

**Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday,
15 February 2023 at 4.30 pm in Council Chamber - City
Hall, Bradford**

Commenced 4.30 pm
Concluded 7.35 pm

PRESENT – COUNCILLORS

| LABOUR | CONSERVATIVE | LIBERAL DEMOCRAT | BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP |
|---|----------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Alipoor Humphreys Berry Thirkill | Winnard (Chair) Pollard | Sunderland | Sajawal |

Councillor Winnard in the Chair

Apology: Joyce Simpson

50. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

In the interest of transparency, the following Members declared an interest:

- Councillor Winnard was the Chair of Aware Charity;
- Councillor Sajawal was a director of Woodroyd Nursery and Children Centre.

51. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th January 2023, be signed as a correct record.

52. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

There were no appeals submitted by the public to review decisions to restrict documents.

53. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals made to the committee.

54. MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES RELATING TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

The Director of Integrated Health and Care submitted a report (**Document "S"**) which provided an overview of the current autism and ADHD assessment services for children and young people and describes the increased investment into the autism and ADHD service.

The report also highlighted the challenges that exist in terms of meeting increasing demand for assessments across Bradford district and Craven and the impact on waiting lists.

It also outlined the current work to address the special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) Written Statement of Action (WSOA) requirements of improving the service offer for children and young people with autism and/or ADHD.

In the ensuing discussions, the following points were highlighted:

- In response to a Member's statement regarding the need for teacher training and the potential for unrealistic expectations, the Officer acknowledged the importance of training and noted that the team was adapting to recognise additional needs such as ADHD. However, the Officer also emphasised that the process of diagnosing a child with a condition could be lengthy and complex.
- In response to a Member's concern, the officer responded the ability of teachers to identify factors for children and the reliance of parents on schools for support, staffing that whilst schools had potential to be informative, criteria from them was needed as part of performance service. However, it was also noted that the complete reliance on schools may not be feasible, given that home environments could differ, and information and history need to be gathered for proper diagnoses, which could be a lengthy process. Nonetheless, the service was exploring ways to use healthcare assistance and seeking help from residents.
- In response to a Member's inquiry, the officer responded, in terms of, communication with parents, the families could access the internet for information and support from Bradford District Care Trust. Additionally, the officer acknowledged the awareness of internet access and the difficulties. Other options were being explored to support individuals in regards to this.
- The Committee recognised the importance of involving individuals with autism and their families, to ensure that their voices and perspectives were heard.
- The Committee also raised concern regarding recruitment of staff from countries that did not accept autism, highlighting the need to focus on more significant changes. It was emphasised that recruiting staff who were skilled and trained was crucial.

Resolved –

- 1. Members thanked officers.**
- 2. The Committee requested that a report be presented in the new Municipal Year which not only focuses on the Written Statement of Action, but also the:**
 - Action Plan to support the delivery of this and outcomes delivered;**
 - Findings and recommendations from the Deep Dive Review;**
 - Areas of unmet need, in certain communities and how this is being addressed.**

ACTION: Director of Integrated Health Care.

(Ruth Shaw – 07976 0530407)

55. EXPLOITATION ANNUAL REPORT

The Assistant Director Office of the Chief Executive presents a report (**Document “T”**) which provided an annual update on the issue of exploitation. It focuses on the strategic partnership response to all forms of child and adult exploitation and how partners from the Bradford District Safeguarding Children Partnership, and the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board work to drive improvements across the district and hold agencies to account for their work in their area.

During the discussion, the following points were highlighted:

- In regards to a member’s inquiry, the officer responded that it was difficult to identify when the demand was low as recent cases had involved complex investigations.
- The Committee inquired about the availability on additional training regarding Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Bradford, as well as how to identify the issues. The officer explained that partnerships had provided eight sessions of training per year, which were currently in full capacity. Early indicators were used to detect signs of sexual exploitation when working with children, and the training had been proven to be highly effective. Furthermore, parents gained a better understanding of their children’s lives through this training.
- The Committee recognised the necessity of providing support to young individuals until the age of 25. However, they raised concerns regarding the support available for young adults who were no longer in the formal care system. The officer stated that risk management services identified various risks, the statistics were collected based on where the children were placed. However, it acknowledged that it was essential to strengthen relationships with partners to increase collaboration to ensure that complex issues were addressed adequately.
- The Committee inquired what support was being provided to children who were home-schooled (Elective Home Education) (EHE). The Committee felt it was important that children continued to receive adequate education. The officer responded that various resources were available for home-

schooling families, such as online classes, educational websites, and educational support services.

- A member raised concerns regarding the length of time it took to reintegrate excluded children back into their normal education. The officer responded that various factors would be taken into consideration, such as the reason for the exclusion, the duration of their absence, and the level of support available to them during the reintegrated process. Whilst it was understandable to have concerns about the length of time it took, it was important to note that each child's situation was unique and required an individualised approach.
- In response to the Committee inquiry whether a process was in place to provide support for young individuals who refuse to engage with professional services. The officer responded it recognised it was important to have a process in place to support young people who refuse to engage with professional services. The reasons why a young person may refuse engage could be complex and multifaceted, and it was essential to approach the situation with empathy and understanding. Nonetheless, it recognised by offering support and taking a collaborative approach, it would build trust and ultimately help the young person achieve positive outcomes.

Resolved –

This Committee requests that a further report be presented to the Committee in 12 months, relating to progress being made.

ACTION: Assistant Director, Office of the Chief Executive

(Darren Minton – 01274 434361)

56. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2022/2023

The report of the Chair of the Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee (**Document "U"**) included the Children's Service Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2022/23.

Resolved –

Members discussed the work programme.

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead

(Mustansir Butt – 07582 101597)

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

THIS AGENDA AND ACCOMPANYING DOCUMENTS HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER