

Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday, 1 July 2020 at 3.00 pm in Remote meeting

Commenced 3.00pm
Concluded 6.00 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	BRADFORD GROUP	INDEPENDENT
Humphreys S Khan Mir	Gibbons Pollard	Sajawal	

Councillor Gibbons in the Chair

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Joyce Simpson – Church Representative (CE)
Katherine Haskett – Parent Governor Representative
Fauzia Raza – Parent Governor Representative

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBER

Tom Bright – Teachers Secondary School Representative

45. **ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)**

There were no alternate members.

46. **DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

No disclosures of interest in matters under consideration were received.

47. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 and 29 January 2020 were signed as a correct record.

48. **INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS**

There were no appeals submitted to review decisions to restrict documents.

49. **REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

There were no referrals to the Committee.

50. **VERBAL DISCUSSION ON COVID19 RELATING TO CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

This was a questions and answers session on COVID19 relating Children's Services. The questions had been put forward by members of Children's Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Officers from Bradford Council's Children's Services were responding to members questions.

Question 1

What progress has been made against the OFSTED Improvement Plan?

Answer

Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, which has put the Council on an emergency footing, work has been continuing to implement the improvements required by Ofsted. A huge amount has been done by both our Council teams and our partners to implement new and more flexible ways of working to ensure vulnerable children are kept safe during the coronavirus lockdown. Staff were able to carry out high quality 'virtual' as well as real doorstep visits. In spite of the lockdown, we are really pleased that all performance against key indicators is on an upward trajectory.

The improvement programmes focuses on four main areas: Prevention and early help; social work practice; leadership and management; and children in care and leaving care. The programme team continues to be involved in supporting the response to Covid 19 and are actively involved in recovery planning with the services across Children's Services. Key elements of the improvement initiatives we are currently working on are:

- A permanence tracker has been developed from scratch and is actively being populated. This will help us monitor the progress of all placements far more closely.
 - All Social Work documents have now been re-written and are now compliant with statutory requirements. These are with ICT colleagues so that they can be developed into online formats to make it easier for staff and for tracking.
 - The Early Help Module is in the final stages of testing – once this is live, we will finally address the long standing issue of high volumes of no further action (NFA) cases at the front door.
 - Supervision policy is now in draft and being consulted on with staff and trades unions and a number of new standardised templates have been produced for staff to drive consistency.
 - A new challenge and resolution process has been implemented for child protection co-ordinators and for the Independent Reviewing Officers to ensure that we are avoiding drift and delay.
- Officers also highlighted the importance of ensuring that policies and procedures were accurate and up-to-date.

Question 2

In the light of announcements re schools not proceeding with further re-opening plans until September, clearly policy from DfE awaited, but is consideration being given at Bradford Met level (+ by any local Academy chains) to possibility of securing temporary 'satellite' accommodation to expand capacity by September to actually accommodate all pupils in a socially distanced way (be that at current or reduced 'safe distance' levels)?

Answer

The DfE guidance prohibits schools from using public venues such as sports halls etc. With regard to securing accommodation such as portakabins there are no temporary classrooms available nationally as they have been used for temporary accommodation for schools with delayed building projects. To attempt to use temporary accommodation would be cost prohibitive even if they were available given that the infrastructure would need to be installed in any such accommodation.

Question 3

What arrangements in place for Elected Members Reg 44 visits to Children's Homes in place? Are monitoring visits being carried out at present?

Answer

At this time (March to date) all non-essential visitors to Children's Homes have been restricted to manage risk, comply with Covid-19 social distancing measures and individual risk assessments for safeguarding CYP. This has resulted in there being no Elected Member Reg 44 Visits during the covid-19 pandemic. At this time there are no plans in place to facilitate Elected Member visits. This is subject to review as social distancing / risk managements strategies are reviewed.

Ofsted have issued statutory instrument on the 23 April making changes to regulations (secondary legislation) relating to the care and protection of vulnerable children and young people. The changes to came into force on the 24 April 2020 and are due to expire on 25 September 2020, (although this expiry date can be revoked). The changes in relation to Reg 44 Visits states: "Monthly independent visits and reports on children's homes no longer mandatory - The law requires that every children's home appoints an independent person to visit the home at least once a month. The independent person must write a report on the home which in particular addresses whether a) children living there are effectively safeguarded and b) the conduct of the home promotes children's well-being. This report must be sent to Ofsted and local authorities. This requirement is being removed and instead providers will be simply be required to "use reasonable endeavours" to ensure they occur".

Despite regulatory changes Bradford CSC has maintained routines for the completion of Reg 44 Independent Person's Monitoring visits. All residential and respite children's homes continued to be monitored on a monthly basis.

Monitoring is being completed through remote monitoring, virtual tours and video consultation. Reports are being completed and processed to Ofsted in the usual manner.

Question 4

With the School closures, what has been the impact on educational attainment levels, particularly in deprived wards/disadvantaged communities?

Answer

At the moment it is not possible to say with any accuracy. There is no data available to be able to evaluate in any statistical way what the impact has been. There are no national examinations this year so for primary schools we have teacher assessments which will indicate what teachers felt the achievement of pupils was up to March 20th. For GCSE and A levels, a mixture of teacher assessment and prior attainment data will be used. When pupils return in September schools will use a range of assessments to evaluate and establish the starting points for students.

We do have some information from schools that have re-opened for identified year groups that the Y6 have settled back into their learning and have not lost their learning. Where there have been groups of very vulnerable pupils in schools the nurturing and small groups of support have benefited the pupils.

Until we have all pupils back it will not be possible to say with any accuracy. Over the initial lockdown period (data available from 30/03/2020 to 29/05/2020), a maximum of 864 children flagged as vulnerable were attending a Bradford school (this was on the 18/05/2020). On average, between Week 4 and Week 9, vulnerable children accounted for 37% of children in attendance on any given day.

Officers further stated that they would not really be able to see what the impact has been, but there was some evidence to suggest that not all children were undertaking home education. Nevertheless, support would be provided to children, for further education and putting transition programmes in place for those that have not met their grades.

Question 5

How many vulnerable children have been going to school over the initial lockdown period?

Answer

Over the initial lockdown period (data available from 30/03/2020 to 29/05/2020), a maximum of 864 children flagged as vulnerable were attending a Bradford school (this was on the 18/05/2020). On average, between Week 4 and Week 9, vulnerable children accounted for 37% of children in attendance on any given day.

Question 6

How many schools opened to reception /year 1 and year 6, and when?

Answer

On the 1st June, 6 Bradford schools reported to the DfE that they were open to core groups of pupils (Reception, Year 1, Year 6) and a further 3 were open for Nursery children.

As of 25th June, 110 Bradford schools reported to the DfE that they were open to core groups of pupils (Reception, Year 1, Year 6). 5 Nurseries were open. Additionally, 21 schools were open for Year 10 and 12 pupils. 24 who reported 25th June, are **only** open for vulnerable / keyworker children.

Members were also keen to understand where accountability was for this.

In response, officers highlighted that schools are required to complete risk assessments and the key areas that needed to be considered are school buildings and older school buildings particularly where corridors are narrow and where schools were opening for key stage workers. Officers also indicated that there are a lot of families living in multi-generation households and parent were not sending their children to school. However, schools are continuing to review this.

In response to members questions, officers indicated that 24 schools had been open to wider/core year groups during the pandemic, however, officers stressed that all schools were actually open.

Question 7

How many schools are extending opening to other years before the end of term?

Answer

The DfE daily return does not ask schools when they intend to extend their opening to more pupils. If a school informs the DfE that they are closed then they do give a reason but not when they are expecting to re-open, or who they will re-open to.

Question 8

What approaches have been put in place to ensure that adequate “bridging work”, takes place for children who have missed school as a result of the lockdown?

Answer

This is the responsibility for individual schools and academies who know their students and know what they need to do to meet the learning needs of pupils. All schools have provided work to be done at home and this has ranged from virtual learning using IT devices to schools delivering work packs to all students at home together with the resources to achieve the learning.

We have a transition project for Y6 and Y7 which is starting now. A group of primary teachers and headteachers designed a cross curricular scheme of work for Y6 pupils based on the book ‘Boy 87’ by Ele Fountain. We secured the funding from OA to buy a copy of the book for every Y6 child in the district.

