

To all Members of the

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

AGENDA

Notice is given that a Meeting of the above Panel
is to be held as follows:

VENUE: Room 8, Civic Office, Waterdale, Doncaster

DATE: Thursday, 17th September, 2015

TIME: 2.00 pm

Members of the public are welcome to attend

Items for Discussion:

1. Apologies for absence
2. To consider the extent, if any, to which the public and press are to be excluded from the meeting.
3. Declarations of Interest, if any.
4. Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd July, 2015 (*Pages 1 - 8*)
5. Public Statements

(A period not exceeding 20 minutes for statements from up to 5 members of the public on matters within the Panel's remit, proposing action(s) which may be considered or contribute towards the future development of the Panel's work programme).

A. Items where the Public and Press may not be excluded

6. Quarterly Performance Trust Update Report. (*Pages 9 - 14*)
7. Annual Complaints Report - Doncaster Children's Services Trust. (*Pages 15 - 26*)

Jo Miller
Chief Executive

If you require any information on how to get to the meeting by Public Transport, please contact
(01709) 515151 – Calls at the local rate

Issued on: Wednesday, 9 September 2015

Senior Governance Officer
for this meeting:

Caroline Martin
(01302) 734941

8. Doncaster Children's Safeguarding Board Annual Report - (to follow).
(Pages 27 - 30)
9. Overview and Scrutiny Children and Young People's Panel Work Plan Report 2015/16. (Pages 31 - 40)

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

Chair – Councillor Rachel Hodson
Vice-Chair – Councillor Neil Gethin

Councillors Nick Allen, Nigel Ball, Bev Chapman, James Hart, Alan Jones, Sue McGuinness and Sue Wilkinson.

Co-Opted Members:

Mr. D. Thorpe - (Diocese of Hallam Roman Catholic Church)
Mr. J. Hoare - (Diocese of Sheffield Church of England)
Vacancy - (Parent Governor Primary Sector)
Vacancy - (Parent Governor Secondary Sector)
Vacancy - (Parent Governor Special Needs Sector)

Invitees:

Mr. J. Board - (UNISON)

Agenda Item 4.

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

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

PRESENT:

Chair – Councillor Rachel Hodson
Vice-Chair - Neil Gethin

Councillors Alan Jones, Nigel Ball, Sue Wilkinson, Nick Allen, James Hart

Damien Thorpe – Diocese of Hallam Roman Catholic Church

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Councillor John Mounsey, Chair Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee

Mark Douglas, Chief Operating Officer, Doncaster Children's Services Trust
Peter Featherstone, Business Manager - Learning and Opportunities CYP
John Duhig, Head of Service - Standards and Effectiveness: Learning and Opportunities: CYP

1.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sue McGuinness	All to note
2.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY</u>	
	There were no Declarations of Interest made	All to note
3.	<u>MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MEETING HELD ON 2ND APRIL, 2015</u>	
	The minutes were agreed and approved as a true record.	
4.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made	
5.	<u>DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES TRUST – PROGRESS REPORT</u>	
	Members were presented with a 6 month update since 1 st October	

	<p>2014 when the trust became operational. A summary of the Trust's monitoring arrangements were outlined, these included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Performance Monitoring Group • Annual Contract Review Meeting (approximately December 2015). • 6 monthly update to the Secretary of State for Education • DFE have also commissioned a separate organisation, "Achieving for Children" to monitor the Trust's performance and report back to DfE each quarter. 	
	<p>Placement Costs – Members learnt that the placement costs of Children in Care continued to be a challenge. It was stated that the focus was on the most expensive placements first. Members were informed that they had been reduced by 5 which included both those who had ended their care and others who had now been placed locally.</p> <p>Members were told that although out of authority placements were high outside the Borough, there was a certain percentage that would not be able to return. It was recognised that the main focus needs to prevent children going out and to plan carefully for those placed out of the borough to be able to return.</p>	
	<p>Timeliness of Assessments and Statutory Visits – Members were told that this had shown improvement and that: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A percentage of single assessments completed within the target of 45 days had shown an upward trend from 87% in October 2014 to 94% in May 2015. • Child Protection Plans without a statutory visit within 2 weeks had shown a downward trend from 8% in October 2014 to 1% in May 2015. 	
	<p>Percentage of Care Leavers - in education or training has shown an upward trend since October 2014 from 49% to currently 55%. It was commented that this figure could be further improved and that Officers would like to see it around 85%</p>	
	<p>Recruitment – Members were informed that this area had shown progress as it was reported that the number of Frontline full-time posts occupied by Agency staff had shown a downward trend from October 2014 from 12% to 10.2% in May 2015</p>	
	<p>Performance Framework – Members were told that the Performance Framework was taking shape (with a set of two performance indicators) and that the initial corporate scorecard had been created.</p>	

	<p><u>Finance</u> – Further to the information outlined in the report, members were informed that the surplus created by the trust had been paid back to the authority.</p>	
	<p>Pay Cost – Members were informed that the pay cost was heading in the right direction.</p>	
	<p><u>Innovation Fund and ongoing development work</u> - Members were informed about additional funding that had been secured to support a number of innovative high impact improvement projects.</p> <p>The projects were individually discussed as outlined below. A Member enquired as to whether there would be any other projects coming up in the future that weren't already listed. The Panel was informed that there were no plans for any further big projects as there was no more money available nationwide but that the position would be monitored for individual or joint bids. It was added that within Doncaster we were looking to ensure that the basics were all in place.</p>	
	<p>Pause – An explanation was provided of this pilot that consisted of an intense programme aimed at women who had had 2 or more children removed from their care. It was added that this pilot was not available for those women who were currently pregnant or in proceedings. The Doncaster pilot had currently identified a cohort of 44 women to approach as potential participants and 3 Project Workers were now making contact with those women. It was further noted that other authorities were looking to learn from Doncaster's experience of the pilot.</p> <p>Members were informed that engagement was taking place through one of the following ways: -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Project Manager making direct contact with those women identified. 2. Referral pathways for professionals – potential to widen this to Members. 3. Referral pathway being triggered by second child going for adoption. 	

