

**Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday,
9 October 2019 in Ernest Saville Room - City Hall,
Bradford**

Commenced 4.30 pm
Concluded 6.50 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP
Engel Arshad Hussain Firth	Gibbons Pollard	Humphreys

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

Claire Parr
Joyce Simpson
Kathrine Haskett
Fauzia Raza

Church Representative (RC)
Church Representative (CE)
Parent
Parent

Apologies: Councillor Beverley Mullaney, Councillor Talat Sajawal, Kerr Kennedy and Tom Bright

Councillor Gibbons in the Chair

20. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

21. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2019 be signed as a correct record.

22. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

23. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals to the Committee.

24. YOUNG CARERS

The report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services (**Document "H"**) provided a requested update on the plans to meet the needs of Young Carers within the Bradford District. The Young Carers Service was a commissioned service which met the Council's statutory duty to provide an assessment for Young Carers, as well as providing other resources following assessment.

It was reported that the Carers Resource was successful in gaining the new tender from 1st April 2019 and this report was an update of their progress to date.

Previous reports had been presented; with the last one being on 13th February 2019.

Members sought clarification in relation to what actually constituted inappropriate care that was being provided by young people. In response, members were informed that inappropriate care involved excessive care, where it was causing harm to the young carer. Members heard that some young carers were reaching a crisis point in their care arrangements, however intense one to one care was being developed for such young carers to support them.

Several members commented on the need to reach out to young carers in all communities, such as the South Asian and Eastern European Communities. Members referred to the £50,000 additional funding that was secured for summer activities programmes to 500 young carers and asked how many places were allocated to young carers from South Asian communities? In response members were informed by officers that they were not able to say how many places had been allocated to Young Carers from South Asian Communities. However, officers did comment that it was difficult to engage with young carers from the South Asian and Eastern European communities but officers were working with the Children's Society, in relation to engagement with hidden groups and this would also include those communities to help in identifying young carers.

Members asked whether there had been any outcomes from the Equality Impact Assessment that had been undertaken as part of the contract tendering process. Officers stated that as part of the contract tendering process, there had been no changes to the service provision; hence, they did not need to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment.

There was considerable discussion amongst members about the performance against key performance indicators, as well as the new model for providing care to young carers. Members were keen to explore this further.

A young carer was also in attendance. The young carer talked about their experience and the support available to them. They informed members, that as a

result of the support that they received from the Young Carers Service, they were able to have a good balance between providing care and support for their own life.

Resolved –

That a further report be presented to this Committee at the meeting on Wednesday 15 April 2020 which focuses specifically on:

(a) Progress being made against key performance indicators.

(b) The new model for providing support to young carers.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children’s Services

25. PROGRESS UPDATE FOLLOWING THE OFSTED INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ILACS) - OFSTED MONITORING VISIT PREPARATION, PROGRESS AND CONTINUED CHALLENGE

The Strategic Director of Children’s Services presented a report (**Document “I”**) that provided the Committee with a progress update in respect of improvements identified within the Ofsted Improvement Plan, namely:

Ofsted monitoring visit preparation, progress and continued challenge.

Members stressed the importance of having a stable workforce of Social workers and were concerned that Social workers were coming to work for Bradford Council through an agency and that Social workers were leaving for employment offering a higher salary. This was also highlighted as an area for improvement in the report. In response on the importance of providing conditions to retain Children’s Services Social workers was noted. Members were informed, that the financial aspects had been reviewed, however it was equally important to create good conditions such as, supervision, training and having case loads that are safe and manageable. Furthermore, it was noted that the first year of employment for a Social worker was working well, but it became more challenging once the Social Worker became experienced.

In a response to a member’s comment about identifying children at risk at an early stage, it was reported that a considerable amount of work had been undertaken in this area and that they were continuing to work with West Yorkshire Police in relation to domestic abuse referrals.

Members were keen to understand what approaches were being used to improve staff morale. In response, officers indicated that they actively and openly rewarded staff for their achievements, through the “Shout out Fridays” approach.

Members raised concerns in relation to PEP’s, (Personal Education Plans), especially concerning the trends regarding the number of assessments not being completed and whether PEP’s were being robustly monitored. It was reported that PEP’s were a complicated process and that they are also quality assured and monitored.

Members of the Committee indicated that that the CAMHS, (Child Mental Health Services), provision needed greater challenge and that waiting lists were too long. It was felt that the role of Overview and Scrutiny was to interrogate the data and provide challenge as the performance was not good enough. Members asked what action was being undertaken to improve performance and reduce waiting lists. In response it was highlighted that accountability was being incorporated into the system. This was being done by service managers explaining performance and they would then ask Team Managers to explain performance in their own areas. Officers assured members that there was challenge when the quality was not good enough.

Resolved –

- (1) That representatives from the Improvement Board be requested to attend future meetings of the Committee and inform members of progress or otherwise in all areas of the Vital Signs report.**
- (2) That future reports to this Committee contain detailed information relating to the five programmes under the “Getting to Good”, improvement measure.**
- (3) That a report relating to the structures and effectiveness of Child Adult Mental Health Services, (CAMHS), be presented to this Committee.**

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children’s Services

26. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

The report of the Chair of the Committee (**Document “J”**) included the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme for 2019/20.

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead presented the work programme for the committee.

There was discussion amongst members about the need to have a focused work programme and that the work programme should reflect key Children’s Services priorities.

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead highlighted a list of potential Scrutiny Reviews in key Children’s Services Priorities, which could be undertaken by the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Resolved –

- (1) That the work programme continue to be kept under review.**
- (2) That a programme of Scrutiny Reviews be undertaken across key areas within Children’s Services which include:**
 - (a) Alternative School Provision, (including Home Schooled**

- Children).
- (b) Looked after Children.
 - (c) Children's Homes.
 - (d) Fostering.
 - (e) Children's Mental Health.
 - (f) Recruitment and retention of Social Workers.
 - (g) SEND, (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities).
 - (h) YOT, (Youth Offending Team).

ACTION: Overview and Scrutiny Lead.

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.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER