

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee

Meeting held 11 December 2017

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Andy Bainbridge, Lisa Banes, Mohammad Maroof, Abtisam Mohamed, Josie Paszek, Bob Pullin, Jim Steinke, Alison Teal, Sophie Wilson, Colin Ross (Substitute Member) and Andrew Sangar (Substitute Member)

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Sam Evans, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors John Booker, Craig Gamble Pugh, Vickie Priestley (with Councillor Colin Ross attending as her substitute) and Cliff Woodcraft (with Councillor Andrew Sangar attending as his substitute), and from Gillian Foster (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member), Joanna Heery and Peter Naldrett (Parent Governor Representatives - Non-Council Voting Members) and Alice Riddell (Healthwatch Sheffield, Observer).

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 There were no declarations of interest.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 13th November 2017, were approved as a correct record, subject to the amendment of Item 6 (2017 Pupil Outcomes – City Context and School Performance), by the substitution of the word ‘aggregated’ for the word ‘aggravated’ in the ninth bullet point of paragraph 6.4 and, arising therefrom:-

(a) Councillor Mohammad Maroof confirmed that he had received the information on the ethnicity of adopters and foster carers in the City; and

(b) the Chair stated that:-

(i) he would welcome the views of Members, by 15th December, 2017, in terms of how they would like to see the scope of the scrutiny exercise

on Child Poverty narrowed down; and

- (ii) following a request by Councillor Bob Pullin for the briefing paper – Social Market Foundation – ‘Commission on Equality in Education’, to be submitted to this Committee for information, he had agreed with Councillor Pullin and the Policy and Improvement Officer that he would forward the paper to the Sheffield Executive Board for comment.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. ADOPTION PERFORMANCE

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Children and Families containing an update on key performance improvement and an explanation of how performance was measured across the Adoption journey, which had been requested by the Committee at its meeting held on 17th July 2017, following a report on the annual position of the Sheffield Adoption Services.

- 6.2 In attendance for this item was Joel Hanna, Assistant Director, Provider Services.

- 6.3 Prior to the consideration of the report, the Committee received a question from a member of the public, Jane Edwards, who asked how the Council measured performance after an Adoption Order had been made in respect of post adoption support.

- 6.3.1 In response, Joel Hanna stated that post adoption support services were primarily demand-led services, and that there were no specific performance targets after an Adoption Order had been made. He reported that the performance indicators held by the Council referred to when a child had been taken into care, to the point when they were placed for adoption, though the Local Authority also measured the number of adoptions that failed, and where a child may return to local authority care. He stated that he would give consideration to measuring performance after an Adoption Order had been made, and undertake some work in terms of better promoting the support services available to adopters, post adoption.

- 6.4 The Committee considered the report now submitted, which was supported by a presentation by Joel Hanna. Mr Hanna referred to the main indicators relating to adoption performance, which included the A1 indicator – average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family, for children who have been adopted, and A2 – average time between a local authority receiving court authority to place a child and the local authority deciding on a match to an adoptive family, and reported on the national targets for both indicators, which were based on an average taken over three years, together with Sheffield’s average for 2013 to 2016. He reported on the key points of the adoption process that were measured by the Local Authority, and referred to the adoption performance figures, in terms of average number of days, against the national scorecard indicators A1 and A2, with primary focus on A1, for the years 2015/16,

2016/17 and projected figures for 2017/18, and which set out the three-year average as at the end of 2017/18. Mr Hanna then briefly referred to the 11 stages of the adoption process and the in-year adoption performance statistics, by each of the stages, in 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18 (as of 24th October 2017). He concluded by referring to future planned work required in order to improve performance, and to how the Local Authority compared with its South Yorkshire neighbours in terms of performance.

6.5 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- The Local Authority had no targets in respect of the number of children placed for adoption. The process for adoption was dealt with on a case by case basis, and the numbers in terms of adopted children were dependent mainly on the assessments and performance of social workers or other health professionals.
- A significant amount of work was undertaken, through the assessment process, in looking at where all family members were able to care for the child and, in those cases where children had been adopted by other families, in terms of being party to any decisions or proceedings in respect of the future care of the child.
- The Families, Adopters and Carers Team (FACT) provided support for adoptive families following the Adoption Order being made, with such support being provided for several years in some cases, if required.
- Whilst the Local Authority did not hold comparable data in connection with successful and disrupted adoptions, the aim was to limit the number of disrupted adoption cases, and work was planned in terms of tracking such numbers.
- There were no specific statistics regarding those children deemed difficult in terms of finding suitable adopters, such as older and disabled children. The process in terms of identifying and supporting prospective adopters in terms of such children could be a considerable and lengthy process. There was a broad range of training provided for prospective adopters, which would be specifically tailored for those people wanting to adopt older or disabled children.
- Sheffield performed better than many other local authorities in terms of hard to place children, but not in terms of timeliness. Whilst older children and those children with disabilities were the hardest to place, children from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds were not deemed as hard to place. The Council made good use of interagency adopters, and also spent considerably more than other local authorities on placing children out of the City.
- In terms of offering continuing support to families, following adoption, an

Advisory User Group, comprising parents, would offer such support, in the form of 'buddying'. The Council also planned to use the Group as a reference point. There were issues with regard to privacy in terms of contacting families and for this reason, the Council would not always proactively contact adopters.

- When parents applied to be foster parents they would be advised on the potential to become adopters. Generally, people wishing to apply to become foster carers, only wished to be foster carers, likewise with adopters.

6.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information reported as part of the presentation, and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Joel Hanna for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests:-
 - (i) that the Children and Families Service continues to work towards the successful placement of the child, as opposed to meeting performance targets;
 - (ii) the Director of Children and Families to look into finding some form of mechanism for reporting post-adoption success rates, including performance indicators, in the annual Adoption Service Report 2018/19; and
 - (iii) that the Director, in developing such indicators, consults with all elected Members as they may be able to contribute suggestions from personal experiences.

7. SHEFFIELD SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

- 7.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, People Services, attaching the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17.
- 7.2 In attendance for this item were Jane Haywood, MBE (Independent Chair, Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB)) and Victoria Horsefield (Assistant Director, Children and Families and Professional Adviser to the Board).
- 7.3 Jane Haywood introduced the report, which outlined the progress that had been made during the year, together with the key challenges ahead for the City to ensure that its children were safe from harm, abuse and neglect. Ms Haywood referred to her role as Independent Chair, and reported that the Board was responsible for monitoring performance across its partners, and challenging the partners when it

was considered improvements were required. She stated that, despite there being a number of issues during the year, which was expected, she had observed a very strong partnership, with any issues being resolved in a constructive manner.

7.4 Ms Haywood highlighted the range of the Board's work during 2016/17, referring specifically to the continued focus on child sexual exploitation; the development of Future in Mind to support mental health in the City's young people; the comprehensive audits involving all partners, which allowed the Board to ensure that it was doing its best for the City's children and young people; the key strategies around neglect, female genital mutilation and the suicide prevention pathway; and the wide ranging multi-agency training, which was considered important in supporting the workforce to be the best they could in safeguarding children and young people. She stated that all this work would continue throughout 2017/18, with a strong emphasis on the transition of young people into adulthood and ensuring that the services, as they developed and changed, continued to keep the City's children and young people safe.

