

Minutes

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

17 February 2016

Meeting held at Committee Room 4 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>Committee Members Present: Councillors Jane Palmer (Chairman), Nick Denys (Vice-Chairman), Teji Barnes, Jem Duducu, Duncan Flynn, Becky Hagggar, Tony Eginton, Peter Money, Jan Sweeting (Labour Lead) and Mr Tony Little.</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Vince Clark (Interim Assistant Director - Children's Social Care), Nikki Cruickshank (Interim Assistant Director of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance) and Sarah Hydrie (Assistant Internal Audit Manager) and Nikki O'Halloran (Democratic Services Manager)</p>
62.	<p>TO CONFIRM THAT ITEMS OF BUSINESS MARKED PART 1 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PUBLIC AND THAT THE ITEMS MARKED PART 2 WILL BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>It was agreed that all items were Part I and would be discussed in public.</p>
63.	<p>TO AGREE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 JANUARY 2016 (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 January 2016 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
64.	<p>CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIAL CARE SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced an update on the status of the Children and Young People's Social Care Service Improvement Plan. The report provided a summary of the status of the Plan and was one of the quarterly updates that was due to be considered by the Committee. The Plan was substantially complete and was on track to meet the service objectives set in March 2015.</p> <p>There were two main elements to the report presented. The first was the Service Improvement Plan itself which was a live document that would be regularly updated. The second was a six month progress report, which showed the progress made, to 8 February 2016, against each of the 7 work streams / 52 actions contained in the Plan.</p> <p>Members felt that the format of information provided was much improved and commended the progress made in improving Children's Social Care. The figures included in the Quarterly Casefile Audit Outcomes graphs in Appendix 3 included aggregated data. Although it was acknowledged that progress had been made, to provide Members with a clearer picture and enable the Committee to adequately monitor the extent of this progress, Members requested that data be provided on a</p>

month by month basis rather than quarterly. In addition, officers would provide Members with a more comprehensive glossary of acronyms.

The Plan was now supported by a dedicated project manager, who was responsible for monitoring the Plan and progress made against each of the actions within it. Steady progress was being made against the actions included in the Plan, with 40 having been completed and 12 in progress (an increase from 48% of the actions completed to 77% since the previous quarter). The actions were being monitored on a monthly basis. In addition, a copy of the Service dashboard (at 1 February 2016) and a glossary of terms used had been appended to the report.

Although the original intention had been to include the Early Intervention Service in the current Plan, it would now be included in the 2016/2017 Service Plan and would incorporate recommendations from the major review. This would ensure that it covered the whole service.

Following the Committee meeting in July 2015, Members had requested greater transparency and a clearer audit trail surrounding changes made to the Plan. This request had been accommodated in the Action Plans presented to the Committee. The information provided had been made clearer and a 'traffic light' system adopted in order to show the progress made.

Significant progress had been made in the recruitment of permanent Team Managers and Service Managers and it was noted that the Senior Management Team would comprise permanent members of staff only from 22 February 2016. The nationwide recruitment process to appoint social workers had featured some of the Council's existing social workers in the advertising campaign and had resulted in approximately 65% of staff in the service area (excluding Skylakes) now being permanent. This had helped to stabilise the service and facilitate improvements.

It had been anticipated that the recruitment drive would establish and implement four in-house Duty Teams in line with the new service model for the Referral and Assessment Service. Two teams had already taken over the work from Skylakes, with the remaining two teams expected to be operational by the end of March 2016. However, it was noted that Skylakes' work would not finish until April 2016 and that there were a number of front line manager posts that had not yet been advertised. Although these posts were currently being filled by agency workers (some of whom had been in post for a long time), once the Skylakes contract had finished and the work was back in house, effort would be made to recruit permanent staff to fill these posts.

At the Committee's last meeting, Members had been advised that officers anticipated being in a position for the service to be considered 'good' by Ofsted by March 2016. As it currently stood, officers advised that it was likely that the service would still be rated as 'requires improvement' overall, but that there would be areas of 'good' within this assessment. However, officers were confident that the appointment of permanent staff, the stability of the service, the increase in special guardianship orders, a reduction in care case timescales and work undertaken on areas such as permanency outcomes would enable an Ofsted rating of 'good' by late summer. It was suggested that, although improvements had been made, further work was still needed in relation to areas such as children in need, leaving care and pathway plans. Officers had been mindful of Ofsted requirements during improvement planning and implementation.

The current Plan had aimed to ensure that the service was safe and that the structure was sound. With this groundwork in place, the 2016/2017 Service Plan would address issues around the quality of the service provided. Officers were aware that it was

important that the Council was not complacent with regard to the progress made as there would always be various stresses and expectations on the service area.

