

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2015

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held in Room 008 - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 17TH SEPTEMBER, 2015 at 2.00 PM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Rachel Hodson
Vice Chair – Councillor Neil Gethin

Councillors Nick Allen, James Hart, Alan Jones, Sue McGuinness and Sue Wilkinson

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor John Mounsey, Chair Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Mark Douglas, Chief Operating Officer, Doncaster Children's Services Trust
Damian Allen, Director – Learning and Opportunities: Children and Young People
Peter Featherstone, Business Manager - Learning and Opportunities: Children and Young People
James Thomas, Head of Performance and Business Intelligence
Sam Jones, Interim Complaints Manager
John Harris, Independent Chair, Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB)
Rosie Faulkner, DCSB Business Manager
Suzannah Cookson, Head of Quality - Doncaster CCG

| | | <u>ACTION</u> |
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| 7. | <u>ORDER OF BUSINESS</u> | |
| | In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4, the Panel agreed to the variation of the order of business that agenda item 8 and item 6 replace one another. This is in order to accommodate meetings with officers that have since been arranged with Ofsted who are undertaking an inspection this week. | All to note |
| 8. | <u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u> | |
| | Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nigel Ball, Bev Chapman, Damien Thorpe – Diocese of Hallam Roman Catholic Church and John Hoare – Diocese of Sheffield Church of England | All to note |
| 9. | <u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u> | |

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| | None | |
| 10. | <u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u> | |
| | There were no declarations of interest made. | |
| 11. | <u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 2ND JULY, 2015</u> | |
| | The minutes were agreed and approved as a true record. | |
| 12. | <u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u> | |
| | There were no public statements made. | |
| 13. | <u>DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT</u> | |
| | <p>John Harris, the Independent Chair of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) was in attendance to present his report to the Panel, and provide any updates to Members. Mr Harris gave a presentation outlining the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview • Role of Doncaster Children's Safeguarding Board • Annual Report Requirements • Board Working Arrangements • Progress with Business Plan 2014-15 • Key Areas for Improvement <p>It was noted that there had been a Peer Review which resulted in a very positive response about distance travelled and leadership.</p> <p>Questions were raised around a number of areas which included the following: -</p> <p><u>Attendance at Board Meetings</u> – Concern was raised that there had been no attendance at Board Meetings by head teachers. It was explained to the Panel that there had been a number of head teacher resignations which were now being filled.</p> <p>It was reported that there was a lack of head teacher engagement at Board level and that this had been identified as a gap. It was supported that head teacher involvement on the board was very important. It was suggested that it could be a standing item on meetings with head teachers group in relation to safeguarding.</p> <p>Reference was made to the Education Advisory Group which had been revamped and was doing well. It was commented that this should be making more of a connexion with the head teacher group.</p> | |

Engagement with Partners – Members were informed that each agency has a named Board Member and that substitutions were only allowed at certain exceptions as it's about having the right level of people present at the Board Meeting. Regarding engagement with Safe at Last, Members were informed that the organisation was currently undergoing a major reorganisation due to loss of funding and that the Board Member has had to prioritise their time to within the organisation.

Development and Training - Some of the work that had been undertaken with Board Members and support provided included the following: -

- Members were informed that outside the Board Meetings one to one's held were held with Board Members.
- Members were informed that Board Members had undertaken self-reviews about what they had contributed to the board, it was added that this had been completed by all the Board Members.
- Challenge training (including members from Doncaster Adult Safeguarding Board).
- Web access via a 'common room' enabling a safe space – providing lead practitioners with access to a wide range of information.
- The implementation and embedding of the early help pathway and thresholds – Members were informed that bespoke training and development events had been organised for practitioners to be briefed on thresholds.
- Reference was made to a challenge log which registers challenges made on a variety of issues.

Strategic Plan Progress (August 2015) – Members made reference to the Strategic Plan Progress in Appendix 2 which did not include any information within further action and completion dates. It was noted that some of the actions that were 'red' had completion dates that had already passed. Concern was raised that the annual report would be seen with an action plan that was out-of-date, incomplete and showing reds. Members were informed that the strategic plan had been around for some time and it was acknowledged that the plan should be reviewed and updated.

Members were assured that the plan was tracked every 6 weeks and updated at the Chairs Group meetings. If a delay was identified then remedial action was taken.

