

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY PANEL

2nd APRIL, 2015

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on
THURSDAY 2ND APRIL, 2015

PRESENT:

Chair – Councillor Rachel Hodson

Councillors Andrew Bosmans, Neil Gethin and Sue McGuinness

Mr John Hoare, Co-opted Member for Education representative of the
Sheffield Hallam Diocese

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Lead
Member for Children's Services

Councillor John Mounsey, Chair Overview and Scrutiny Management
Committee

Councillor Paul Bissett

Councillor Fred Gee

John Harris, Independent Chair of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children's
Board

Eleanor Brazil, Director Learning and Opportunities: Children and Young
People, Doncaster MBC

Rianna Nelson, Assistant Director Children's Commissioning, Children and
Young People Service

Paul Thorpe, Head of Service Performance Improvement, Children and
Young People Service

Superintendent Peter Norman, South Yorkshire Police

Rosie Faulkner, Doncaster Safeguarding Children's Board Manager

Akeela Mohammed, Lay Member of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children's
Board

Paul Moffatt, Chief Executive, Doncaster Children's Services Trust

Mark Douglas, Chief Operating Officer, Doncaster Children's Services Trust

Sue May, Adoption Placement Service Manager

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue Wilkinson, P
Coddington, Eva Hughes, Barbara Hoyle and Dave Shaw

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| 8. | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY</u> | |
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| | Councillor Andrew Bosmans declared an interest in agenda item number 8 the Adoption Leadership Board Headline Measures stating that he was a member of the Adoption Panel. | All to note |
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| 9. | <u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u> | |
| | <p>Mr Tim Brown, a Doncaster resident thanked the Scrutiny Panel for allowing him to speak.</p> <p>He questioned how someone like himself, who was a brother, parent and son, could become involved in the Childrens Trust process. He stressed that he had indicated to the Panel previously and referred particularly to his correspondence with Professor Le Grand, who had indicated that he had a basic right to be involved in the development of the Trust. He expressed his disappointment that no-one had had the decency or courtesy to contact him to assure his engagement with the process.</p> <p>With regards to job opportunities in the borough for young people from an ethnic minority background he highlighted that he had brought the issue of good Apprenticeship programmes to the Mayor's and Councillor Glyn Jones attention, as he felt the percentage of qualified young people in Doncaster from all backgrounds were not offered good job opportunities, with those from an ethnic background even less and in turn feared they would turn to gangs and drugs.</p> <p>Mr Brown continued by questioning how Child Sexual Exploitation was being addressed. He stressed he was not an academic, but felt there was no strategy to deal with CSE issues and, as a parent, wished to know more about the position at a basic level.</p> <p>During his statement, Mr Brown also stated that in his opinion the Local Authority had been ethnically cleansed and how could this be in 2015. He also stressed that he felt humiliated when attending such meetings because of the way people, who had well paid jobs, looked at him.</p> <p>He finalised by stating that before he left the meeting he wished to be advised of an engagement plan with</p> | All to note |

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| | the BME community. | |
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| | On behalf of the Panel the Chair thanked Mr Brown for his statement and asked that his statement be taken into account during discussion throughout the rest of the meeting. | |
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| | Note: At this point Mr Brown left the meeting. | |
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| 10. | <u>RESPONDING TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) IN DONCASTER – ASSURANCE REPORT BY THE INDEPENDENT CHAIR OF DONCASTER SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN’S BOARD</u> | |
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| | <p>The Chair of the Doncaster Children’s Safeguarding Board, Mr John Harris, presented a progress report relating to the Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan.</p> <p>He highlighted, taking Mr Brown’s statement into account, that a BME group had been established, reporting to the main Safeguarding Board, which was addressing specific issues in detail prior to the action plan being activated for this area. It was acknowledged that this was a major area of work which was being undertaken, with many sessions focusing on faith and culture.</p> | |
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| | The Chair thanked Mr Harris for his introduction and asked that the Panel focus discussion on the following key questions:- | |
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| | 1. How well is the nature and scale of CSE in Doncaster understood? | |
| | Since December, it was noted that a much improved set of South Yorkshire intelligence data, broken down by borough, was now being provided on a quarterly basis from South Yorkshire Police outlining the nature and scale of the current position. It details profile of victims, perpetrators and hotspots in the area. | |
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| | 2. Data reliability – Members sought assurance over its consistency and reliability. | |
| | Following Members concerns that the Casey report from Rotherham identified inconsistencies it was stressed that there was always improvement | |

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| | <p>required to data, however, the Childrens Trust and South Yorkshire Police, through the multi-agency response team were ensuring that it provided an accurate picture of the current position. The data was also being monitored nationally to ensure its integrity and validity.</p> | |
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| | <p>Reference was made to a recent BBC Radio 5 live programme relating to the hidden problem of CSE over the years but highlighted that people now had the courage to report. It was noted that cases from 1963 were currently being investigated with the information still relevant today. Information was being gathered by analysts who were identifying more and more about the Doncaster area everyday.</p> <p>The analysts and partners were ensuring that data and information was of the highest quality to lead to more prosecutions and victims rescued.</p> | |
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| | <p>It was also reported that all South Yorkshire Safeguarding Board Chairs met regularly and assess detailed data across the county ensuring it has the same thresholds confirming the picture is correct. It provides sophisticated information on online grooming, CSE gangs/networks and trends.</p> | |
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| | <p>3. How effective is the preventative work with Children and Families and is there any evidence of results?</p> | |
| | <p>It was noted that the training programmes were continuing but there had been no sudden spike in referrals. It was stressed that, following the first report in December, 2014 it was a little early to identify the impact.</p> <p>There was a range of areas that were being addressed included working with taxi licensing to introduce a training package, in touch with Border agency staff at the airport to assist with recognising children and young people who were being trafficked for CSE, hotels and places where children and young people congregate e.g. takeaways. Preventative work was being undertaken by all agencies, for example, staff in education were trained to know where to go if they have concerns with Ofsted reports of individual schools commenting on behaviour and safety to ensure children understand risks and safety.</p> | |

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| | With regard to referrals the Panel was reminded of the dedicated CSE multi-agency team made up of health, police and social workers who filtered and processed all referrals made. | |
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| | 4. How far are partners providing timely, appropriate and effective support to victims and those at risk? | |
| | It was noted that projects were being delivered locally, for example the "Mocking Bird Project" which provided designating, training and support to specific foster carers that have no placements of their own. It was a source of support for a hub of 6 to 8 foster carers to provide direct and practical assistance including advice and guidance, 24 hours telephone support and, where necessary, respite care so as to minimise placement disruptions. A Domestic Violence programme was also being focused on that has specialist teams to provide wrap around support. | |
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| | 5. How effective is the work being undertaken in disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators? | |
| | The Panel was assured that methods were improving and numbers of prosecutions were increasing. It was confirmed that this information relating to this issue would be provided as part of the Panel's next update. <u>Conviction data 1/4/2014 to 31/01/2015</u> 25 convictions 18 crown court cases ongoing 4 not guilty cases 42 cases currently being investigated/outstanding | |
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| | 6. How effective is the multi-agency training for responding to CSE? | |
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| | Members noted that feedback was received at the end of all training but also each individual keeps a personal log of training undertaken to evidence their understanding and nature of CSE through building into their daily work. | |
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| | 7. How effective are quality assurance arrangements? | |
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| | It was reported that all cases have been audited and from this work, information will be collated to | |

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| | improved evidence and impacts. The Children's Trust had also undertaken its own review of decision making in the CSE team which reassured that the evidence base was sound. | |
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| | 8. Reassurance was sought with regard to the effectiveness of the strategic leadership in responding to Doncaster's CSE? | |
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| | <p>Members were reassured that the framework developed and reported to the Panel at its meeting in December, 2014 continued to be effective. Some issues are being addressed by all partners due to the complexity and nature of CSE. The Children's Safeguarding Board was also monitoring the effectiveness of the management framework and action plan.</p> <p>Key areas discussed that required monitoring or increased development included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • children missing from education; • progress with faith groups required detailed preparatory and engagement to establish the correct framework, which, in turn would make the greatest impact. A Lay member of the Children's Safeguarding Board stressed that a lot of reactionary work had been undertaken in the past but outlined that some of the work with the muslim community was delicate with slow progress but there had been recent positive moves to introduce CSE training within the community; • engagement with all communities particularly stressing that representation was required from the Afro-Caribbean community; • Youth Service engagement and links with the Children's Trust CSE team – it was stressed that this needed to be an effective service with a more informal feel to ensure positive engagement with children and young people; • Voluntary sector involvement with identifying and addressing CSE; • Lack of national baseline data with only local quality assurance data showing how the multi-agency teams are working with young people; • Separate training required for child care units - It was noted that a WPC from South Yorkshire Police worked closely with children and young people in residential units and noted that at its | |

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| | peak there were 54 missing reports and following her intervention there are now approximately 10 or 12. | |
| | To conclude, the Panel was heartened to note that, even in its infancy, data collation was improving and progress made with the Action Plan. It was stressed by a Member that Members as corporate parents and partners needed to continue to work together to address the issue of CSE. | |
| | <u>Resolved:-</u> that the discussion be noted and a further update be considered by the Scrutiny Panel in 2015/16 municipal year. | All to note |
| 11. | <u>DONCASTER CHILDREN'S TRUST</u> | |
| | The Director of Learning and Opportunities introduced the report and asked the Chief Executive of the Doncaster Children's Trust to comment on the detailed information that had been provided by the Trust in the body of the report. | |
| | It was highlighted that effective joint working between the Trust and Council continue to be really important, and a Joint Operational Manager meeting had recently been established to address joint activities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early Help • Corporate Parenting • Developments in Residential Care • Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub | |
| | The Chief Executive outlined to the Panel that a group had been established to address how care planning could be more effective, with 3 young people appointed as his advisers to specifically highlight problem areas. In response to Mr Brown's statement he gave examples of the challenges young people in care could face when from a BME background. | |
| | Members sought assurance on ensuring that front office provision was effective and that performance information collated was accurate. It was noted that following a baseline review of decision making, it was evident that there was a clear accountable framework that was working effectively. | |
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| | The Panel noted that the Trust held an action plan that was regularly monitored, however, because the Trust was the first in the Country to operate through this new model, there was nothing currently for the Trust to compare itself against. | |
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| | The Challenges for a new company were recognised, as were the historical and current financial challenges, including children and young people being cared for in out of authority placements. It was stressed that allocating outside the authority still needed to be reduced, with both internal procedures and external agencies being challenged. It was stressed that placements need to be balanced and safe, however, as much as possible Doncaster's children needed to remain here, with family and friends. It was noted that a number of Doncaster foster carers had been lost but a strategy was currently being developed to address the position. | |
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| | It was reported that external assistance had been brought in to undertake a case file audit ensuring knowledge and practice was constantly improving. | |
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| | <u>Resolved:-</u> that the discussion be noted and an update on out of authority placements be provided in the Panel's next update. | Chief Executive Children's Trust |
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| 12. | <u>ADOPTION LEADERSHIP BOARD</u> | |
| | <p>The panel received a headline measures report relating to the adoption process addressing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance including area comparisons; • Adopter gap: the difference between the number of adopters needed for children with a placement order waiting to be placed and the number of adopters waiting to be matched; • Child Timeliness: the average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adopted family; and • Adopter Timeliness: the average time between an adoption agency receiving an application from a potential adopter to a child matched. <p>It was noted that between 1st April, 2014 and 31st March, 2015 there had been: 33 adoption approvals 46 matched adoption placements</p> | |

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| | <p>30 court approved adoptions</p> <p>The Panel was pleased to note that there had been an increase in the numbers placed and matched but disappointed that due to the Court process speed, the final court approved adoptions had decreased. It was noted that speed through the Court process was an issue at both local and national level.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that children and young people with troubled and challenging lives were harder to place and it could take a long period of time, but were positive in learning that placements and adoptions for these children were happening and successful.</p> <p>It was noted that many couples, nationally, wishing to adopt requested the 0 to 2 years but there were not, in reality, a lot of placements made for this age group.</p> <p>The Panel concluded it's discussion by addressing how to encourage potential adopters, the length of the process, training and importantly the emotional aspect.</p> | |
| | <p><u>Resolved</u>:- that the report be noted and an update be provided to the Panel in 12 months.</p> | <p>Senior Governance officer. Placements Service Manager</p> |

Signed: _____

Dated: _____