	<p>It was requested that further information should be circulated to Members.</p> <p>Members were informed that men were not included in the programme, that this had been recognised as a gap and raised at a national level. It was noted that to retrieve the funding, it was necessary to remain within the agreed methodology of just targeting women. Members were assured that other work was being undertaken to address both men and women.</p> <p>Members were told that there would be an official launch in Doncaster in the near future.</p>	
	<p>Mockingbird – Members were informed that this was a model for foster care delivery that offers practical, cost effective solutions to improve the lives of the most vulnerable children and youth. It was added that this had been designed to provide stable placements for better outcomes and would be delivered by the fostering network</p>	
	<p>Growing Futures – It was explained that this was the largest of all the innovation projects with funding in excess of £3million. Members were told how domestic violence was one of the largest causes of interventions and that rates of domestic violence was high in Doncaster. It was added that support provided for children in this area could be stronger and that it was about being able to provide a whole system response.</p>	
	<p>Child Sexual CSE Innovation Project – It was explained that the project was developing through a new model of assertive outreach work with young people. Also, that there were specialist foster carers being created to work with more vulnerable children as well as more local placements being provided.</p>	
	<p>Corporate Parenting Board – Members were told how the board had undergone reconfiguration with a view to drive preparation and planning for work relevant to looked after children. It was noted that good Member/Officer involvement was vital in underpinning this work.</p>	
	<p>Doncaster Safeguarding Children’s Board – The Panel learnt that there was a peer review currently underway and that the Board was currently benefitting from good leadership and a sound sub-</p>	

	committee structure in place.	
	Regulation 33 monthly visits to children's homes – It was emphasised how important these visits were. Members were told how Ofsted will want to see the Council discharging its Corporate Parenting duties.	
	Ofsted Inspection – Members were informed that the Trust and DMBC were working together to prepare for Ofsted Inspection, and develop and embed the Borough's Early Help Strategy.	
	Developments in Residential Care – Members were informed that there was a need for good quality local provision and staff. There was a refurbishment programme of care homes currently underway across both the Council and Trust to improve the quality of the in-house residential provision.	
	Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub –update to come back to Children's and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel once the hub is fully established.	Chief Executive of Children's Trust/Senior Governance Officer
	<p>NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) – Members requested a full breakdown and targets of NEET figures, in particular of those that were Care Leavers (including age and reasons). In respect of what is being done, Members were informed that there was a range of initiatives in place including: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Offending • Schemes through national citizen through Doncaster Rovers • H2R Formal Programme <p>It was explained that there were a number of challenges within this area and there was a need to raise aspirations and open gateways for children. Members were reminded that this area wasn't just about looked after children and that the Council, Doncaster College and Employees all had a role to play in addressing this issue.</p>	Chief Executive of Children's Trust/Senior Governance Officer
	Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parents – Members were informed that help had been provided with childcare which had resulted in an impact in this area.	
	Agency Staff – In respect of the Children's Trust setting up its own agency, Members were told that this offered no significant savings but could make an impact in terms of managing agency costs. It was explained that there was a tendency for staff to inflate their	

	<p>wages as they moved from job to job. The Panel was informed that it raised the challenge of how we can dictate costs/rates when there was no incentive to secure commitment to one contract. It was added that there may be potential in offering a commitment to providing a permanent post to staff that were on a contract. Members were informed that the Trust would like to be in a position when agency staff will one day be the exception.</p> <p>It was reported that there were 125 vacancies of which the largest proportion were Social Worker positions. The reasons for this included lack of competitive salaries as well as historical reasons associated with Doncaster. Members were informed that positions needed to be filled with both experienced and newly qualified Social Workers to ensure that the service provided had some stability. A Member stressed that it was important to get the right people into the jobs rather than concentrating on reaching targets.</p>	
	<p>Foster care – Members were informed that the trust would welcome a position to be its own agency. Members were reminded of the focus to place children locally but that it was sometimes necessary to go external or seek more specialist placements that may not be available within the borough. Officers spoke about the South Yorkshire CSE Innovation Project which includes an element of children who display sexual harmful behaviour and are at risk to others who therefore need specialised therapeutic behaviour.</p>	
	<p>Caseload Levels – The Panel was assured that current caseload levels were reasonable and although demand was beginning to increase they was not dangerously high. It was noted that caseload levels would be kept under review.</p>	
	<p>Training and Development – Members were told that support, supervisions and appraisals for frontline staff were being reviewed. It was added that training and development was considered as effective. There was a brief discussion about suitable incentives to maintain staff such as bonus payments.</p>	
	<p>Terms and Conditions – Members were informed that these were currently being looked at to see how they can be made more attractive. The Panel was informed of the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to training and professional development. • Salaries – it was noted that these had been affected by the pay freeze and subsequent pay cuts which had resulted in salaries falling behind. • Importance of having access to suitable equipment to undertake role effectively and be able to undertake mobile working, for example, having up-to-date phones. 	