In relation to Strategic Priority 3 – Doncaster has effective arrangements for responding to key safeguarding risks (particularly child sexual exploitation, missing children and neglect) promoting early identification and support to prevent escalation of risk to keep children safe. Members were informed about a South Yorkshire inspection

undertaken in May 2015 which was followed by a re-inspection in July 2015. It was reported that out of the inspection, concern was raised regarding inappropriate use of custody for young people. It was reported that within South Yorkshire an improvement plan had been developed for the four local authorities with clearer use of custody and that the police had been working constructively to address major weaknesses that had been identified.

Engagement with minority groups - In relation to how LGBT children have been engaged with, Members were told that work had been undertaken with this group though work with Doncaster College, youth partner organisation and as part of work undertaken around Child Sexual Exploitation.

It was acknowledged that everyone wanted to speak with young people. Members were informed that a mapping exercise was being undertaken to map young people groups and to see who is best to engage with those groups.

In relation to an area for improvement identified in the report – for ‘the Board needs to develop a clear strategy in relation to listening to what Doncaster’s children and young people have to say about services’ Councillor Mounsey asked for progress on this strategy. A section of the report ‘Voice of the Child and Community Engagement’ was referred to as this outlined the positive work engagement that has been carried out in Doncaster on the participation of children and young people. It was added that there had been attendances of 180 at two conferences which had been held.

It was noted that an update will be provided in February 2016 on the CSE review of the ten key scrutiny questions posed by the Panel early on this year. It was agreed that an updated Business Plan Report will be included on the agenda at a future Panel formal meeting.

Councillor Mounsey addressed the Panel in relation to an area for improvement identified in the Annual Report which is to ‘develop an effective communications strategy to raise the profile of the DSCB by improving links with practitioners’. Councillor Mounsey gave an open invite as Chair of the Governors Board of Outwood Academy at Adwick to visit the academy and find out more about the good work being undertaken there.

The Chair thanked Mr Harris for attending the meeting and for providing the Panel with an informative and useful update.

RESOLVED;

- i. that the Panel noted the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board’s Annual Report; and**
- ii. that an updated Business Plan Report would be brought to a**

Independent

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| | later meeting. | Chair of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board |
| 14. | <u>ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT - DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST.</u> | |
| | <p>Sam Jones, Interim Complaints Manager attended the meeting to respond to questions in relation to the Annual Statutory Complaints Report 2014–2015. Members were informed that the report provided information about complaints made during the twelve-month period between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015 during a time when the complaints function was in transition within the period.</p> <p>It was explained that the responsibility for the provision of Children’s Social Care Services transferred to the Doncaster Children’s Services Trust on 1st October 2014. At this time the Council continued to co-ordinate the complaints function until the 31st January 2015 and after this period the Trust took responsibility for the day to day management of the process. It was reported that the Council was still working with the Trust as its ‘front door’ in respect to gathering customer feedback via the Council’s website and the Council’s contact centre. Members were told that a review of these arrangements will formally take place at the end of September 2015.</p> <p>There was a discussion around the following areas: -</p> <p><u>IT and Data Capture</u> - Members were informed that the system was more outcomes driven and that there currently was no internal database in place. It was stated that data capture needed to be improved and that work was being undertaken with the Council to implement a better computer system which would provide information faster. It was noted that joint work with the Trust and Council with sharing information could be better, but positive progress has been made.</p> <p><u>Historic Complaints</u> – it was explained that historic complaints was within the remit of the Council and that work was being carried out within the Service Level Agreement to make it clear about who’s responsibility it should be to realistically investigate such complaints.</p> <p><u>Complaints Process</u> – The complaints process was described to Members and it was added that there was a leaflet now available as well as on the Trust/Council websites. Members were assured that all complaints are looked at and registered. Members were also told how complainants were engaged with at an early stage.</p> <p>Reference was made to the number of complainers against complaints. It was explained that a number of complaints came from a small</p> | |

