

DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2022

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER, DONCASTER on THURSDAY, 17TH MARCH, 2022 at 4.30 PM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Leanne Hempshall

Councillors Tim Needham, Bob Anderson, Laura Bluff, Steve Cox,
Charlie Hogarth and Rob Reid

Co-optees: Antoinette Drinkhill

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Leanne Hornby, Assistant Director Education, Skills, Culture and Heritage
Lee Golze, Assistant Director Partnerships, Early Interventions and Localities
Rebecca Mason, Head of Engagement and Partnerships

Youth Councillors:

Bethany Dixon – Vice Chair / Rep for UTC
Ian Greave – Chair / rep for Don Valley
Gracie Sneap – rep for Sir Thomas Wharton
Katie Thorpe – rep for the Laurel Academy

Aidan Nicol – Participation Officer (Partnerships and Engagement)

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Aimee Dickson and Susan Durant and Bernadette Nesbit (Co-optee)

		<u>ACTION</u>
16.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	There were no items on the agenda.	
17.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	
	The following Councillors declared that they had a non registerable	

	<p>interest as a close family member, had knowledge of and/or used the SEND service being discussed.</p> <p>Councillor Hempshall Councillor L Bluff Councillor Reid Councillor S Cox Councillor T Needham</p>	
18.	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THE 9TH DECEMBER 2021</u>	
	RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 9 th December, 2021 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.	
19.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made at the meeting.	
20.	<u>YOUTH COUNCIL PRESENTATION: YOUTH COUNCIL UPDATE INCLUDING THE DOMESTIC ABUSE CAMPAIGN</u>	
	<p>The Panel received a presentation from the Youth Council relating to it's Election held on 19th December 2021, the "Make You Mark" priorities and actions undertaken on Domestic Abuse. From the presentation, Members noted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18 schools were represented on the Youth Council; • There had been 42 newly elected Youth Councillors; • "Make Your Mark" ballots, requesting the main areas of concern amongst young people, were then divided into Area Priorities; and • Domestic Abuse had been the top "Make Your Mark" issue in November 2020 – the Youth Council worked closely with South Yorkshire Police, Doncaster Children's Services Trust and the Domestic Abuse Team on the work undertaken, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Formalising a logo, and creating a #ReduceDomesticAbuse hashtag; ➤ Presented ideas to the Domestic Abuse Theme Group, and secured funding from the Violence Reduction Unit (VRU); ➤ Circulated a survey in schools on healthy / unhealthy relationships; 	

- Promoted the hashtag throughout Domestic Abuse Awareness month;
- The Youth Council collaborated with local mural artist Natasha Clarke to develop an abstract art piece raising awareness of coercive and controlling behaviour. This would be displayed in DGLAM in May 2022;
- Produced a short film with a local filmmaker titled 'Red Flags' planned and scripted to highlight the signs to look for in a coercive / controlling relationship. This will be released as an advert in Doncaster's two cinemas throughout April 2022.

The film was well received by the Domestic Abuse team, and has already had an impact. Young people can call Doncaster Children's Services Trust about a 'red flag' and they will be able to skip the safeguarding assessment form and instead receive direct advice and guidance; and

- Produced posters to be used across Doncaster bus stops designed to include some of the signs highlighted in the 'RED FLAGS' film.
The posters will include reference to toxic behaviours such as:
 - Gaslighting;
 - Lovebombing; and
 - Location tracking.

The Following areas were discussed in further detail:

Representation on the Youth Council across the whole borough – a Member stressed it was unfortunate that not all schools had a representative on the Youth Council but noted that work was being undertaken to try and ensure as many young people as possible were aware of the Youth Council to encourage their schools to take part. For example, posters were being display in bus stops to encourage involvement and to reach as many young people as possible.

Voting and ballots used – due to the Covid pandemic the Panel noted that traditional paper based voting mechanisms could not be used therefore voting through a Google forum was undertaken adapting to more online methods.

Partnership working – whilst working on the Domestic Abuse campaign, Youth Councillors acknowledged that the topic was very sensitive and to avoid accidentally offending people, they worked closely with the Domestic Abuse Team, South Yorkshire Police and the Doncaster Children's Trust who helped them correctly focus the work undertaken.

	<p>The Panel was absolutely delighted with and commended the work undertaken by the Youth Council.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the Youth Council be congratulated on the fantastic work undertaken; 2. the Participation Officer share the #ReduceDomesticAbuse hashtag with the Panel so they were able to share on their own social media pages; and 3. note the information provided. 	
21.	<p><u>SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS STRATEGY - UPDATE</u></p>	
	<p>A Presentation was provided outlining the refreshed Special Education Needs Strategy, the six priorities that underpin the Strategy alongside the progress made over the last two years in its implementation.</p> <p>Further to the presentation the following issues were addressed:</p> <p><u>Early help</u> – in response to a question it was accepted that systems were required to respond more quickly and that Covid could not be ignored in playing a part of slowing some systems down. When the pandemic hit there was a need to address pressures and ensure children were safe particularly because they were not attending school.</p> <p>It was stressed that the cause of many issues being raised and not symptoms required addressing earlier, with early help support being provided through Hubs and well-being. It was noted that all staff working in this support field needed to be aware of how and where to seek assistance to provide support as quickly as possible, with commitment through the Early Help Strategy providing this.</p> <p><u>Children with Social Emotional and Mental health (SEMH)</u> – with regard to provision for children and young people with need in this area, it was explained that accessing wellbeing support in a nurturing environment was essential, through a hub but to also ensure support was available through mainstream education rather than in a special school.</p> <p><u>Early Help Strategy</u> – It was noted that this would be finalised within 6 to 8 weeks of the meeting and Members suggested that it be shared with the Panel with regular updates throughout the following year being provided. It was acknowledged that babies and infants thrive during a good pregnancy to 2 years old, including a good birth, secure environment and stimulation but for some families this could be challenging. It was stressed that 96% of Doncaster’s childminding</p>	

services were good and outstanding therefore the service needed to be accessed by parents. It was noted that when a child was born they were registered with a Family Hub but there were still a few difficulties to resolve in relation to this issue.

