

**Minutes of a meeting of the Children's Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday,
14 December 2022 at 4.32 pm in Council Chambers -
City Hall, Bradford**

Commenced 4.32 pm
Concluded 6.30 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP
Alipoor Berry Thirkill	Winnard Pollard	Sunderland	Sajawal

Councillor Winnard in the Chair

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Parent Governor Representatives - Fauzia Raza and Shifa Simab
Church Representative – Joyce Simpson

29. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

No declarations were received for matters under consideration.

30. MINUTES

Resolved –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2022 be signed as a correct record.

31. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

No requests were received to inspect any restricted documents.

32. REFERRALS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were no referrals made to the committee.

33. ESTABLISHING THE BRADFORD CHILDREN AND FAMILIES TRUST (THE

TRUST)

The report of the Chief Executive (**Document “K”**) provided an update on activities to establish the Bradford Children & Families Trust, the progress to date and critical next steps.

The Officer provided a build-up report following the previous presentation provided in September 2022, this report outlined the update on the progress with the establishment of the Bradford Children and Families Trust (BCFT).

It was reported that the gateway review was completed in October confirmed that there was a viable, technical Critical Path, which allowed the operational and contractual establishment of the Children’s Trust by April 2023.

The Officer reported that good progress had been made with the contractual KPIs following joint workshop between the Trust and Council. The Trust had successfully made some appointments with Charlotte Ramsden appointed as the Trust Chief Executive and Julie Crellin who has been appointed as the Finance Director.

Members were keen to understand the difficulties with recruiting staff and making successful appointments and asked if the level of pay had been an issue with recruiting.

The Officer advised that it was a limited and difficult field and a challenging environment, a few key roles had been filled, this should give people some confidence. The pay may have been an issue as competition is tight, therefore work had been carried out to ensure packages were attractive.

Members sought further clarification around the issue of affordability.

The Officer reported that they would be looking at demand of service and DFE support but the level of improvement already made in Children’s Services was progress.

Members asked what happened if there was no final consensus with the final budget.

The Officer advised that all parties were looking positive at reaching an agreeable budget. Discussions would also take place with DFE around the budget and support as there were a combination of opportunities that still needed to be explored and discussed.

The Officer reported that the Trust would be executing/discharging service on behalf of the Local Authority, therefore making the Local Authority equally accountable. The Trust has formed a shadow board to ensure

Members asked as the new team has limited experience, how would it be supported for a positive outcome.

The Officer reported that the team was encouraged with positive motivation and were also encouraged to report any issues and concerns to help deal with them efficiently.

Members of the Committee made the following comments:

- It was stressed that Members would prefer more than quarterly and

annual reports.

- Members requested for more regular and solid reports on progress and actions. The reports need to have more details on timelines of what had been achieved, fit for purpose reports.
- Members wanted to better understand what the deal is with the Trust and what powers of the Committee would be.
- It was suggested that the process required a facilitator that could bring everything together in order to have a more effective service delivery.

A Member of the Committee asked what steps would be taken to develop a culture where the Service can acknowledge something has gone wrong i.e the rights of elected members, policy development for elected members to be more involved.

The Officer assured members that partnership was very important to the Trust and it would ensure that there was a robust arrangement in place to keep members up to date with all progress made and actions taken.

A Member asked if there would be a review of management after the recent Ofsted inspection/report and also how the transitioning was progressing for the Trust.

The Officer reported that an update would be provided following the Ofsted report and that most staff would be moving over to the Trust and are aware of opportunities, staff had been made aware of all the possibilities and have been encouraged to raise and issues and concerns.

A member of the Committee was keen to understand if the Trust had the flexibility on they delivered the service.

The Officer reported would have operational independence and will have KPI's in the contract, the Trust would be expected to meet statutory guidance. It was further reported that a gateway review would take place in January 2023 and a further progress report would be provided by early March.

Resolved –

- (1) That a further progress report be presented to this Committee, in early March 2023.**
- (2) This Committee requests that the comments raised by members, be considered as part of the further developments of the Children's Trust arrangements.**

ACTION: Strategic Director Place

(Chris Chapman – 01274 433656)

34. ANNUAL REPORT FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS APRIL 2021 - MARCH 2022

The report of the Director of Quality and Nursing – West Yorkshire Integrated Care Board (Bradford) (**Document “M”**) presented the Annual Report for Children Looked After and Care Leavers April 2020 – March 2021.