They were delivered centrally and schools collected sufficient copies for their school during the week of 15th June. There is a 3-week scheme of work for schools to use.

This will then be taken to the secondary school where there are further activities for schools to do. We hope that this will give a common starting point and a shared experience to draw on.

Question 9

What consideration has been given to the use of remote virtual learning to children, across all schools in the District?

Answer

All schools have considered remote learning for their pupils. The extent to which this is accessible to all families varies and schools have worked hard in many cases to ensure that children are provided with work packs. The LA has received about 2000 laptops for children with a social worker which are being checked and having the necessary safeguards placed on them and these will be delivered to pupils via schools in the next few weeks. We are also waiting to receive about 500 tablets for younger children with a social worker. Children who do not have access to suitable connections will be provided with internet access for a full year rather than the 6 months which was funded by the DfE. Schools have also been able to order laptops for their most vulnerable pupils directly from the DfE scheme.

Question 10

Given the potentially massive impact this prolonged break will have on both the academic attainment and development of primary and secondary age children, particularly those who are vulnerable or would have started school below the 'average' expectation, what is being done by the council to explore how these children will be impacted and what steps are being taken to address this impact e.g. targeted spending on events or programmes that help reduce the impact this break has once guidelines permit this.

Answer

The DfE has provided some funding for catch up programmes. £350m for tuition for disadvantaged children and £650m for schools to determine how best to deliver catch up following this prolonged absence from school. Additionally, the council has funded catch up for Y11 pupils from September in mathematics and we are exploring a similar model for literacy in order to provide the best boost to the GCSE year.

Question 11

What support is being offered to parents of non key workers who will have little choice but to find educational / childcare support or may find themselves with concerns over job security?

Answer

Many schools have been generous in the support they have offered to parents who have been in need and have stretched the definition of vulnerable children to include such families in the provision of childcare in school and food support. We know of many individual cases where parents who have lost jobs have been supported by schools in the provision of food parcels and have invited children in for childcare. As other childcare provision has been unable to operate during the lockdown schools have been serving their communities and families well.

Question 12

Children with SEND are particularly vulnerable to the impact of this pandemic and there are a range of sub questions below on this:

- How will school transport options for children who undertake significant journeys be altered to allow for social distancing (this applies to all children not just those with SEND) and how will the relationships that they have with those drivers / support staff be maintained or will support be given to children who may now be transported with unfamiliar people.

Answer

The service will be contacting all parents of children on transport to ask them if they wish to take up the offer of a personal travel allowance . This (in addition to new applications) will give the Travel Assistance Service an indication of the actual volume of children who will require transport provision. A COVID-19 project plan has been developed and weekly meetings with operations managers ensures that volumes, capacity and Government guidelines (Coronavirus (COVID-19): safer transport guidance for operators / passengers – published today) are being simultaneously tracked and that service provision is collaborative, responsive and flexible. At the heart of this response is a risk assessment for every child to ensure the best possible care can be afforded to them in these logistically challenging times.

The number of children currently attending school is low and therefore the project plan aims to mitigate these challenges from September 2020 as the number increases. A full assessment of core fleet capacity during social distancing and extra capacity with all external operators has been conducted and a contingency is in place to work differently with them in the coming months. Comprehensive risk assessments and health risk mitigation measures have been implemented.

We continue to maintain constant contact with West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) in order to assess any risk to the home to school transport of the children in receipt of a bus pass. WYCA is currently liaising with commercial operators to ensure that the challenges on capacity presented by social distancing are mitigated as effectively as possible. Capacity is currently running at 10-20% and the implementation of 1m plus will make virtually no difference. WYCA has identified 75 – 100 coaches in West Yorkshire and the use of these is currently being explored.

- What specific help are you going to be offering to specialist SEND schools

where social distancing guidelines will potentially be harder to enforce?

Answer

Children with complex physical and health needs will continue to require close personal care and treatment that make social distancing very difficult to maintain.