60 cases had been audited in December 2015 and 89 in January 2016. Officers advised that 90-100 audits were usually undertaken each month, but that the Christmas period had impacted on this number. It was anticipated that 60-70% of cases would be rated as 'good or outstanding' by March 2016, which would fall short of the 80% target.

The implementation of a formal review process to drive the quality of planning had not yet been fully embedded. An induction process had been introduced which included monthly training sessions plus extra sessions for new social workers (senior staff were also required to undertake this training).

Staff morale of front line social workers had increased significantly as a result of improvements, such as the appointment of new team managers. Members recognised the progress that had been made by the service over the last 18 months, but also that there were further improvements to be made. They congratulated those officers that had been involved in the transformation work to date and suggested that feedback be sought from service users to identify further areas for improvement.

It was noted that a review had just been completed in relation to Voice of Children and that this would be reported to the Committee at a future meeting.

With regard to future action in relation to *4.9 Improving outcomes for Leave in Care*, there had been several recent iterations of recruitment for carers. Once the assessments had been completed and they had been signed off by the Fostering and Adoption Panel, these applicants would become active. The process, which had targeted those willing to foster teenagers, had resulted in 20 new carers so far and had meant a swing towards having more in house foster carers than independent foster carers. It was noted that there now appeared to be greater stability in the Fostering and Adoption Panel and that the morale of social workers seemed to be higher.

Each team comprised a manager, an Advanced Practitioner, four Social Workers and one Newly Qualified Social Worker. As interim/agency posts were moved out, recruitment was being undertaken and they were replaced by permanent members of staff. During the transformation process, communication with staff had been key to ensuring that they were aware / supportive of the action being taken. To support this ongoing open dialogue, the Corporate Director of Adult and Young People's Services held monthly "Tea with Tony" sessions where staff could speak with him openly.

Work stream 7: Effective Quality Assurance included the following activity: *Review and implementation of new ways of working within the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) ensuring consistent and robust multi agency responsibility and ownership*. It was noted that the Committee had not yet been updated on the progress that had been made and requested that this information be presented at a future meeting.

New ways of working had been introduced, which included an effective triage service which had had a significant and positive impact on front line services, a reduction in the number of managers (who were now more accountable) and bringing the Referral and Assessment Service back in-house. Furthermore, the average caseload had reduced from approximately 33 for a Newly Qualified Social Worker and 23 for a Social Worker, to an average of 18. This workload was monitored on a weekly basis and supervision trackers were being monitored on a monthly basis.

It was noted that Vince Clark would soon be leaving. The Chairman was saddened by his departure and, on behalf of the Committee, thanked him for the work that he and his team had undertaken to put the service in a much better position. She thanked Mr Clark for his honest approach and wished him well in his new position.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. Future Children and Young People's Social Care Service Improvement Plan update reports include month on month data to ensure a clearer picture.**
- 2. Members be provided with a more comprehensive glossary of terms/acronyms.**
- 3. The results of the Voice of Children review be reported to the Committee at a future meeting.**
- 4. The Committee receive an update on the review and implementation of new ways of working within the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) at a future meeting.**
- 5. The report be noted.**

65. **WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16** (*Agenda Item 6*)

It was noted that this meeting had not incorporated a witness session as it was during the school holidays and that the Committee would need to be mindful of the holidays when undertaking reviews in the future.

Confirmation was sought regarding which head teachers would be attending the Committee's next meeting in to provide evidence for the minor review.

The Chairman advised that there was an expectation that a wide range of individuals be included in each of the Committee's reviews (rather than seeing the same faces). This would help the Committee to gather a broader range of information

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. Members be advised which head teachers would be attending the Committee's next meeting on 16 March 2016;**
- 2. An LSCB update be incorporated into the Work Programme.**
- 3. The Work Programme be noted.**

66. **FORWARD PLAN** (*Agenda Item 7*)

Members queried whether any changes had been made to the Standards and Quality in Education 2014/2015 report after it had been considered by the Committee, before it was included on the Cabinet agenda for the meeting on 18 February 2016. The Democratic Services Manager would contact Dan Kennedy to establish whether there had been any changes.

At its meeting on 13 January 2016, the Committee resolved that Early Years and Foundation Stage data be circulated to the Committee, broken down by educational planning area. The Democratic Services Manager would contact Mr Kennedy to establish whether this information had been circulated.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1. The Democratic Services Manager contact Mr Dan Kennedy to establish**

whether there were any changes to the Standards and Quality in Education 2014/2015 report considered by Cabinet on 18 February 2016.

- 2. The Democratic Services Manager contact Mr Kennedy to establish whether the Early Years and Foundation Stage data had been circulated to the Committee, broken down by educational planning area.**
- 3. The Forward Plan be noted.**

The meeting, which commenced at 7.00 pm, closed at 8.00 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Jon Pitt on 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.