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| | <p>number of people. Members were informed that where there were ongoing complaints from one source that further work was undertaken to look at the whether there was an underlying problem. It was explained that stage 3 complaints were not included within the reported 145 individual complaints</p> <p>In respect of how information had been presented within the section 9.0 of the complaints report, Members were assured that where reference to a team had been repeated, this was because of movements and splits within that team.</p> <p>In respect of what lessons have been learnt, Members were informed that this area could be improved. It was explained that outcomes from complaints were conveyed through PDRs and Members were told that specific practice issues were addressed with individual workers where appropriate. It was added that complaint issues were also communicated to Heads of Services as well as Senior Managers</p> <p>Opinions were shared on whether receiving complaints was useful in being able to improve or whether it was an indication of poor customer service which should have been right the first time. It was also noted that more should be conveyed in terms of compliments.</p> <p>It was agreed that an update should be brought back to the Panel on the 15 improvements under consideration around the effectiveness of the complaints function in 6 months' time.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Jones for attending the meeting and responding to the Panels questions.</p> <p>RESOLVED that;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. the Panel noted the Doncaster Children's Services Trust Annual Complaints report. ii. an update is brought back to the Panel on the 15 improvements under consideration around the effectiveness of the complaints function in 6 months' time. | <p>Interim Complaints Manager</p> |
| 15. | <p><u>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE TRUST UPDATE REPORT.</u></p> | |
| | <p>James Thomas, Head of Performance and Business Intelligence from the Trust attended the meeting. It was noted by Members that the report was mainly a headline report and lacked detail and continuity compared to other reports. It was acknowledged that there needs to be further discussions and agreements as part of the annual review, regarding the level of information provided whilst taken into consideration any sensitivities or contractual issues. Also, subject to these conversations, for future update reports to the Panel to include an exceptions report with an explanation of those measures not going in the right direction and the reasons why. It was also commented that</p> | |

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| | <p>there had been a delay accessing Covalent (performance system used by the Council).</p> <p>The following issues were raised as part of the discussion: -</p> <p><u>Adoptive Parents</u> - Looking at current Contract Measures that were outside tolerance, Members were informed that in relation to adoption there had been a challenge in placing older siblings and older boys with families.</p> <p><u>Placement costs out of the authority</u> – it was noted that efforts continued to reduce placement costs, that there was an increase in capacity in the Borough but not many specialist providers.</p> <p><u>Agency Staffing</u> - The Panel spoke about increased budgetary demands to the Trust and stated that agency staffing was now on a downward trend and stabilising at around 10%. It was added that Doncaster was a challenging area geographically and workers can source opportunities elsewhere where there were higher salaries.</p> <p>Councillor Mounsey commented about the high level of non-contract spends at an increase of £1.2 million (22%) on the last quarter. It was stressed that PDRs needed to be completed so that we can gain a better knowledge in-house to identify the skills and develop the quality of staff within the Trust to undertake their work. Members were informed that training and qualifying Social Workers (who require a formal degree) was a challenge and that it was difficult to develop staff in-house. It was explained that agency staff was sometimes key in bridging the gaps in a volatile market.</p> <p>The Chair thanked Mr Thomas for attending the meeting and responding to the Panels questions.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel noted the Quarterly Performance – Trust Update Report</p> | |
| 16. | <p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PANEL WORK PLAN REPORT 2015/16.</u></p> | |
| | <p>Councillor Sue Wilkinson updated the Panel on the progress of the Corporate Parenting Board on the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That there were currently 505 looked after children and 35 children that belonged to Doncaster Council through the disability service. It was reported that the reason behind the increase in looked after children was because there has been an increase of sibling groups which were coming into care. • That placement stability was the measure for a young person to have positive outcomes. The number of young people who have been in 3 placements in a 12 month period was reducing and the | |

number of young people who have been in the same placement for 2 years is increasing.

- That recruiters had been stopped for adoptive parents for babies and young children and that there was more of a focus on hard-to-reach children.
- Virtual School – that there was a drive to recruit extra foster carers.
- Ofsted review of council run care homes – All four children homes have been inspected, Tickhill Square received an overall rating of requires improvement and there was an action plan in place and being worked on.
- Judicial Review – That in-house and out-of house foster carers all paid the same and therefore not an issue.

Caroline Martin, Senior Governance Officer updated the Panel on the workplan which included: -

- An informal joint meeting with Children and Young People and Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel to be arranged. It was explained that the purpose of this meeting is to look at Sexual Health with a particular focus on signposting and effectiveness of partnership working.
- Additional items to the workplan now included updates on the Ofsted Inspection, Trust Complaints Improvement Areas and DSCB Business Plan.

Councillor Neil Gethin updated the Panel on the children disabilities review and informed Members that there would be two more meetings to take place.

The Panel noted that a response had been provided to their letter responding to the previous Panel's "Relationships with Academies and Educational Attainment" Scrutiny Review and recommendations.

RESOLVED that the Panel noted the revised workplan and updates.