7.5 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- If a specific problem had been highlighted with an agency's response to children's safeguarding, a Section 11 (Children Act 2004) meeting would be held, and if sufficient progress was not made following such a meeting, the issue would be escalated to a senior level within the relevant partner agency. Again, if progress was not made, the issue would then be referred to the Board for consideration.
- The benefit of an Independent Chair, over the proposed new structure with regard to independent challenge, was that the Independent Chair was not responsible to any one partner agency, and therefore had the powers to challenge and improve across all partners in terms of their safeguarding arrangements in a transparent manner.
- Neglect had been a priority for the Board since the launch of the Neglected Strategy, but there continued to be a need to provide support and guidance to front-line workers, who often struggled to know precisely when to intervene in a particular situation, and to provide assistance/guidance on this issue. There was a strategy, agreed by all partner agencies, which provided a clear definition of, and clear guidance on, neglect. Training was provided to all relevant partner agencies, with a view to that being cascaded through the organisations.
- The Board had recently requested a report on home-educated children and young people, and this area was currently being researched for further discussion about what, if any, issues needed to be considered. School nurses would still offer support for those families whose children were home educated, but the majority of those children were not in regular contact with, or being monitored by, relevant services. Officers were aware of this issue, and accepted that there was a need for more work in this area. Whilst home

education was a parental right, and did not necessarily have to be viewed as a problem, it was important that children being home educated were also known to a GP or school nurse.

- The Board had both a Risk Register and a Business Plan, which contained a set of targets, which could either be included in future Annual Reports or presented to Members separately.

7.6 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, and the Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17, together with the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) expresses its thanks to Jane Haywood and Victoria Horsefield for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised;
- (c) welcomes the excellent work being undertaken by the Board, together with the work and commitment of the wide range of partners and their colleagues, in connection with ensuring that the City's children were safe from harm, abuse and neglect;
- (d) expresses a view that it would like to see the Board continue with the Independent Chair model; and
- (e) requests a report to be submitted to a future meeting on child trafficking activity in the City.

8. SHEFFIELD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SERVICE - ANNUAL REPORT 2016/17

8.1 The Committee received a report of the Executive Director, People Services, attaching the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service - Annual Report 2016/17.

8.2 In attendance for this item were Janine Dalley (Chief Executive Officer, Sheffield Futures) and Jane Fiddler (Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service Manager, Sheffield Futures).

8.3 Janine Dalley referred to the introductory report, which contained information on the service user profile for 2016/17, key achievements in 2016/17, developments in 2017/18 and priorities for the Service for 2018/19.

8.4 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- In addition to the services delivered by Sheffield Futures, one of the Service's key partners was the NSPCC, who worked across the City, delivering school-based group work and seminars for professionals to help identify sexual abuse and sexual exploitation. There were no details available at the meeting

in terms of the numbers of children who had received such interventions from the NSPCC, but the Service identified that the Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Group was discussing bringing together key partnership data. The NSPCC also delivered drama workshops across the City's schools, highlighting the dangers of sexual abuse and exploitation.

- The Service had seen an increase in risky online activity, with such activity running consistently through nearly every referral received in 2016/17 at low, medium and high risk levels.
- The majority of referrals received by the Service came from Children's Social Care, then the police, parents, teachers and health staff.
- It would be very difficult to include details of the personal experiences in a case study format of children who had accessed the Service in the Annual Report due to concerns of such children being identified in any way. It was agreed that the 2017/18 Annual Report would include details of the actual interventions young people had received in the Service to illustrate their journeys and the support received.
- There was support for children who had been the subject of sexual exploitation, in the form of youth work led 'wrap around support', which helped build up their confidence, prior to more targeted work being undertaken with them.
- In terms of gaining the trust of children or young people who had been the subject of sexual exploitation, the child or young person was included as part of the assessment process from the outset, therefore workers were fully aware of the circumstances of each case. The levels of engagement with the child or young person were dependent on whatever level of intervention was required in terms of each individual case, which included meeting them at any location where they felt comfortable and safe.
- The breakdown in respect of the ethnicity of children or young people experiencing sexual exploitation had been reasonably consistent over the last few years. Specific work had been undertaken with community groups. There was a now a training pathway which could identify any gaps in provision, with a view to plugging such gaps.
- There was no data available in terms of the ethnicity of perpetrators. This data was held by South Yorkshire Police. The Service was involved in monthly multi-agency mapping meetings, which were led by the police, and looked specifically at the perpetrators, victims and geographical areas of offending.
- The Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) had a Licensing Manager, who worked closely with relevant organisations and businesses, including the licensing trade (both taxis and licensed premises), hotels, bed and breakfasts, fast food takeaways, and other similar establishments where young people chose to frequent, to ensure that they were all aware of their safeguarding

duties. Many of the establishments were well engaged in terms of their safeguarding responsibilities.

- The Service was currently undertaking an analysis of data, which would be used to establish a benchmark regarding young people identified at risk of sexual exploitation. It was hoped that this data could be included, or referenced, in the Annual Report 2017/18.
- The levels of knowledge in terms of understanding the vulnerability of some children and young people, together with the expertise, mainly due to strong multi-agency working, had improved considerably over the years. Specific services could now be employed in a more targeted manner, and the Service was providing support to other partner agencies in terms of their specific work. Due to the evolving nature of the risks involved, despite the best efforts of all partner agencies, the Service had to accept that it would be very difficult to stop all sexual exploitation, and should never get complacent about this.
- The SSCB reported that all educational establishments in the City were asked to complete an annual safeguarding report, which included information on policies, procedures, training and referrals for safeguarding issues. All such establishments would also be expected to show what policies and procedures they had in place as part of their Ofsted inspections.
- The SSCB worked very closely with an on-line safety consultant, who was responsible for providing on-line safety training for schools, social workers, foster carers and other relevant groups/organisations, in connection with the risks posed by on-line grooming. The consultants held focus groups with school students in order to identify which websites they visited, and where there were potential dangers.
- Whilst the Service provided targeted training in terms of vulnerable children and young people, the current “It’s Not OK” campaign, led jointly by the NSPCC and the SSCB, was leading training and workshops in schools, with the schools themselves identifying which children should be targeted in respect of such training.
- The officers from the Local Authority did not have any statistics in terms of trafficking cases to share at this meeting, but agreed that they would source this information for a future meeting.
- In relation to reported sexual exploitation concerns into the Sheffield Safeguarding Hub, every effort was made to promote the third party information form, which was available for use by any professionals. Again, whilst there was no guarantee that all groups/organisations in the voluntary and faith sector were aware of such a form, every effort was made to notify such groups of its existence.
- The model used in terms of sessions held with children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation was needs-led, therefore there were no limitations in

terms of the number, and duration of, such sessions.

- The Service had received six months additional funding from the CSE Funding Alliance, via the Alexi Project, to employ a Transitions Worker, and there was already evidence to show that this additional funding had made a positive impact. The Board was considering how this project could be paid for through mainstream funding.

8.5 RESOLVED: That this Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service - Annual Report 2016/17, and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks (i) Janine Dalley and Jane Fiddler for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised, and (ii) all staff in the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service, and all partner agencies involved, in tackling child sexual exploitation in Sheffield; and
- (c) requests:-
 - (i) the Chair, on its behalf, to work with, and support, Sheffield Futures in terms of securing continued funding in respect of the post of Transitions Worker; and
 - (ii) that further to the issues/concerns now raised, consideration be given to including more detailed information in future Annual reports on how the Service works with those young people who have experienced sexual exploitation, in the long-term, in order to help them deal with the trauma involved, and to plan an appropriate survival strategy.

9. WORK PROGRAMME 2017/18

9.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer which set out its Work Programme for 2017/18.

9.2 Further to questions raised by Members of the Committee, the Chair stated that he would check on the timeframe of the item on Youth Work, in terms of whether it will be submitted in the 2017/18 Municipal Year, and that a more detailed report on Elective Home Education would be submitted to a future meeting.

9.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee, in noting the comments now made by the Chair, approves its Work Programme for 2017/18.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 15th January 2018, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall.