

AT A MEETING of the Children and Families Advisory Panel of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on Tuesday 11th June 2019

Chairman:
p Councillor David Keast

p Councillor Pal Hayre
Councillor Martin Boiles
P Councillor Ann Briggs
P Councillor Fran Carpenter

p Councillor Peter Edgar MBE
p Councillor Jackie Porter
Councillor Robert Taylor
p Councillor Malcolm Wade

57. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Boiles & Cllr Taylor. Cllr Warwick was in attendance as the Conservative Deputy.

58. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Non-Pecuniary interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 2 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

No declarations were received.

59. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed and signed.

60. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations received.

61. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman asked if any members had visited a Children's Home and wanted to feedback. Cllr Briggs shared details of her visit to the Children's Home in Havant, noting how excellent she thought it was and that it was just like an actual home.

62. **HAMPSHIRE JOINT WORKING HOUSING PROTOCOL**

The Children and Families Advisory Panel receive a report from the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of the reviewed joint working protocol between Hampshire's Children's Services Department and District Housing departments. This was as a result of the expanded duties for local authorities in the Homelessness Act 2017 in relation to housing for 16 & 17 year olds. The Panel noted that this duty means that the local authority must undertake enquiries for someone where there is reason to believe they may be threatened with homelessness in the same way as someone who is homeless. The timescale for this is now 56 days. The Panel also heard that the accommodation provided must be suitable for their needs and there is no situation in which a bed & breakfast can be considered suitable.

In response to questions members heard that;

- Assessment often leads to an identified accommodation need, but as a top tier authority, Hampshire has no control over this area. This could lead to frustrations in relation to this duty, but the protocol is in place to help prevent that.
- There is a pressure on spaces which differs depending on the District concerned. The first option is family and friends then supported accommodation is concerned.
- If there is no imminent risk of homelessness a referral will usually be made to the Early Help Hub.
- Sometimes children are registered as Looked After Children to assist with the timely allocation of accommodation.
- There are specialist placements available for young mums and some foster carers are happy to assist in this regard. However, this is only when the individual is willing to become Looked After.

Recommendation: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the contents of the report and agree that the key challenges are to be considered by the Corporate Parenting Board.

63. **ANNUAL REPORT ON THE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE**

The Children and Families Advisory Panel received a report from the Director of Children's Services providing the annual report on the educational outcomes for Children in Care. The Panel heard that the role of the Virtual School was to promote educational outcomes of Children in Care and they therefore collect data on all Looked After children in Hampshire Schools. The Panel noted that the small team worked alongside the Designated Teachers for Children in Care placed in each school.

The Panel heard how the analysis focused on children who had been in care for a year or more as of the 31 March, and that the data is affected but the relatively small cohort leading to fluctuations.

In response to questions, members heard that;

- Looked After Children receive support at schools in relation to afterschool activities etc. alongside college & university applications.
- Statistical neighbours are followed to ensure best practise is always applied.
- Schools for looked after children are selected after careful consideration to find the best provision for them.
- Previously looked after children are not included in the data and are not tracked.

Recommendation: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the contents of the report.

64. **OVERVIEW OF HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCILS' CHILDREN'S HOMES**

The Children and Families Advisory Panel received a report from the Director of Children's Services with an overview of the provision and development of residential care in Hampshire.

The Panel heard how the residential strategy was agreed in 2014 with a vision of choice, based on effective assessment of need and careful matching with a standard not less than that of a large family home. The strategy had two main strands, quality of staff and quality of environment. The Panel received an overview of the progress in each of Hampshire's homes as set out in the report.

In response to questions, members heard that;

- There continues to be a challenge in relation to recruitment.
- A bi-monthly board has been established for managers of each home to meet, alongside other key managers in Children's Services, to share best practise.

Recommendation: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the update provided in this report regarding the provision and quality of residential care for Children Looked After within each of the Children's Homes.

65. **OUTCOME OF THE APRIL 2019 OFSTED INSPECTION OF HAMPSHIRE CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Children and Families Advisory Panel received a presentation from the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of a recent OFSTED inspection in which Hampshire's Children's Services were found to be 'Outstanding'. This makes Hampshire one of only two Local Authorities to receive this level across the board.

The panel received an overview of the assessment covering; Early Help, Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, Children in Need & Child Protection, Children in Care, Care Leavers, Disabled Children's Team, Fostering, Adoption, Transformation, Staffing and Leadership & Management.

Recommendation: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the outcomes and comments within the recent OFSTED inspection and congratulate Children's Services on achieving the 'Outstanding' ranking.

Chairman, Children & Families
Advisory Panel