6.	<u>THE LOCAL AUTHORITY INSPECTION OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT ARRANGEMENTS</u>	
	<p>Following the Local Authority Inspection of School Improvement Arrangements, a report was received by the Local Authority detailing the assessed progress to date by the Ofsted Inspection. It was shared that the outcome of the inspection recognised the difference that had been made in this area.</p> <p>Members were informed that there would be no further visits from Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI). It was added that the Regional Senior HMI will continue to monitor the local authority's arrangements for school improvement.</p> <p>Members were informed that the first draft of a post-inspection action plan has been completed, but would be amended in due course.</p>	Jo Moxon (Interim Director – Learning and Opportunities/ Senior Governance Officer)
	<p>Budget Surpluses in Schools – There was a discussion as to why so many schools have unacceptably large budget surpluses. Members learnt that this had been an issue faced for some time. It was clarified that there was no claw-back mechanism in place. Members were assured that this would be looked at by the Schools Forum and it was acknowledged that this was a challenge for School Governors and Elected Members as well. Members were informed that this information is available and published with more detail.</p> <p>Members were told that as a result of Pupils Premium, more money might be brought into the school than expected and therefore some money might be left over. It was recognised that schools have bank accounts which cannot go into deficit and despite there being a 4 year programme in place.</p>	
	<p>Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) – Concern was raised about the standard of CIAG within schools and this was recognised as an area of poor performance. A Member commented that there should be more of a commitment towards this in schools and we should be looking further at areas of good practice. 'A' levels were also not deemed as being particularly good enough within Doncaster. Members were told that Jayne Vose - Head of Service Learner Engagement was better placed to respond to Members questions.</p>	
	<p>Virtual School – There was a discussion about the role of the virtual school in monitoring and improving outcomes for looked after children which had been reported in the inspection as not being very well developed. Members were told that Looked After Children had achieved better than the national average in terms of progress. Members were informed that a Peer Review had been commissioned with feedback shortly due. Members were informed</p>	

	that a Secondary Raising Achievement Officer had been recruited. Members were informed that following the outcome of the review that there would be an Action Plan in place.	
	Attainment Figures – A Member referred to a disappointing 7% reduction in GCSE results show on last year. It was noted that it was important not to look at only one outcome on its own and that maintaining a consistency of education across the Borough was essential. Reference was made to the significant gap in the Early Years provision and the Panel was informed that an officer responsible for early year’s provision has been appointed. Members were assured that there was an improving quality of school to school support in place.	
	Performance of Academies – In response as to whether data was showing improvements in those schools that had changed to academies, Members were informed that the DFE had published a report (Schools in academy chains and LAs: performance measures). Members sought clarification on the role and limitations the Local Authority has in challenging academy schools.	

**To the Chair and Members of the
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL**

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE – TRUST UPDATE REPORT

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and Lead Member for Children's Services	All	No

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update on the Contract performance monitoring arrangements, along with a summary of the latest Quarterly monitoring performance meeting.

The Trust is showing improvement or stability across the majority of contract measures. More measures are within tolerance or at/above target, and trends are largely positive. Declining trends have been arrested. The transformation programme is critical to the delivery of long term sustainable change that will enhance future performance above and beyond the current operational levels.

Where performance is outside tolerance, a deeper analysis is beginning to differentiate between temporary spikes in performance and those with underlying trends.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This is not an Exempt Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. That Panel gives consideration to the Quarterly Performance Trust Update report.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. Doncaster Children's Services Trust was established on 1 October 2014 at the direction of the Secretary of State with the mandate to deliver improvements to children's social care. This report provides an update of progress achieved to date by the Trust

BACKGROUND

5. Reporting arrangements

- 5.1 On a Monthly basis, the Trust Contract Performance Monitoring Report to DMBC, which contains key performance indicators with narrative. This is tabled at the Monthly Progress meeting.
- 5.2 A quarterly performance meeting is attended by C/Execs of both organisations, along with representation from Trust Board, and Officers with Performance Management responsibility. The most recent meeting was 21st July 2015.
- 5.3 An annual review of the Contract and monitoring arrangements, will take place in late October 2015. The format of this review is in preparation.

5.4 Quarter 1 2015/16 and partial Quarter 2 (July) 2015/16 Performance summary

- 5.4.1 Doncaster Children's Trust is showing an improving picture in relation to overall performance; driven by an integrated approach to performance management and management oversight. The Trust's initial Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP), aligned to the Business Plan, has been approved and informs Service Level Plans and ultimately personal development plans. The Trust Board now receives a corporate scorecard, which will be complimented with sub-scorecards that will focus on key areas of governance.
- 5.4.2 Within the Quarter 1 report, it was reported that of the 19 current Contract measures with targets, 11 were performing better than target, 4 were within tolerance, and 4 outside tolerance. All but one measure was showing an improving/stable 6 monthly trend. These exceptions were reported, along with findings from additional "deeper dive" analyses, and resulting actions being taken to address these exceptions. It should be noted that performance has improved since the quarterly report for one of the measures reported as an exception in Quarter 1.
- 5.4.3 Although not a contract measure, an increase in the number of referrals was noted in the Quarterly Performance Meeting. Additional analysis of where demand had increased, for example locations, age profiles, referring agencies, is being undertaken by the Trust, and findings will be shared with colleagues within Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. It should be noted that referral rates have now fallen back to normal levels during quarter 2.
- 5.4.4 A balanced budget for 2015-16 has been established which reflects income the Trust expects to receive from Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) & the Department of Education (DfE) and the Trust's planned expenditure, reflecting proposed staffing and current activity levels. Increased budgetary demands to the Trust are largely due to the cost of

increased demands for agency staffing, and placement costs. A rolling recruitment programme is in place to continue to reduce reliance on agency staff, and efforts continue to reduce placement costs through reviews of out of authority placements and edge of care provision.

5.4.5 Discussions with DMBC regarding budget for 2015-16 have concluded and a contract variation describing the movements in the budgets from last year to this year is due to be sent to the Trust for signature. The overall impact shows a reduction of £557k compared to the original contract value for 2014/15.

5.4.6 The Trust’s Continuous improvement plan has been created, documenting key strategic priorities aligned to service level actions. This will be reviewed quarterly, and is shared with staff in full or summary versions.

5.4.7 In terms of Ofsted Inspection Readiness, there is no specific protocol for inspecting Trusts and Councils together. Both DCST and DMBC have been promised clarity by Ofsted, prior to inspection. This has not been delivered.

5.4.8 A Joint Strategic Intelligence Group is attended by Operations Director of the Trust and Assistant Director of DMBC to prepare for inspection, with subgroups focussing on data quality, logistics and communications. Staff from the Trust and DMBC are meeting regularly to develop a shared Self Evaluation Form, and ensure that the substantial additional evidence required by Inspectors is available and of a sufficient quality. The Trust has appointed temporary resource to manage and assure this “evidence chest.”

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6. Not applicable

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

7. Not applicable

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL’S KEY PRIORITIES

8.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster’s vital services</i> 	

	<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
	<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>The Trust has been established with a mandate to continue delivering improvements in children’s social care. The formal contract with DMBC details a requirement for future Ofsted inspection judgements to be:</p> <p>Requires improvement’ or better by April 2016 Good or better by October 2017</p> <p>- And that overall the service should be Outstanding by October 2019</p>
	<p>All families thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster’s vital services</i> 	
	<p>Council services are modern and value for money.</p>	
	<p>Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.</p>	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

9. There are no specific risks associated with this report

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. In September 2014, the Secretary of State for Education issued a Direction transferring various children’s services to Doncaster Children’s Trust Limited (“the Trust”). Although the Trust performs Services on behalf of the Council, the legal powers and duties in relation to safeguarding children remain with the Council and court proceedings continue to be brought in the name of the Council.
11. On 30th September 2014, the Council entered into a contract with the Trust governing the provision of services by the Trust. The contract with the Trust

contains various monitoring powers so that that the Council can assure itself that Services are being delivered correctly.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12. See item 5.4.3

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS (*Insert where applicable – see guidance*)

13. Not applicable

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS (*Insert where applicable – see guidance*)

14. Not applicable

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

15. Not applicable

CONSULTATION

16. The Doncaster Children's Services Trust has been consulted in the development of this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

17. None.

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

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For

Paul Moffatt
Chief Executive, Doncaster Children's Services Trust

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**To the Chair and Members of the
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT – DONCASTER CHILDREN'S SERVICES
TRUST**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools.	All	N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This is the Doncaster Children's Services Trust's first annual report with respect to the complaints activity for the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

EXEMPT REPORT

2. This is not an Exempt Report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. That the Doncaster Children's Services Trust's Annual Complaints report be noted.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. The report demonstrates the Trust's recognition of the importance of developing the Complaints function, from its current position to developing into a service that drives change, recognising when things have not gone as well as we would have liked and implement changes to the existing services. Ensure the Complaints functions sits central to the Trust's ambitions to be a reflective, learning and developing service.

BACKGROUND

5. 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. After this period the Trust took responsibility for the day to day management of the process. However the Council is 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. Details of this arrangement can be found in the SLA and Contract between the Council and the Trust. Review of these arrangements will formally take

place at the end of September 2015.

This report provides information about complaints made during the twelve-month period between 1 April 2014 and 31 March 2015. It should be noted that the complaints function was in transition within the period.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6. Not applicable.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

7. Not applicable.

IMPACT ON THE COUNCIL'S KEY PRIORITIES

8.

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
	<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	To improve the quality and consistency of service provision
	<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
	<p>All families thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	

	Council services are modern and value for money.	
	Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.	

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

9. Not applicable.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. The statutory requirements for dealing with children’s complaints and representations are determined by the following legislation: The Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The Children & Adoption Act 2002 and Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the accompanying guidance ‘Getting the Best from Complaints’ (DfES July 2006)

The Council were directed by the Secretary of State for Education to transfer the provision of Childrens Social Care Services to a new company called Doncaster Childrens Services Trust Limited (“the Trust”).

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

12. Not applicable.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

13. Not applicable.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

14. there are no Equalities Implications arising from this report, however it is essential that the Trust operates the complaints procedure in accordance with the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

CONSULTATION

15.

This report has significant implications in terms of the following:

Procurement		Crime & Disorder	
Human Resources		Human Rights & Equalities	
Buildings, Land and Occupiers		Environment & Sustainability	
ICT		Capital Programme	

BACKGROUND PAPERS

16. The Children and Young People's Service – Complaints and Compliments Annual Report 2014-15 (attached).

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

Sam Jones, Interim Complaints Manager.

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Damian Allen
Director Learning and Opportunities

Annual statutory complaints report 2014 - 2015

Every local authority with a responsibility for children's social care services is required to produce an annual report outlining the complaints activity for the service. This report covers the period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015. It is important to note that the statutory complaints function transferred from Doncaster Council to Doncaster Children's Services Trust within this period: the formal responsibility transferred on 2 February 2015; therefore this report reflects the complaints activity whilst the complaints function was being transferred to the Doncaster Children's Services Trust.

It is also important to note that the data quality captured when complaints are received is limited. In turn, this limits the insights available and therefore the strengths, weaknesses and lessons to be learned towards improvements. This, along with other significant challenges, has started to be addressed as outlined in the review summary at 10.0 below.

1.0 **The statutory requirements for dealing with children's complaints and representations are determined by the following legislation:**

The Children Act 1989, Representations Procedure (England) Regulations 2006. The Children & Adoption Act 2002 and Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 and the accompanying guidance 'Getting the Best from Complaints' (DfES July 2006)

2.0 **The complaints procedure:**

2.1 The complaints and representations procedures enable young people and adults to formally raise concerns in regard to the service they receive.

2.2 The complaints procedure for children's social care has three stages:

- Stage one - local resolution.
- Stage two - independent complaint investigation.
- Stage three - independently chaired review panel.

2.3 **Stage one – local resolution:**

Stage one is intended to be a swift, focused resolution taking no more than 20 working days. Stage one offers the relevant service area the first opportunity for considering, responding and resolving the complaint. It is our hope that the majority of complaints can be dealt with at this stage.