This is recognised in the national guidance from the DfE which sets out the need to maintain social distance when this can be done but also on how to reduce the health risks when a child or young person requires close personal care. In response to this the local authority has been working very closely with all our state funded special schools and other relevant clinical professionals to ensure that children and young people can access education safely. This includes:

- Every child in our special schools has been individually risk assessed.
- The specialist nursing service have been very involved in providing clinical advice and support to special schools to inform the individual risk assessments and provide advice and support on appropriate PPE.
- Working with Public Health to develop guidance for all schools (including special schools)
- The local authority has been identified as an additional provider of PPE.
- Special schools have received local authority risk assessment templates on how to manage increased pupil attendance, buildings and staffing issues.
- A lead local authority officer (Niall Devlin) has been identified to work directly with the special school to support with all of the issues relating to Government Guidance and COVID 19. These meetings take place fortnightly.

- What expectation do you have on social distancing guidelines on school places - especially in regard to SEND places which are already at a premium for those in the north of the district?

- Consultation on SEND 0-25 Integrated Assessment Team.

Answer

The integrated Assessment Team is responsible for the Educational Health and Care (EHC) needs assessment process, issuing EHC plans (currently 4394 EHC plans), paying top-up payments to all PVI Nurseries, schools, colleges and independent providers and annual review. Current staff includes 5 Senior EHCP Officers, 10 Casework officers, 10 EHCP officers (admin support) and 2 finance officers.

At the Level 2 meeting on the 11th of June it was agreed that there would be a restructure of the Integrated assessment Team that would increase capacity.

This will result in an overall increase of 4 casework officers and 3.5 EHCP officers (administrative support). The restructure acknowledged that in line with regional and national data that the number of EHCP was increase at about 10% a year and that the increased capacity was needed to meet this demand. As this restructure had a impact on staffing it was agreed to undertake a consultation.

Question 13

What is the council doing to actively encourage vulnerable children to attend school at present and encourage cross ward work regarding preventing youth issues over the summer holidays?

Answer

The Deputy Director for Education and Learning writes to all Headteachers and CEOs of academy trusts each day with updates including encouraging schools to find solutions to bringing children into school. Her staff have been ringing schools regularly (at least weekly) to ascertain what the barriers have been to more vulnerable children attending school. Where required staff have liaised with social workers to find solutions to encourage attendance. At the start of lockdown schools were asked to complete attendance records to provide knowledge of which children were attending. This was then superseded by the DfE attendance system which reports on attendance nationally and we are able to interrogate and report on.

The Youth Service have maintained contact with vulnerable young people through their detached youth work presence throughout the Covid pandemic. In each area we run a “*Moving Up*” project which actively targets those who are struggling or who will struggle with moving up to secondary school. These projects are already identifying young people who are considered to be in need of additional support and they will be worked with during the summer holiday period to support a smooth transition into secondary school.

The Youth Service also works with young people through its *Buddy and Safe Space Projects* which particularly support young people with poor mental health offering 1-1 support to assist them to access things like school, other activity offers, small support / peer groups etc – this work starts with wherever this young person is at and each full time worker has an allocated caseload of young people who they support - is envisaged to continue throughout the summer holidays.

Each area team are planning to use many of the open and green spaces in their areas for small group activities over the school summer holiday periods with a direct targeting of young people who are needing positive things to do.

Detached workers are already identifying young people on the streets who would benefit from participation in such programmes.

Schools have developed a number of strategies to ensure the welfare of vulnerable children including undertaking direct visits to children in the home or maintaining telephone contact. All schools are reporting on a daily basis the number of children accessing direct support and these numbers are captured in the daily activity reporting.

Schools are focussing not just on those children who are known to social care, but also any family that they are aware may have additional vulnerabilities that could be exacerbated under the current situation. To support schools with this activity, children’s social have deployed ten early help coordinators who will work directly with the schools to provide a proactive outreach service to families who are not open to social care services. As an example,

- Some schools have actively gone out to the homes of families and spoken

at length to parents to encourage them to send their children to school. Some schools have been very persistent in this which has seen a consistent and steady take up and increase in the number of vulnerable children attending.

