioned to mainstream settings so far this year.
- A multiagency panel had been set up to help challenge and improve the assessment process.
- EHCPs had increased by 4% in Lincolnshire, against 9% nationally. The number of EHCPs were below original projections, which evidenced that the transformation work had had a positive effect.
- A new strategy was being developed regarding social, emotional and mental health. It was anticipated that this would be launched by the end of this year.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, the following points were confirmed:

- EHCPs were not usually linked to transport arrangements for children with special needs, except in exceptional circumstances, and there was no funding for transport arrangements at sixth form level. Also, EHCPs could not be ceased without parental consent.
- Mental health issues concerning trauma and distressed behaviour often reasoned for some children being moved to SEND schools. Work was underway to upscale mainstream settings to help them meet the needs of these children so that they could comfortably remain in mainstream schools.
- Lincolnshire used to have one of the highest exclusion rates in the country; exclusion rates were dropping since an inclusive approach towards needs was adopted.
- The majority of clinical support for children with high level mental health needs was now provided through a community response since the closure of the residential mental health provision in Lincolnshire. It was suggested that an update on the community response to high level mental health needs was brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee be assured on the progress made through the SEND transformation work and be satisfied with the positive impact of the transformation work.
2. That further progress be reported at a future meeting.
3. That an update on the community response to high level mental health needs be brought to a future meeting.

36 SERVICE LEVEL PERFORMANCE REPORTING AGAINST THE SUCCESS FRAMEWORK
2022-23 - QUARTER 1

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker, on the Service Level Performance against the Success Framework for Quarter 1.

With reference to the report, it was highlighted that four measures did not meet their target, one measure exceeded its target, and three measures achieved their target.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, the following points were confirmed:

- Targets were set annually by Council and aimed to keep outperforming targets high and set realistic goals for underperforming targets.
- Covid had greatly impacted the allocation of protection plans due to courts being closed. The backlog was being redressed now that public health measures had been lifted.
- Covid had also resulted in an increase in the number of late entrants to education.
- An update on performance showing a fuller picture of the situation following the lifting of pandemic public health measures would be included in the report for the second quarter.
- 50% of children in the court system had been found to reoffend; however, this related to pre-court offences. This would be clarified in the final report. It was also clarified that percentage rates were statistically insignificant due to the small size of the cohort; however, it was a national requirement that rates be reported in this way.
- Family networks were always prioritised when rehoming children in care – as kinship carers. It was the Council's policy that kinship carers be allotted the same allowances as other carers, despite there being no requirement to match allowances. It was felt that this extra spend on kinship carer allowances both benefited the children and protected future budgets by helping to avoid further complex care provision arising.
- Further information was requested in relation to 16/17 year old Children in Care participating in learning and what was being done to reduce the number of Children in Care not in education, employment or training.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Committee be satisfied with the overall performance of the measures.
2. That further information on 16/17 year old Children in Care participating in learning be circulated to the Committee.

37 CHILDREN'S SERVICES ANNUAL STATUTORY COMPLAINTS REPORT 2021-22

Consideration was given to a report by Carolyn Knight, Head of Service - Quality and Standards and Principal Social Worker, on the performance of Children's Services in relation to complaints.

With reference to the report, a total of 144 contacts were received in 2021/2022 from individuals wishing to complain about the service, up by eight contacts from 136 last year. Of these, 35 complaints were resolved informally, outside of the complaints process, 29 complaints were fully upheld and 16 complaints were found to be partially upheld.

In response to questions raised by the Committee, the following points were confirmed:

- Any issues that did arise were often resolved informally.
- Overall, complaints were evenly spread across the county.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee endorse the annual complaints report for 2021/22 and note the low numbers of complaints that were upheld or partially upheld.

38 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

39 EDUCATION PROVISION PLANNING

This item was deferred to the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 11.10 am