

Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel, 13 October 2015

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
13 October 2015**

PRESENT:

PANEL MEMBERS:

Councillor Chris Wakefield - Chair; Councillor Susan Phillips - Vice-Chair, Councillors Malcolm Davies, Bobbie Dove, Norman Decent, Cheryl Johnson, Don McQueen, Pat Oakley, and Pat Marchiori-White (Roman Catholic Diocesan Board).

ALSO PRESENT:

Councillor Nicola Greene - Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services.

Councillor Jane Kelly - Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Public Health.

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Carole Aspden - Service Director, Children and Young People
Sue Ross - Interim Service Director, Children's Social Care
Ann-Marie Dodds - Service Manager, Family Support Services
Michaela Slatford - Marketing & Recruitment Officer, Children & Young People
Geraint Griffiths - Head of Integrated Youth Service
Sam Crowe - Assistant Director, Public Health
Rigo Pizzarro - Officer, Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group
Neil Goddard - Service Director, Community Learning & Commissioning
Lisa Green - Service Manager, Children's Social Care
David Webb - Service Manager, Youth Offending Service
Tom Hancock - Democratic Services & Overview & Scrutiny Officer

The meeting commenced at 6.03 p.m.

Note: To see a copy of the public reports that were considered by the Panel at this meeting please visit:

<http://www.bournemouth.gov.uk/CouncilDemocratic/CouncilMeetings/CommitteeMeetings/ChildrensServicesOverviewScrutinyPanel/2015/10/13/ChildrensServicesOverview&ScrutinyPanel13-Oct-2015.aspx>

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SECTION I - BUSINESS RECOMMENDED TO THE COUNCIL

No Items

SECTION II - BUSINESS DECIDED UNDER DELEGATED POWERS

46. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Stollard and Alan Hogg.

47. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Pat Oakley substituted for Rae Stollard.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Chairman declared an interest as a trustee of the Parent-Carer Forum and of 'Crumbs', a local charity, in relation to minute no. 51.

49. EARLY YEARS SECTOR AWARDS

The Marketing and Recruitment Officer, Children & Young People told the Panel that there was an award ceremony for the Early Years Sector Awards, which recognises those who care for the Borough's young children and had achieved an Outstanding OFSTED rating and/or received a nomination. The Panel members were asked to volunteer to act as judges and attend the award ceremony.

The Chair asked interested in Panel members to make contact with the Marketing and Recruitment Officer, Children & Young People or the Democratic Services & Overview & Scrutiny Officer.

50. CHILDHOOD IMMUNISATION PROGRAMME

The Assistant Director, Public Health introduced the report published at '9'. It was outlined to the Panel that a number of practices in the Boscombe area were not achieving the standard performance and the variation between those practices and other practices within a close geographical area who had

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a much higher standard of performance. The Panel was told the level of variation was a concern and that there was a need for renewed focus on the problem, it was explained that since the Panel asked for an item on the issue work and dialogue with partner agencies had taken place.

The Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group told the Panel that a joint primary care committee was in place and that it would look at the issue of immunisations as a priority.

The Panel was told that there were a number of proposed steps to tackle the issue - it was explained that a task and finish group would be set up by the Immunisation Board to look at the issue in Boscombe and to learn from Weymouth & Portland, which had better performance despite some similar challenges in terms of deprivation. It was also proposed to attain engagement with the surgeries and practices involved.

The Panel asked a number of questions and made a number of comments including on the following topics:

Place of Vaccination - A number of Panel members recalled that immunisations used to be delivered in schools and wondered if the delivery of more immunisations in public institutions would drive the rate of immunisations up. The Assistant Director, Public Health told the Panel that the commissioning of Health Visitors had transferred over to the Local Authority which offered an opportunity to improve co-ordination with Children's Centres and that the issue of school nurses would be considered by the proposed task and finish group.

Languages and Culture - Councillor Davies asked if it was possible that one of the causes of the lower vaccination rates related to language issues given the multi-cultural make-up of Boscombe. The Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group explained that there was a problem with outreach to the community in Boscombe but that it was a multi-faceted issue and was not attributable entirely a language barrier.

Looked After Children - Councillor Phillips asked whether the vaccination rate for Looked After Children was monitored. The Assistant Director, Public Health told the Panel they would note the issue and follow it up as they were unaware of the answer.

Length of the Problem - The Chairman expressed concern that it had taken the Panel asking for an item on the issue for action to be kickstarted when the statistics showed that this issue was not a new phenomena. The Chairman was also concerned that there would be other issues related to Children's Health that were statistically concerning and had not been

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allocated the appropriate importance. The Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group told the Panel that there was a long-standing issue with vaccinations, which were one part of a long-standing issue of variation of health outcomes between the rich and the poor. The Panel was reassured that the Clinical Services Review had a strong focus on Children's Services.

DECISION MADE:

That the Panel:

1. Add an item to the workplan to review the progress made on the immunisation rate.
2. Support the proposed actions to tackle the problem.

51. YOUTH SERVICES CORE SERVICES TRANSFORMATION -CST

The Head of Integrated Youth Service introduced the report published at '7'. The Panel was reminded that the CST was implemented in April 2015 and had been designed to focus on the areas and issues of most need.

The Panel were told that the service invested in youth centres, including the Boscombe Argos building which would be opened in the near future, and worked closely with the voluntary sector.

The Panel had a number of comments and questions, including on the following topics:

Role of the Youth Worker - Pat Marchiori-White asked about whether the role of the Youth Worker had changed in the wake of the CST. The Head of Youth Integrated Youth Service explained that there had been a change in line with the changes to the structure. The Panel was told that there was now a large amount of training on offer to staff and that there were more formal assessments undertaken by youth workers in order that other services can link up to help young people.

Budget - Councillor McQueen highlighted that cuts had been made to the Youth Services budget and that there would likely be pressure for more savings and enquired as to how the Youth Service was and would respond to this. The Head of Integrated Youth Service explained that the service data suggested that the youth service was much more efficient since the changes and that efficiencies were at a realistic level. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education outlined that as part of the CST there had been extensive engagement with the voluntary sector and that the driving

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factors were to engage with those in most need, invest in services and work with the voluntary sector in a professional way. The Panel was told all of these aims had been achieved.

Voluntary Sector - The Chairman of the Panel explained to the Panel that the Council had to be mindful of the capacity of the voluntary sector to take on the work that it was aspired they would. Councillor McQueen asked what the length of the commitments were with the voluntary sector in respect of the services rendered or the assets used. The Head of the Integrated Youth Service explained that arrangements were informal and that there was debate around whether short term or long term agreements would be best suited. It was also explained to the Panel that the Council was not making a profit on the arrangements.

52. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE - COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS - ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

The Service Director, Community Learning & Commissioning introduced the report circulated at '8'. It was highlighted to the Panel that the report demonstrated that the number of complaints were down and compliments up. The Panel was told the number of complaints the year before had been influenced by the introduction of a restructure of relevant services. It was also explained that the majority of complaints boiled down to communication issues.

The Panel was further told that it had not been possible to benchmark against other authorities due to the way different authorities record complaints and compliments but that anecdotally it seemed that Bournemouth had performed well.

The Panel had a number of comments and questions, including on the following topics:

Complaints from Young People and Looked after Children - The Vice-Chair asked about the numbers of complaints received from Looked After Children which had reduced. The Service Director, Community Learning & Commissioning told the Panel that that information could be shared outside the meeting as it was hard to generalise and individual information was confidential. The Panel was also told that complaints received from young people received the highest and most urgent attention.

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Learning - Councillor McQueen asked about how the lessons emanating from complaints were learned. The Service Director, Community Learning & Commissioning told the Panel that the annual report highlighted lessons learnt and that outcomes were shared widely. The Service Manager, Children's Social Care also told the Panel that within Children's Social Care quarterly meetings were held with complaints reviewed by a board with an onus on managers to explain what they have done to remedy issues raised.

DECISION MADE:

That the Panel:

1. Note the report
2. Approve its publication on the Council's Website
3. Encourage the development of Key Performance Indicators -KPI's- and request that the Panel be kept informed of progress in developing KPI's.

53. YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN

The Service Manager, Youth Offending Service introduced the report circulated at '10'. The Panel was told that the merger of the Bournemouth & Poole Youth Service with Dorset County Council's Youth Service had taken place.

The Panel was told that alongside funding from the Local Authority the service received funding from the Ministry of Justice, via the Youth Justice Board. It was explained that in 2014/15 the service received £790k, which was then cut to £730k for 2015/16 and that a further in-year cut was expected to £653k which was a big reduction for the service and would have significant implications.

The Panel had a number of comments and questions, including on the following topics:

Savings - The Chair asked whether the level of savings would impact upon the services ability to meet its targets. The Service Manager, Youth Offending Service explained that there was concern for the next year with the significant reduction expected. The Service Director, Children and Young People explained that the expected cut had wiped out all financial flexibility within the service.

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Councillor McQueen asked whether the merger had created savings. The Service Manager, Youth Offending Service explained that the merger had meant savings had been achieved, with posts withdrawn and that there was the possibility of further posts going. The Cabinet Member for Education and Children's Services explained that the merger was not financially driven and had brought together two high performing services.

Rates of Offending - Councillor McQueen asked about the halving of offending rates in five years. The Panel was told that previously the police had performance targets based on bringing offenders to justice which had perhaps led young people to become relatively easy targets that helped meet performance challenges. It was explained that there had now been a change of culture including the use of restorative justice to keep young people out of the system.

DECISION MADE:

That the Panel:

1. Recommend to Cabinet that Cabinet Recommend to Full Council adoption of the Youth Justice Plan.

54. WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer told the Panel that the weight of items for the November meeting would be reviewed and an updated Forward Plan issued to Panel members.

Councillor McQueen requested that an item on the Workplan related to the cost of in-house foster carers remain.

DECISION MADE:

1. The Panel note the forward plan.

55. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- a. **Peer Review** - The Panel were told that an LGA Peer Review would take place during November to review progress made since the OFSTED inspection report. The Executive Director, Adults and Children invited Panel members to get involved with the review by

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attending the opening and closing events and/or volunteering to be interviewed by the peer reviewers.

The meeting closed at 8.20 p.m.

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