- A few schools have taken to decision to provide all students who do not have access to a computer for their own use at home, with a laptop or tablet to ensure that they log on and access the virtual classroom. If the school note that a particular child has not accessed a virtual lesson, a door step visit is completed.

Social workers have been asked to further support and encourage parents to send their child to school. The Director of Children's Service has written to all parents whose children are subject to an Early Help Plan, a Child in Need Plan, a Child Protection Plan, Placement with Parent Regulations and advising parents to send their child to school.

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Question 14

What funding is either being sought or provided if already budgeted for to increase potential needs for portakabins or similar building to help provide temporary/ semi permanent buildings to accommodate social distancing when more classes return? The same question applies regarding the potential for more support staff / teachers being required.

Answer

With regard to accommodation, see question 2.

The DfE has not said that there will be any additional funding for additional support staff. There has been an announcement for catch up funds to schools which may be used for additional staffing, but we are yet to receive the guidance. This fund amounts to £90 per pupil for the coming academic year,

Question 15

Will the council be seeking to provide any summer support for food or activities to relevant families, including those who have applied for but not perhaps have been granted universal credit, given the financial burden of home schooling children for what amounts to around three summer holidays?

Answer

The DfE announced that it would continue the free school meals voucher scheme into the summer holidays. The scheme called the COVID Summer Food Fund and is set up separately to the existing school voucher scheme. The scheme covers the summer holidays from 17th July. Vouchers worth £90 per pupil intended to cover a six-week holiday period. In '*exceptional circumstances*' schools may order a number of smaller vouchers to be sent to a family instead of a single £90 voucher. If families become eligible for benefits related free school meals during the summer holidays a school can place an exceptional order via the Edenred system.

With regard to summer activities for children, the DfE has allocated funds to community groups and charities to carry out the kinds of activities they would usually do with disadvantaged communities in the summer. Whilst we know that Leeds Community Foundation has been identified as the coordinator for this in the Bradford area, as yet we do not have any information about what the plans are and the DfE were unable to provide us with an indication as to what the expectations would be.

Question 16

What consultations / engagement has the council undertaken with parents / carers as well as the voice of children with regards to the return of children to school?

Answer

The Council has not undertaken a consultation on this as each school situation is unique and therefore it is more appropriate for schools to undertake a consultation with their parents to understand views. Schools have made their plans for the gradual return of pupils to school as well as encouraging children who need to, to attend school during lockdown.

Headteachers have discussed their opening with families and have taken their views into account when coming to decisions and in framing their plans for re-opening.

Schools have also engaged with children via a number of methods so that they can understand their views and concerns.

Question 17

What guidance, if any, is the council providing for PPE for school staff?

Answer

Schools have received relevant guidance from the DfE and regular updates through Public Health who have issued information packs.

Question 18

Given the likelihood of fewer children using public transport to school what is the council doing to accommodate the potential for more vehicles around schools as well as provide storage for cycling / other more environmentally friendly methods to travel to and from school? N.B. in this area what has been looked at as a way of encouraging walking buses etc that a social distancing compliant?

Answer

Public transport is predominantly used by eligible children based on the distance criterion. If social distancing measures are still in place in September, this will have a significant impact on commercial operators to provide a business as usual level of service. Current indications are that capacity will be reduced to as little as 20% of the normal level.

The Travel Assistance Service has not risk assessed the use of bicycles as an alternative form of transport for these children and, given the higher risk of inclement weather conditions from September, this form of transport should not be promoted without individual assessments of cycling ability, route safety, distance and traffic levels. Any facilities provided by schools to safely store bikes is a decision for them to make. This goes beyond the jurisdiction and duty of the Travel Assistance Service.

It is reasonable to expect that children who are displaced from commercial services may seek private transport from parents or carers. Consequently traffic levels around schools may increase. It is important to note that the Travel Assistance Service has no authority to manage traffic at schools and this would be provided by Parking Services and/or other agencies such as Highways and the Police. Drivers must continue to observe the law at all times and this unprecedented situation will also rely on them applying a common sense approach at drop off and pick up times.

The Travel Assistance Service is keen to work with partners, parents and schools to address the points in this question and will use its resources as flexibly as it can in order to achieve this.

