

AT A MEETING of the Children and Families Advisory Panel of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Tuesday 17th October 2017

Chairman:
p Councillor David Keast

p Councillor Roz Chadd
p Councillor Martin Boiles
p Councillor Ann Briggs
p Councillor Fran Carpenter

Councillor Pal Hayre
p Councillor Jackie Porter
p Councillor Robert Taylor
p Councillor Malcolm Wade

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present and no apologies were noted.

12. 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.

13. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting were reviewed and agreed

14. DEPUTATIONS

No deputations were received.

15. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman asked if any Panel Members had visited a Children's Home since the last meeting and if they had anything they would like to feedback.

Various Members had been to Swanwick Lodge and all agreed that they were impressed with what they had seen. The Centre is becoming more like a home, the young people present were happy and looked after by the dedicated staff.

Cllr Wade commented that he was impressed on a visit to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

16. **YOUTH JUSTICE ANNUAL PLAN**

The Panel received a report from the Director of Children's Services which provided an overview of the work and an update of recent developments within Hampshire's Youth Offending Team. The annual Hampshire Youth Justice Plan was also included.

Hampshire's Youth Offending Team aims to prevent offending and reoffending by children and young people aged 10-17 years. This aim involves significant criminal justice statutory functions which include the assessment and supervision of children and young people subject to out of court disposals, court orders, custodial sentences and bail and remand.

In addition to the statutory functions, Hampshire's YOT also has a significant investment in the prevention of offending, with the aim of diverting children and young people away from the criminal justice system at an earlier stage.

In response to questions members heard that;

- The data reported on is from 2014/15 as this is the most recent verified information. Hampshire does keep and use up to date data however this can not be published until confirmed by the Youth Justice Board (YJB)..
- One of the core reasons that reoffending rates have not dropped is that the cohort has become smaller and those whose needs are more challenging remain.
- There are many initiatives to help prevent offending behaviour, such as the Wessex Dance Academy, however there is a lot in this area for District Councils to contribute to.
- The reduction in young people entering the criminal justice system is attributed to the effectiveness of the YOT and the work done to divert young people before they offend.
- In response to financial pressures, more work is being undertaken with partner agencies in relation to the complex individuals who are still offending.

Resolved: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the work of the Youth Offending Team and the Youth Justice Plan for Hampshire.

17. **ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE AND SAFEGUARDING UNIT: ANNUAL CARE PLANNING AUDIT**

The Panel received a report from the Director of Children's Services which provided an update of the work of the Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) and Safeguarding Unit. The report was accompanied by the annual audit of care plans and care planning for children looked after by the authority.

The Panel heard that the performance of the IRS and Safeguarding Unit remained strong and the Care Plan Audit highlights many positive areas. However there are some areas that require improvement in relation to planning for children for whom the authority has a corporate parenting responsibility.

The Panel heard that the IRS had a high workload but the number of Children on Child Protection or Child Looked After Plans remained stable. Currently, 80% of reviews are being completed on time with the remainder being only days late meaning there is no risk of drift. A recent Bright Spots survey found that Hampshire children who are looked after are happy although there were concerns from some 8 to 11 year olds around bullying at school..

In response to questions members heard that;

- Less than 2% of children had signed their plan and only four had been signed by the parents. Officers explained that this was not the only indicator of engagement and is not considered a key indicator. It was also noted that signing a Plan was hard to achieve practically but it was thought that new technology will improve this.
- The Care Plan Audit was for all Hampshire looked after children, including those placed outside of Hampshire borders or with a private agency. The Audit did not include children from other local authorities being looked after within Hampshire.
- There were differences in the audit outcomes between the East and the West of the county which are being addressed by Children's Services management.

Resolved: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel;

- Note the continuing sound work of the Independent Reviewing Service and Safeguarding Unit.

And

- Note the outcomes of the annual audit of Care Plans and Care Planning for Hampshire's 'Looked After' children.

18. **ESTABLISHING A CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

The Panel received a report from the Director of Children's Services in relation to the creation of a sub-committee of the Children and Families Advisory Panel (CFAP) to act as a dedicated Corporate Parenting Board (CPB).

The Panel heard that the role of the CPB would be to promote the best outcomes for children in care and care leavers and enable Councillor led engagement and advice to CFAP and the relevant Executive Member. Alongside the report was a proposed Terms of Reference for the CPB.

Resolved: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel;

- Agrees to the formation of a sub-committee known as the Corporate Parenting Board on the basis set out in the report and in the attached draft terms of reference.
- Agrees to the adoption of the proposed Terms of Reference for the Board.
- Appoint three Members to the Board, on a proportionate basis and identifies one of them as Chairman and another as Vice-Chairman. In addition, that the Children and Families Advisory Panel appoint a substitute member for each political group.
 - The Panel appointed Cllr Chadd (Chairman), Cllr Briggs (Vice-Chairman) and Cllr Wade alongside Cllr Carpenter (Conservative Deputy) and Cllr Porter (Liberal Democrat Deputy)

- Recommends to County Council the appointment of three co-opted Care Ambassadors as Members of the Board as set out in the Terms of Reference.

19. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN UPDATE

The Panel received a report from the Director of Children's Services in relation to Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) being cared for by Hampshire's Children's Services.

The Panel heard that the majority of the UASC cared for by Hampshire had come into the UK of their own accord, although a significant minority who arrived over the last 6 months had been accepted by the South East Dispersal Scheme. It is suggested that each local authority should support a number of UASC that equates to 0.007% of their population, for Hampshire this would be 195 children and Young People.

A large number of UASC are placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers outside of Hampshire in order to achieve suitable placements for them. However this incurs a large cost and has an impact on both Social Workers time when visiting and their ability to form a relationship. Alongside this, the demand for Interpreters has increased across the county which puts a strain on good practise.

The Panel heard that these complications affect performance indicators as it is difficult to know historical details around UASC's education or health. In addition, there is often a need for emergency placements for those who arrive without warning and a subsequent move to a permanent placement, affecting placement stability.

In response to questions Members heard that;

- Social Workers often will not know UASC's date of birth and so an Age Assessment is completed by two Social Workers. In Hampshire, this does not involve any invasive methods of measuring age.
- Some UASC make contact with their families when they arrive, but not all do.
- Best practise for UASC is shared within the South East Region Migration group and advice is provided by London Boroughs as they have more experience. However, some Councils are not playing their part in relation to their quota of UASC.

Resolved: That the Children and Families Advisory Board note the contents of the report and that an updated report be provided in February 2018.

Cllr Keast, Chairman, Children and Families Advisory Panel