2.4 **Stage two – formal independent investigation:**

Where a complainant is unhappy with the outcome of their stage 1 complaint, they can request a stage 2 complaint investigation. All stage 2 investigations are carried out by independent investigating officer (IO), together with an independent Person (IP). As a consequence of this investigation the IO will produce a comprehensive report into the individual complaints, resulting in the complaints either being upheld, partially upheld, inconclusive or not upheld. The IO will also make formal recommendations in respect of the investigation as a whole. The IP provides a formal report concerning the integrity of the IO's report.

In addition the Trust will provide a formal written adjudication in respect of the outcomes of the reports. This will in effect be the formal response on behalf of the Trust.

It is the expectation of the statutory guidance that the stage two investigations will be completed in a maximum of 65 working days.

2.5 **Stage three – review panel:**

Where the complainant remains dissatisfied with the outcome of the stage two investigation, they can request a stage three review panel. The panel is made up of a chair and two wing members. The timescale for setting up the panel is 30 working days. It is the panel's responsibility to review the investigation but not to re-investigate the complaint. The panel will produce a formal finding, in writing, to the complainant within five working days. The Trust will then consider the panel's findings and produce a formal response to the panel's findings, which are forwarded to the complainant within 15 working days.

3.0 **Local Government Ombudsman (LGO):**

At the conclusion of the three stage process the complainant has the right to escalate their concerns to the local government ombudsman.

4.0 **The complaints service:**

When the complaints function was transferred to the Doncaster Children's Services Trust the service was placed within the communications and marketing team as a customer service function. However, on review the decision has been made to transfer the function to be placed within the Quality Assurance team.

5.0 **How complaints have been received:**

Primarily complaints are received via the Council's Contact Centre: details in respect to the complaints are collated by contact centre workers and forwarded to the complaints manager within the Trust. In addition, Trust workers receive complaints that are forwarded to the complaints manager.

6.1 **Number of complainants: 39**

6.2 **Total number of individual complaints received: 145**

7.0 **Who made complaints:**

A large majority of the complaints made are from adults who are expressing their dissatisfaction with the actions of the service.

8.0 **Compliance with timescales, stage 1:**

Unfortunately there are a large number of complaints that have exceeded the required timescales. However, work undertaken to clarify and better understand the nature of complaints does result in better outcomes. 36 complaints responded to within this period were resolved at this stage.

Compliance with timescales, stage 2:

Time scales have been exceeded for stage 2 investigations; this is mainly due to the number of complaints made and the complexity of the issues being investigated. 2 complaints were responded to via Independent Investigation and resolved at this stage. 1 complaint from the previous year was completed and resolved within this year.

Compliance with timescales, stage 3:

One stage 3 panel review has taken place. This was started within the Council and was completed within Doncaster Children's Services Trust; time scales were exceeded; a formal acceptance of a breach of confidentiality was accepted. In addition a review of the LADOs Service systems and processes was undertaken.

9.0 Number of complaints received by team and the nature of the complaints made:

Service area:	Team:	Number of complainants	Number of individual complaints made	Poor Communication	Decision making	Actions of workers/service	Information within assessment report	Data breach	Request for a copy of core assessment	Error in recording	Decision to remove children from foster placement	Stage
Assessment and Child Protection	Central 2	4	18	x	x							
Assessment and Child Protection	Central 3	1	3			x						
Assessment and Child Protection	Central 3	1	3		x							
Assessment and Child Protection	Central 3	5	11	x		x	x	x				1 complaint escalated to Stage 2
Assessment and Child Protection	East 2	4	10	x		x		x	x			
Assessment and Child Protection	North 1	3	20			x	x					1 complaint escalated to stage 2, this started in the Council and concluded within the Trust.
Assessment and Child Protection	North 2	2	2	x	x	x						
Assessment and Child Protection	South 1	1	9	x		x				x		
Assessment and Child Protection	South 2	3	13	x		x						
Children In Care	East	3	13	x		x						
Children In Care	North	2	9	x							x	
Children in Care	Central	1	1					x				
Children In Care	18+ Service	1	1			x						
Children In Care	South	2	7		x	x						

Service area:	Team:	Number of complainants	Number of individual complaints made	Poor Communication	Decision making	Actions of workers/service	Information within assessment report	Data breach	Request for a copy of core assessment	Error in recording	Decision to remove children from foster placement	Stage
Referral and Response	Child sexual exploitation	1	7			x						
Referral and Response	Referral & Response	2	15		x							One complaint escalated to Stage 2
Fostering, Adoption and Children's Homes	Provider Services	1	1			x						
Safeguarding, Standards and Policy		1	1					x				
Complaints process		1	1									Delay in Stage 1
TOTALS		39	145	8	5	12	2	4	1	1	1	

9.1 Analysis in relation to the reasons for complaints being made are as follows:

21 complaints were made in respect to the decisions or actions of the services areas.

'Decision and actions' of the service have predominately been in respect of the service pursuing or not pursuing child protection issues. In addition quality of assessments and sharing the outcome of these has been a theme within the complaints raised. As a known issue, work has been undertaken and a new case audit process has been implemented. In addition a Manager was appointed in July 2015 to monitor and support the quality of assessments.

8 complaints were made in respect to communication.

The predominant issue within the complaints raised has been poor, slow or inaccurate communication. This issue is being fed back into the service areas: transparent, accurate and swift proactive communication is fundamental to the ideal of 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' and to the work undertaken by the Trust.

7 complaints were made in respect to data breaches or information recording.

A review of the systems and processes in respect to 'data protection' are ongoing with training being delivered to establish the importance of diligence in this area.

6 complaints were made in respect to the conduct of workers.