Question 19

Have Safeguarding standards been maintained during this pandemic?

Answer

The requirements for schools in relation to safeguarding children did not change during the pandemic. The DfE issued additional guidance in respect of safeguarding which the local authority shared with schools. The Education Safeguarding Team has continued to provide schools with advice and support on safeguarding issues that have arisen during the pandemic.

A statutory instrument was published on the 23 April making unprecedented changes to regulations (secondary legislation) relating to the care and protection of vulnerable children and young people. The changes to ten sets of regulations came into force on the 24 April 2020 and are due to expire on 25 September 2020, although this expiry date can be revoked.

Although the changes are in response to the additional pressures that children's services are facing nationally they represent a significant weakening of safeguarding responsibilities towards vulnerable children. Services in Bradford have, therefore continue to work to the higher standards set out within the primary regulations.

Question 20

What impact has there been on Social Care for Children across the District?

Answer

Lockdown has placed additional pressure on many children, young people and families in terms of emotional wellbeing and mental health issues arising from social isolation, loneliness, relationship breakdown, depression and anxiety and in addition for some, the impact of bereavement.

The impact of financial hardship arising from Covid-19 will continue to affect the families we work with but is also likely to result in us needing to support families who we would not normally have.

It is anticipated that as lockdown restrictions are being eased and schools are re-opened there will be an increase in referrals from partner agencies regarding the safety and wellbeing of children. This is likely to lead to further increases in demand for services at all levels of need.

Question 21

What has been the impact on Children's Services and School Children of COVID-19?

Answer

From the start of lockdown the overwhelming majority of staff who have been able to have worked from home and have kept safe and well. As we start to reopen we have rigorous risk assessments on buildings and staff regarding who and how many staff will be able to return. I am unclear what the question is asking of the impact on school children and our staff beyond this.

Question 22

What is the Council doing about School Admission Appeals for September of this year?

Answer

Our colleagues in Legal and Democratic Services are responsible for School Appeal hearings. We are working with colleagues to implement the temporary regulations that the Government have published. School appeals will resume shortly and hearings will take place throughout the summer holidays to enable all the appeals lodged by the deadline, for Reception and Yr7, to be heard. Any appeals that were postponed, prior to lockdown, will also be prioritised.

Members wanted to explore the logistics of how school appeals could be conducted and officers responded by saying that this would be done remotely and where parents did not have access to the Information Technology, then written appeals would be considered.

Question 23

What is the proposed restructure of the Exclusion Service?

Answer

Currently, there are two Senior Exclusion officers within the exclusion services. The aim is to restructure this so that there will be one Senior Exclusion Officer and two Casework Officers. This will result in increased capacity and flexibility on how to deliver the service.

Question 24

Education delivers academic, social and emotional and safeguarding input into children and young people's lives. With partial reopening but possibility of some pupils being out of formal school for a long time how will be ensuring that all of these aspects are being met?

Answer

Schools have been required to provide remote learning for children who are not able to access school during this time. Where a school has concerns about the well-being of a child, they are able to contact the Education & Learning Team to discuss their concerns and to obtain advice.

Question 25

How are plans joining up with other providers and organisations that contribute to these different inputs?

Answer

We have worked closely with social care colleagues during this pandemic and have ensure that there are robust systems in place to safeguard C&YP whilst schools have been closed for education provision. Discussions have also taken place with health colleagues on how to identify and address potential issues in respect of mental health and well-being.

A proposal has been put forward as part of a post covid-19 educational recovery plan for the creation of a small Education Therapeutic Team to work with identified families and children who are struggling to re-engage with education. In addition, the Educational Psychology Service will play an important part in providing advice to schools on how to plan and prepare to support children who have not physically attended school for a period of time.

Question 26

There could be particular reluctance amongst certain communities to return their children to school (e.g BAME communities where there is a fear over high death rate). How will these concerns be addressed and how what provisions will be made to ensure that pupils are supported where their families decide not to return them to school?

Answer

Through our daily contact with schools we are aware of the reluctance of some parents to send children to schools. Head teachers and their staff have worked hard to ensure that all families are contacted and dialogue maintained.

