

Agenda Item 3

AT A MEETING of the Children and Young People Select Committee of
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at the castle, Winchester on
Wednesday, 20th November, 2019

Chairman:
p Councillor Kirsty North

Vice-Chairman
p Councillor Ray Bolton

p Councillor Jackie Branson
p Councillor Ann Briggs
p Councillor Zilliah Brooks
p Councillor Fran Carpenter
p Councillor Peter Edgar MBE
p Councillor Marge Harvey
p Councillor Pal Hayre

p Councillor Wayne Irish
p Councillor Gavin James
a Councillor Neville Penman
p Councillor Jackie Porter
p Councillor Robert Taylor
p Councillor Malcolm Wade
p Councillor Michael Westbrook

Co-opted Members

p Ian Brewerton, Secondary School Parent Governor Representative
a Gareth Davies, Primary School Parent Governor Representative
p Robert Sanders, Church of England Schools Representative
p Kate Watson, Special School Parent Governor Representative
VACANT Roman Catholic Schools Representative

In attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:

Councillor Patricia Stallard, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services and Young People
Councillor Roz Chadd, Executive Member for Education and Skills

110. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Neville Penman. Apologies were also received from Gareth Davis, the Parent Governor Representative for primary schools.

111. 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

Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 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 made at this point in the meeting.

112. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

113. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations on this occasion.

114. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed Kate Watson to her first meeting as the Parent Governor representative for special schools.

115. UPDATE ON CHILDREN IN CARE

With the agreement of the Chairman, this item was taken before Item 6 and Item 7 on the agenda.

The Committee received a presentation from the Director of Children's Services on Children in Care and Corporate Parenting (Item 8 in the Minute Book). Members were taken through the presentation and various issues were highlighted. The key triggers of children being taken into care were explained and also the process of children entering the care system which was normally either through the courts or because parents had requested this. Officers also explained the process around a care order and an emergency protection order.

The rise in numbers of children in care was noted and it was highlighted that this was common in all local authority areas, and there were not enough foster carers to meet demand. This had led to the use of independent providers increasing, and the costs associated with these were rising. Members heard that 50% of private providers were controlled by three Hedge Funds which raised questions about profiteering from children in care.

The role of Corporate Parenting was explained and the role of the Local Authority assuming the role of a good parent to a child in its care, and the aspirations to achieve the best outcomes possible for an individual child. Officers highlighted the role of the Corporate Parenting Board and the seven principles of Corporate Parenting which included ensuring children and young people felt safe in their home lives and the importance of their wishes and feelings. Members attention was also drawn to care leavers and the importance of help and support for their transition into adulthood and leaving the care system at 25 years of age.

Officers referenced the national Bright Spots survey which was conducted every two years and explored the well-being of children in care. It was noted that children and young people in Hampshire reported positive relationships with their carers and social workers, and there were also high percentages of children and young people who reported that the adults they lived with noticed how they were feeling. Members noted the spelling error on page 11 of the presentation which should read “lived” instead of “loved”.

Attention was drawn to Hampshire’s Children’s Home Strategy which offered children a home environment and it was important to note that these were placements of choice for children rather than a last resort. It was highlighted that the view of residential care nationally had been influenced by historic abuse cases, but officers were working to change this view and highlighted the number of residential care leavers who as adults, continued to drop-in and visit the homes.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That an increase in the number of looked after children in Hampshire from April/May 2016 was caused by a number of significant factors, which included an increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, increased focus nationally on child sex exploitation, new technology and development of County Lines.
- That population growth in Hampshire had resulted in 23,000 new school places being built, and this growth was reflected nationally. The aim was to reduce the number of children in care against the growth trajectory and to safely keep more children with their families wherever possible.
- That it was important that there was stability of school placements for children in care, and a large proportion were placed in specialist schools according to individual educational needs and may require an Educational, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Schools and social care teams work closely together to support educational needs.
- That with regards to foster care, there were differences between non regulated placements, non-registered placements and other combinations, and these were all quality assured by Children’s Services.
- That children in care were heavily involved in the design of children’s homes, and the design would take into consideration key issues such as privacy from children’s own life experiences.
- That the Bright Spots survey completion rate in Hampshire was 36%, which was high compared to national completion rates. These surveys provided a better understanding of children’s experiences in care and it was important to note that the experience for children in care was largely positive.
- That a personal advisor was mandatory for all care leavers until they reached 21 years of age.

RESOLVED:

That the Children and Young People Select Committee received and noted the overview provided in the presentation.

116. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION

The Select Committee received a report and presentation from the Director of Children's Services on Elective Home Education (EHE) in Hampshire (Item 7 in the Minute Book). Members were taken through the slides and details around the new guidance on EHE from the Department for Education were highlighted. It was heard that the new guidance had been welcomed and was in two parts, for both local authorities and parents, which provided greater clarity. Key extracts from the guidance were explained. Officers informed Members on implications of the guidance and it was heard that local authorities should now consult the parents of the child when establishing the suitability of home education, and prompt action and early intervention was crucial. The use of school attendance proceedings and robust policies and procedures were also explained.

Members heard that the number of children in Hampshire currently receiving EHE was 1,715 which was a significant increase from 7/8 years ago where numbers were approximately 400 and this increase was expected to continue. It was explained that there were also differences in numbers between the district areas in Hampshire.

The work of the EHE team was detailed and it was heard that priority was given to children who were most vulnerable. Officers highlighted the work of the EHE coordinator and the administrative team, and services offered such as bespoke telephone or email guidance for parents. The importance of the team maintaining good links with EHE parent groups and health and social care was also noted.

In concluding, Members noted that going forward there would be an increase in the number of home visits, increased EHE team capacity in response to the rising numbers of home educated children and a continued focus on the most vulnerable children. Officers also highlighted joint working with other south-east authorities in order to have a common definition of "suitable education".

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That the guidance had been welcome to provide clarity on the need for annual assessments and home visits to home educated children, to be made by local authorities.
- That school funding for local authorities was based on the number of children in school, and home educated children didn't count towards this funding. With the new guidance and funding needed for administration functions and home visits to parents, this would put additional pressure on the schools forum budget.
- That parents could apply for an EHCP if their child was home educated and the organisation SENDIAS could support parents with this.
- That if an EHCP was taken out whilst the child was in mainstream school, then if that child was subsequently home educated, the parent would have to prove that the EHCP was still being met under the new EHE guidance.
- That the large increase in home educated children could be attributed to a number of factors which included: rise in use of social media, parents being more aware of their right to home educate, narrowing of school curriculum, dissatisfaction with the school system, bullying and school

attendance. 30% of children did go back to school every three months, so the total number of home educated children did fluctuate every month.

- That it would be useful for school governors to offer an exit interview to parents who had decided to home educate their child, and this would also help to provide a clearer picture of reasons behind this decision.
- That there was an increase in the number of children being home educated between Year 10 and Year 11 in the summer of 2019, and it was doubtful as to whether these children did undertake their GCSE exams.

An additional recommendation was proposed by Councillor Jackie Porter and seconded by Councillor Kirsty North:

That the Select Committee:

- *'Recommend that the Executive Lead Member write to the Secretary of State for Education to seek funding from the Department for Education to be held by the Local Authority for each child educated at home, so that the Local Authority has the budget to exercise their functions as described by the new EHE Guidance 2019'*

A vote was held, with the outcome:

For: 15
Against: 2
Abstained: 0

The additional recommendation was thus carried.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Children and Young People Select Committee considered the report and noted the next steps being taken by the department.
- b) That the Children and Young People Select Committee recommend that the Executive Lead Member write to the Secretary of State for Education to seek funding from the Department for Education to be held by the Local Authority for each child educated at home, so that the local Authority has the budget to exercise their functions as described by the new EHE Guidance 2019.

117. **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES (CAMHS) UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) (Item 6 in the Minute Book) from representatives of Hampshire and Isle of Wight Partnership of Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's). This update was at the request of the Committee following on from an earlier presentation to the Committee in November 2018 where the Committee had concerns in relation to waiting times for CAHMS.

Representatives of the CCG's provided a brief overview of the presentation slides and a number of key issues were explained. Members heard that CAMHS continued to have more challenges, and demand for mental health services was increasing but ongoing work had continued to address these challenges and demand. This included: work over the summer with key stakeholders, additional funding, skype based interventions and submission of funding bids for eating disorders and mental health. It was also highlighted that the CAMHS website continued to be developed, the promotion of the ThinkNinja app in educating young people about mental health and parent-carer events.

In concluding, it was noted that representatives of the CCG's continued to work in close partnership with the provider to address these ongoing challenges.

In response to questions, Members heard:

- That CAMHS waiting times had increased, which was also a national issue, and work was being undertaken for additional investment into the service, with ongoing work to identify and bid for further funding.
- That the aim for the CCG's was for prevention where possible, and ways of accessing help before children and young people reached the stage where CAMHS was required.
- That within CAMHS, there were specialist training programmes in therapy, and further information on staff training would be provided in a future update to members.
- That there had been some recent issues with staff retention, and areas such as work pressures and ways to retain staff were being explored.
- That in relation to children and young people with eating disorders, work had been undertaken regionally with NHS England through the Strategic Clinical Network to explore closer collaboration around earlier interventions, which should lessen the need for inpatient beds. This had also been piloted locally and was being evaluated.
- That the CCG's would liaise with Children's Services to determine how many children and young people assessed by CAMHS required additional support, for example an EHCP, or short break activities.
- That a national pilot programme had been rolled out to two schools in the Havant and Gosport area to help with early prevention in relation to CAMHS, and a bid would be put forward to increase this number, working closely with health partners and schools.

It was proposed by Councillor Kirsty North and seconded by Councillor Marge Harvey that a further update be presented to the Committee in 12 months' time and this was agreed by Members.

RESOLVED:

- a) That the Children and Young People Select Committee received and noted the overview provided in the presentation.
- b) That the Children and Young People Committee requested that a further update be brought to the Committee in 12 months' time.

118. **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Director of Transformation and Governance presented the Committee's work programme (Item 9 in the Minute Book).

It was confirmed that the next EMTAS update would be brought to the 14 May 2020 Select Committee.

Members also requested that a further update on Elective Home Education be brought to a future Select Committee, the timing of this to be agreed with Officers.

RESOLVED:

That the work programme, subject to any amendments made during the meeting, was agreed.

Chairman,

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