This is in respect to the attitude and tone of communication that service users experience when engaging with workers.

The Trust is currently in the process of adopting the 'Signs of Safety' method of working with families. As a consequence we have appointed a Signs of Safety Manager. In September of this year all operational managers will undertake training with respect to the required methodology, following this there will be a roll out of training to all operational staff. By adopting this approach we will enable a far more inclusive and transparent approach to assessing need and highlighting the risks when working with families. It is our hope that this will result in families being part of the solution rather than them feeling action is being taken against them.

10.0 Effectiveness of the complaints function:

Examining the distribution of the nature of complaints, the following are under consideration by the Trust in order to bring about essential improvements:

1. Complaints handling: training for service areas will be delivered to better inform requirements of the statutory complaints process, enabling us to set standards in respect of dealing with complaints at stage 1. Our hope is that by improving the quality of the responses and early resolution, a far more positive conclusion to the complaint will be achieved.
2. A review of the way in which complaints are 'gathered and monitored' by the Council's Contact Centre, to improve the information available enabling the Trust to have a better 'grip' on progressing complaints.
3. The provision to teams and managers of 'real time' performance information that can influence current work and behaviour rather than 'historical' data.
4. Improved adherence to the required timescales, reducing frustration and possibly avoiding escalation.
5. Build on the existing pool of independent investigators to carry out stage 2 investigations, resulting in a greater resource of knowledge and experience that will benefit the quality of independent reports.
6. Training for Advocates in respect of complaints handling will be provided to ensure Advocates better engage with children who have made a complaint.
7. Recruit the appropriate level of Complaints Handling resource.

8. A review of the governance arrangements with respect to complaints with the Doncaster Children's Services Trust.
9. Review of the processes required to highlight lessons learned and embed service improvements arising from complaints. Review of the electronic means by which children can make complaints to ensure access points to the complaints process are available for children. Work is in development for an App.
10. Review the way in which compliments can be identified. At present very little is done gathering evidence of what the Trust has done well. It is just as vital that this information is gathered and lessons learnt.
11. Improve the way in which the complaints function engages with children. In September the complaints manager will meet with children's groups; this will enable children to be reassured that their concerns will be taken seriously and actions taken to rectify problems when they occur.
12. A business case is in development for the implementation of complaints management software.
13. A review of the SLA and Contract with the Council is underway; it is our intention to develop a joint protocol for dealing with historical complaints.
14. Complaints leaflets will be produced and circulated to children and adults to better advise them of our complaints process, and capture concerns and compliments.
15. Measures have now been undertaken to ensure the inclusion of an Independent Person within Stage 2 investigations, meeting statutory requirements in the future.

Progress with these improvements will be provided within the next annual report.

Sam Jones
Interim Complaints Manager.
04/09/2015.

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Agenda Item No. 8
17th September, 2015

**To the Chair and Members of the
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly lead Member for Children, Young People and Schools	All	N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report informs the Panel of the arrangements for its consideration of the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) Annual Report 2014-15.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

2. Not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Panel receives the DSCB Annual Report 2014-15 for consideration and comment.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the Council's key objectives by holding decision makers to account, reviewing performance and developing policy. This is achieved through making robust recommendations, monitoring performance of Council and external partners and reviewing issues outside the remit of the Council that have an impact on the residents of the borough.

BACKGROUND

5. John Harris the independent Chair of DSCB will provide an update and present the Board's Annual Report 2014-15. Owing to the timeline in approving the

Annual Report, it is anticipated that this report will be made available to the Panel on the 11th September 2015.

6. *'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015'* (guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of Children), requires the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to publish an Annual Report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding in the area served by the Board. The report outlines details of the Board's activities but, more importantly, it provides an overview of the effectiveness of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in Doncaster.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7. There are no specific options to consider within this report as it provides an opportunity for the Panel to discuss the DSCB Annual Report 2014-15.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION.

8. The Annual Report enhances the challenge role of Overview and Scrutiny by allowing Members of the Panel to question and comment on the work undertaken by the DCSB during the previous year and the effectiveness of safeguarding in Doncaster.

IMPACT ON COUNCIL'S KEY OBJECTIVES

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the council's key objectives by holding decision makers to account, reviewing performance and developing policy through robust recommendations, monitoring performance of council and external partners services and reviewing issues outside the remit of the council that have an impact on the residents of the borough.</p>
	<p>People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>This issue has a direct impact on helping children live safe, healthily and active in a safe environment whilst ensure the governance between the Children's Board, Scrutiny and partners is working</p>

	<p>People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	effectively.
	<p>All families thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
	<p>Council services are modern and value for money.</p>	
	<p>Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.</p>	

RISK AND ASSUMPTIONS

9. There are no risks and assumptions relevant to this report

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

11. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

12. Section 149 Equality Act 2010 contains the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This obliges public authorities, when exercising their functions, to have ‘due regard’ to the need to:
- a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct which the Act prohibits;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity;
 - c. Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.

13. The relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination. The relevant characteristics in to the issues in this report are sex, age and race.
14. The DSCB Annual Report gives consideration to the extent to which safeguarding strategy, policy and practice in Doncaster take into account the impact of ethnicity and cultural background. It also evaluates the extent to which the Board is engaging effectively to minority ethnic and faith communities.

CONSULTATION

15. There are no formal requirements to consult about the content of the DSCB Annual Report. The Independent Chair has taken into account the views of the DSCB Chairs' Group and of wider Board members in preparing the report.

CONTACT OFFICER AND REPORT AUTHOR

16. John Harris, Independent Chair, Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board

Caroline Martin, Senior Governance Officer
Tel: 01302 73
Email: caroline.martin@doncaster.gov.uk

Background Papers:

Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report – To Follow.