The Officer reported that this would be the second annual report to the Committee and it would be good practice to continue to produce these reports.

The report highlighted the key aims, matters of legislation, the scope of the Looked After and Care Leavers team and compared numbers of children looked after per 10,000 with Bradford statistical neighbours. The report also provided some information about initial health assessments and review health assessments and provided some key areas of focus for 2022/23.

The report also highlighted some successes in the delivery of a health service to Looked After Children and Care Leavers, the report also referred to the challenges of provision of care, in meeting statutory timescales and of capacity limitations within the context of the year-on-year growth of children becoming looked after across the Bradford District.

The officer further stated that comparatively numbers were far steeper for looked after and Care Leavers in Bradford than neighbouring local authorities. It was reported that children who were coming into care had very complex needs, Bradford had a young population, with the fourth highest proportion of under 16 year olds in England.

The Officer explained that an initial health assessment was carried out by a registered medical practitioner, the statutory guidance stated that IHA's should be done within 20 working days of entering care, any child that was deemed high risk was seen as priority.

It was reported that there were around 116 missed appointments by young people and a huge waste of resources but staff/colleagues were working to reduce this and some great progress has been made however, the amount of children and young people coming to care was outstripping the resources.

Members of the Committee were concerned that statutory guidelines were not being met when carrying out the initial health assessments as they had to take place within 20 days of entering care.

The Officer reported that Bradford was not alone in this as it was an issue faced by many local authorities, sometimes it was not possible to gain consent to see the patient however, this issue was being addressed and worked on.

Members asked what the status was on statutory guidance regarding IHA's. The Officer reported that there were no penalties however, it was not good practice to go over the 20-day timeline for carrying out health assessments. The Service was swapping notes in West Yorkshire to see how best to tackle this issue.

Members were keen to understand the potential risks to children and young people.

The Officer advised that a weekly meeting is held around children who came into care and any case/s that are recognised as being in any potential danger are escalated.

Members of the Committee asked if professionals were looking into why children were missing appointments.

The Officer reported that reminders were sent to patients were there was still a low turn out to appointments. It was suggested by the reporting officer that the service needed to get better at reporting issues and progress to the Committee on a regular basis.

A member of the Committee questioned if a mobile unit can be placed at schools for the purpose of being more approachable or carry out home visits to children who have failed to attend appointments.

The Officer stated that they have tried to get people out to see patients who have missed appointments but there were simply not enough resources to continue this.

Members were concerned regarding the persistent issue around gaining consent for children, Members asked why children were being placed in care of people who could not take them to appointments.

The Officer advised that there was a process that could work around this issue, such as, Care Order but there were also young people of consenting age who were not complying.

A Member of the Committee commented that colleagues in Health and Children's social care needed to work together to overcome issues. The Member also suggested that there needed to be a process of engagement and encouragement with young people.

Members sought clarity on up to date figures of service users.

The Officer reported that the key focus areas for 2022/23 for Partners to address were:

- To identify where there were delays and problems/cause of problems
- To work closely with Local Authority to improve contractual agreement and policy & procedures to strengthen the governance and strategic support.
- To respond to any relevant areas of concern highlighted in the SEND Inspection Written Statement Action.
- Improve attendance at appointments and data collection.

Members suggested that there should be an inclusion of actions taken to help young people attend appointments in the next report and also the impact of initial health assessments, how children were being supported collectively.

Resolved –

- (1) This Committee requests that the Annual Report for Children Looked After and Care Leavers be presented to this Committee in September 2023, to also include:**

- Details of the progress against the Action Plan;
- Outcomes of the Children’s Health Assessments being undertaken;
- Percentage of Children’s Health Assessments being done within Statutory guideline timelines, in comparison with statistical neighbours and national comparators.

ACTION – Director of Quality and Nursing

(Dr Catherine Murray – 01274 237523)

35. CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

The report of the Chair of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (**Document “L”**) was submitted to Members for comment and review of the 2022/23 Work Programme.

The Overview and Scrutiny Lead went through the work programme and also the scrutiny reviews relating to Child Poverty and Elective Home Education.

Resolved –

The Committee discussed the work programme and agreed on the next steps in relation to the Elective Home Education and Child Poverty Scrutiny Reviews.

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