Although we have yet to receive the guidance for the reopening of schools in September, we believe that the assumption will be that all students return and that the legal requirement to attend school will be resumed. We also understand that the issues regarding specific groups being more susceptible to the virus will also be addressed in the guidance.

Question 27

How will we be ensuring that all services not just commissioned mental health services will be supporting children and young people's mental health during the post Covid era and working in a joined up and complimentary way?

Answer

During the pandemic there has been a joined up communication to all partners through the council about children's mental health directly to residents. Targeted comms have gone out to GPS, NHS and social care as well as to individual homes and he VCS. Children's Services are working with the Mental Health Partnership Board and the Children's Sub Group on a plan in relation to children's mental health in the district. This has included a review done by the Centre for Mental Health into Bradford's provision. The partnership has worked together to develop a new pathway for children's mental health. In addition to this the Care Trust have done a rapid review process to change the referral process and reduce the waiting list for CAMHs services. The KOOTH on line counselling

service which has been in place since November has seen an increase in young people using it during COVID-19 and has provided an accessible offer for young people and this will continue. The data collected via KOOTH has helped up to design targeted messages and resources for young people Other mental health services have been changed during lockdown – most face to face has moved to digital and phone support however street walks and garden visits have been undertaken with children who are vulnerable. This joint work will continue moving forward.

Question 28

Different services and organisations will be able to ease out of lockdown in different ways. What measures are being undertaken to ensure that all the different services including commissioned and partnered ease back in a co-ordinated way that does not create blockages for children and young people?

Answer

- CSC services have maintained a business as usual approach albeit staff have primarily been working from home, but still undertaking assessments and home visits to progress assessments and visit children.
- A subgroup of the safeguarding partnership chaired by Jane Booth is meeting weekly to consider key safeguarding risks or challenges across all key agencies working with children and to the confirm the arrangements they have in place to ensure that professionals continue to have oversight of children across the district.
- The Safeguarding Partnership recognises the reduction in referrals to children's social care and has shared this concern with their respective workforce so that professionals can exercise due care and vigilance whilst carrying out their duties. Additionally, the Safeguarding Partnership has commissioned a series of social media safeguarding awareness posts across a number of platforms.

Question 29

What are the positive examples of collaboration and system change and breaking down of silo working and how will these be sustained and built upon for the benefit of children and young people?

Answer

Integrated Covid-19 (ICV19) Outreach team

In response to the reduction in the number of referrals to children social care a partnership approach has been developed to identify children with additional vulnerabilities and ensure that risk is being appropriately managed by the lead agency or that they receive appropriate early help support or are stepped up to statutory social work services. The Covid-19 team is also available to visit children and families in their homes where an infection is known or suspected to have occurred.

Working with Bradford District Care Trust, children's services has ensured individual risk assessments have been undertaken on all children known to either health visiting or school nursing services. These risk assessments have identified children as being low, medium or high risk in respect of vulnerability and determine which families need a joint health and social work visit.

Resolved-

That officers be thanked for attending the meeting, providing detailed responses to Members questions and the work being undertaken relating to Children's Services.

ACTION: Strategic Director of Children's Services

51. RESOLUTION TRACKING 2019-20

The Overview & Scrutiny Lead went through the recommendations that the Committee made in 2019-20.

Members considered the progress that had been made against the recommendations made by the Committee in 2019-20. Members agreed on the need to have more outcome focused recommendations.

Resolved-

That the progress made against the recommendations made by the Committee in the 2019-20 Municipal Year be acknowledged.

(ACTION: Overview & Scrutiny Lead)

52. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2020/21

The Overview & Scrutiny Lead highlighted the areas of work as part of the Draft Work Programme 2020/21, as well as the agreed programme of detailed Scrutiny Reviews to be undertaken by the Committee.

Members discussed and agreed the 2020-20 Work Programme for the Committee.

Amendments were made to the programme.

Members also discussed the programme of detailed scrutiny reviews as agreed by the committee and the need to progress with the Alternative School Provision Scrutiny Review.

Resolved-

That Members discussed and agreed the Committee's Work Programme for 2020/21.

(ACTION: Overview & 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.

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