**Damian Allen,
Director of Learning, Opportunities and Skills**

**To the Chair and Members of the
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PANEL WORK PLAN
REPORT 2015/16**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools	All	N/A

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This report provides an update on the Panel's work plan.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

2. Not exempt.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Panel is asked to:
 - i) Consider and comment on the revised work plan attached at Appendix A.
 - ii) Receive an update on the Children with Disabilities Social Care Review.
 - ii) Receive and comment on the correspondence made following its meeting held on the 2nd July 2015 in Appendix B.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

4. The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the Council's key objectives by holding decision makers to account, reviewing performance and developing policy. This is achieved through making robust recommendations, monitoring performance of Council and external partners and reviewing issues outside the remit of the Council that have an impact on the residents of the borough.

BACKGROUND AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

5. As Members will be aware the Scrutiny Panels will continue to focus on review work with OSMC taking a lead business role. Members will recall that OSMC and the standing Panels held work planning sessions in June 2015 with a view to

identifying a small number of review topics. The work plan attached at Appendix A, approved by OSMC provides an ongoing summary of the work currently being undertaken.

6. **Children with disabilities social care review** – The panel on 27th July, 2015 scoped the review and agreed the following key areas for consideration:

1. Meeting with parents, Foster Carers and Parents Forum;
2. Meeting with young people – Ladder Group;
3. Visit Respite Care Facility and North Ridge School to address Transition to adulthood and the Next Project; and
4. Meeting with Officers/social workers to address Direct Payments, POET (Personal Outcomes Evaluation Tool) pilot, SEN Out of Authority Costs, Good/Poor Practice and gaps.

A further update will be provided at this meeting.

7. **The Children’s Services Trust** – Additionally, the CYP Panel will continue to receive briefings and updates on the arrangements and performance for the Children’s Trust through quarterly formal meetings. The first of these meetings was held in June, 2015 where evidence was received from Mark Douglas, Chief Operating Officer, Doncaster Children’s Services Trust and Peter Featherstone, Business Manager, Learning and Opportunities Doncaster MBC. The next discussion with the Children’s Trust will be held earlier on this meeting’s agenda.

8. **Correspondence with the Executive**

Children and Young People Scrutiny Review – Relationships with Academies and Educational Attainment - In relation to the Panels review undertaken last year; a letter was forwarded to the Mayor following the response provided to the Panel’s recommendations that were made in that review. A copy of this correspondence is attached at Appendix B.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9. There are no specific options to consider within this report as it provides an opportunity for Members to discuss the Panel’s work plan for 2015/16.

IMPACT ON COUNCIL’S KEY OBJECTIVES

	Outcomes	Implications
	<p>All people in Doncaster benefit from a thriving and resilient economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> 	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the council’s key objectives by holding decision makers to account, reviewing performance and developing policy through robust recommendations, monitoring performance of council</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	<p>and external partners services and reviewing issues outside the remit of the council that have an impact on the residents of the borough.</p> <p>This issue has a direct impact on helping children live safe, healthily and active in a safe environment whilst ensure the governance between the Children's Board, Scrutiny and partners is working effectively.</p>
People live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
People in Doncaster benefit from a high quality built and natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
All families thrive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
Council services are modern and value for money.		
Working with our partners we will provide strong leadership and governance.		

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

10. To maximise the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny function it is important that the work plan devised is manageable and that it accurately reflects the broad range of issues within its remit. Failure to achieve this can reduce the overall impact of the function.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

11. The Council's Constitution states that subject to matters being referred to it by the Full Council, or the Executive and any timetables laid down by those references Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will determine its own Work Programme (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 6a).

12. Specific legal implications and advice will be given with any reports when Overview and Scrutiny have received them as items for consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The budget for the support of the Overview and Scrutiny function 2015/16 is not affected by this report however, the delivery of the work plan will need to take place within agreed budgets. There are no specific financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report. Any financial implications relating to specific reports on the work plan will be included in those reports.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

14. This report provides an overview of the work programme undertaken by Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny. There are no significant equality implications associated with this report. Within its programme of work Overview and Scrutiny gives due consideration to the extent to which the Council has complied with its Public Equality Duty and given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different communities.

CONSULTATION

15. The work plan has been developed in consultation with Members and officers.

CONTACT OFFICER AND REPORT AUTHOR

16. Caroline Martin, Senior Governance Officer, 01302 734941
caroline.martin@doncaster.gov.uk

Christine Rothwell, Scrutiny Officer, 01302 735682
christine.rothwell@Doncaster.gov.uk

Background Papers; None

Damien Allen
Director Learning, Opportunities and Skills

Children and Young People (CYP) Overview & Scrutiny Panel Workplan (DRAFT) – Fixed Panel Meetings
Outcomes and improvements for children and young people

10am 2 nd July 2015	17th Sept AM – informal	2pm 17 th September 2015 Formal	November 2015 (TBA)	10am 8 th December 2015	10am 29 th February 2015
Quarterly Performance Report and update from Children's Services Trust – delivery of agreed budgets	Early Years and Collaborative Strategy update	Quarterly Performance Report and update from Children's Services Trust – delivery of agreed budgets	Sexual Health (Informal Meeting TBA) – Signposting for young people/partnership working (how successful is this) – Joint Meeting	Quarterly Performance Report and update from Children's Services Trust – delivery of agreed budgets	Quarterly Performance Report and update from Children's Services Trust – delivery of agreed budgets
School Improvement Inspection Report		Annual Complaints – Children's trust		Exam Results – improving education provision	CSE – review – 10 key scrutiny questions
		Chair Safeguarding Board – Annual Report		Update on Educational Attainment Review Recommendations	Adoption – annual update/review

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C&YP O&S Review

Review Scope - Disabilities – what is it like being disabled and is provision meeting needs

5. Meeting with parents, Foster Carers and Parents Forum – 3rd September at 5.30pm
6. Meeting with young people – Ladder Group
7. Visit Respite Care Facility – 27th August at 10am
8. North Ridge School to address Transition to adulthood and the Next Project
9. Meeting with Officers to address Direct Payments, POET pilot, SEN Out of Authority Costs, Good/Poor Practice and gaps, Invitations to Social workers
10. Youth Service Report (deferred)

Other Areas (to be scheduled)

- Transfer of health – outline what is now in the contract and responsibilities (informal joint meeting with H&ASC)
- Careers Advice and Guidance (in particular NEETS and Progression Routes Post 16) – R&H O&S Panel to formally invite CYP O&S Panel to Skills Meeting (part of Place Marketing Review)
- Youth Offending Service (YOS) Statutory Plan – Going to OSMC

Workplan Ideas 2016/17

- Virtual School /CIC
- Coasting academies

Councillor Rachel Hodson
Councillor for Thorne Ward

16th July, 2015

Mayor Ros Jones
Floor 4 Civic Office
Waterdale
Doncaster
DN1 3BU

Dear Ros,

Children and Young People Scrutiny Review – Relationships with Academies and Educational Attainment

I am writing further to your letter dated 20th April 2015 which responds to the previous Panel's "Relationships with Academies and Educational Attainment" Scrutiny Review and recommendations which was sent by e-mail on the 5th March 2015.

I would therefore like to comment on some of the replies provided and request additional information. These are for recommendations 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 12 and are as follows: -

Recommendation 2

Write to the Schools Regional Commissioner requesting that:

- A. Academies and Academy Sponsors be robustly challenged where they refuse to have any or very low contact with the Local Authority, to ensure they take their responsibilities seriously with regard to the Local Authority's obligations and work it is undertaking to ensure strong educational attainment;**
- B. Robustly challenge large Academy sponsors, where there is concern relating to attainment, and in such cases review whether they should be allowed to accept additional schools into their provision/chain.**

Response Provided

Regularly meetings take place with the DfE and the School's Commissioner. Information is shared with them, and they have been asked for risk assessments on all Academies in Doncaster, in line with the annual local authority risk assessments.

Page 2 Continued

Comment/Action

It was felt by Panel Members that this response does not provide a clear indication as to whether the recommendation has been accepted or not, and if accepted how it will be implemented. The response has merely provided a summary of what is already in place. It is therefore requested that clarification be provided on whether it has been accepted or not and if so, what is being actioned in addition to the above

Recommendation 5

Ensure, as much as is practical, there are minimal changes to the Local Authority education structure and continuity of staff and support.

Response

The new structure is proving very successful, but is at risk to the PPR review and corporate challenges regarding the necessary restructures in the Access to Learning and Data Performance and intelligence services. Centralising the data and intelligence work with schools and settings is at risk if major changes to service organisation dilute the expertise and remove the processes from the heart of services in Learning and Achievement. Funding is secure to maintain overall Standards and Effectiveness team for a further year, but after that we must seek sustainable income sources to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the work we have delivered via the post-Ofsted action plan.

Comment/For Action

In light of the issues raised within your response, Members have expressed concern about how the PPR review and corporate challenges referred to will affect the new structure, which has been working very well. I would be therefore grateful for further information in response to our concerns, particularly regarding the stability of the funding in place, an issue which has been positively referred to within the letter following the focused school inspection in Doncaster.

Recommendation 6

Encourage local councillors to make contact with and visit schools within their wards, if not already undertaken.

Page 3. Continued.

Response Provided

The Cabinet Member is working with the services to examine the membership of all Governing Bodies, including Academies, and encourage Councillors to engage with school governance.

Comment/For Action

To the Panel's knowledge there has been minimal or no confirmation of what has been done to encourage Councillors to engage with school governance. I would be grateful for an update on the response to this recommendation and for any correspondence that has been sent out to Members previously to be repeated and refreshed.

Recommendations from meetings specifically with Primary Head teachers

Recommendation 8

Investigate the numbers of families having to take their children to different schools across the borough, due to their preferred school being full, and how prolific the problem is.

Response Provided

Where there are pressures on school places, the local authority will see to resolve the issues and have a strategic view of future school place planning needs.

Comment/For Action

Again, it has been thought that this response does not provide a clear indication as to whether this recommendation has been accepted or not and if accepted, how it will be implemented. It is considered that the response only provides a broad outline of what would happen in this event of such pressures taking place. It is therefore requested that clarification be provided on whether this recommendation has been accepted or not and if accepted, what exactly is being actioned to address this issue where relevant.

Recommendation 9

Consider the pooling of resources for support of children where English is a second language and investigate how the resource can be increased to meet prospective high demand.

Page 4. Continued

Response Provided

This will be considered by the Assistant Director and the Head of Service Learner Engagement to see how this can be developed.

Comment/For Action

Panel Members would like an update on whether this recommendation has been accepted or not and if so, how it will be developed further to consideration by the Assistant Director and Head of Service Learner Engagement.

Recommendation 12

Investigate simplifying the direct payments scheme and ensure guidance for the transition of pupils requiring special educational needs is up to date with informative easy to use guidance being made available.

Response Provided

Noted and will be considered by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Teams and Finance.

Comment/For Action

Panel Members would like an update on whether this recommendation has been accepted or not and if accepted, how it will be developed further to consideration by the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Teams and Finance.

I would be grateful for a response to be provided as soon as possible but no later than the 16th August 2015. I therefore look forward to receiving further information and clarifications to the recommendations outlined above.

Kind regards,



**Councillor Rachel Hodson
Chair – Schools Children and Young People
Overview and Scrutiny Panel**

cc. Jo Moxon – Interim Director – Learning and Opportunities
Peter Featherstone – Business Manager – Learning and Opportunities
Councillor Nuala Fennelly - Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Schools

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