Literacy and Development during Covid pandemic – for some children born during this period, their development would not be as advanced as it should be, therefore the Local Authority was committing funding to address the issue for the next two to three years.

Children seeking asylum – The commitment from the Local Authority to take families from other countries was recognised providing good homes, schools and wrap around services. There was a specific asylum seeking allocation figure that the Local Authority was required to meet, however the number of families provided with care had reached over and above the required allocation.

Domestic abuse – if a report was received from South Yorkshire Police about a child or young person being subject to or had observed domestic abuse they were immediately placed in social care. The Local Authority know how many children and young people live in homes where there were reports of domestic abuse, the age range and support services that had been provided.

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) – in relation to what happens to the 40% of children that were not successful in obtaining an EHCP it was explained that statutory assessments and levels must be met before a Plan could be developed, with a graduated evidence gathering approach required. It was noted that parents always had the right of appeal if they were of the opinion that their child required a statutory assessment. Up to the 1st January 2022 there had been 42 requests for mediation, then appeals with 17 reaching statutory assessment.

Increase in EHCP numbers – an increase in parents requesting assessments had been made during the Covid pandemic. There were a number of children displaying more complex needs due to gaps in learning and not support from school settings.

With regard to there being enough resources to support this increased demand, temporary additional funding had been made available to increase resources with an additional senior officer and SEND Co-ordinator post.

EHCPs – it was explained that they should be reviewed every 12 months. If the school was not responding to the EHCP then parents could discuss the position with the SEND team at any point to ensure objectives were being met. It was stressed that a review must be forwarded by the school to the Local Authority. Occasionally proposed support presented by a school was not always appropriate for a Plan therefore additional work with the school would be provided, for

example, working with SENCOs and mentoring from other schools.

It was acknowledged there were real struggles for families to get an EHCP in place for their child and that improvements were required to ensure the right resources and help were in place as early as possible.

Additional funding awarded to children with EHCPs – it was outlined that additional funding packages provided to children were reviewed separately by a Panel with a provision map being provided a reviewed annually.

Teaching Assistants – it was accepted that the numbers of posts had reduced.

Resources - It was acknowledged that the DfG grant was nationally insufficient therefore everyone was carrying a deficit. Doncaster was actively involved with consultation to ensure funding would meet demands, for example was funding per capita correct and shaping future needs and support. Additionally it was understood why parents were agitated when they had a massive battle for additional funding if it was not available.

It was explained that every mainstream school received “element 3” top up funding where they have children that required SEND support, with specific banding for each individual child. For example if an EHCP required a Teaching Assistant to be employed then a provision map would be required to support the resources required. It was confirmed that the £6k was detailed with schools budget. Before additional funding was provided the need would have to be demonstrated.

General Development Assessment – it was explained that this was a paediatric assessment tool that leads onto further assessments. It had worked well in some areas but not others, with the challenge being wait times were too long. When the system was originally established, 3 in 10 were receiving a positive diagnosis. The assessment would have to be undertaken over a two term period with evidence and a Plan in place to progress forward.

Health waiting lists – it was recognised that all waiting lists had been delayed due to Covid, including cancer treatments.

Online assessment tools – it was noted that the CCG had commissioned these tools, which were being used elsewhere in the country whilst achieving good quality assessments and time saving.

Diagnosis times – it was noted that diagnosis should be undertaken before a child was 5 years old but some could be inconclusive or too late therefore the need to be diagnosed as early as possible to align with the 0-5 pathway was imperative. It was noted that autism and ADHD diagnosis had different timelines.

CAMHS diagnosis times – With regard to children with ADHD the

CAMHS Policy stated that children must be 6 years old to commence investigation/treatment but there was nothing included with regard to autism however guidance stated aged 7 years.

Training for schools – in response to a question it was outlined that an assessments team provided support and training to schools. Additional support was provided to children and young people to SENCO networks through the educational psychology services and standards and effectiveness team.

General Developmental Assessment (GDA) appointments – in relation to reducing the waiting time for an appointment it was explained that there was currently a national shortage of consultant paediatrics. There were permanent recruitment drives and a real effort to increase permanent employment, but it was noted consultants tended to prefer working in university cities. It was stressed however that as part of the Doncaster Education and Skills Strategy the University City principal was being developed and driven.

Transition improvement between phases for July/September 2022 including pathways in employment – Specific set dates have to be met for the September transition preparation and moving from Primary to Secondary. With regard to moving to post 16 to 19 provision there was a long lead in time for naming education, find the appropriate setting and ensuring a package was completed as soon as possible for work on the care plan to be finalised.

In connection to pathways into employment good work and relationships were undertaken with all colleges and learning establishments ensuring a post 16 focus on employability, providing as many work experience opportunities as possible.

It was noted that the Local Authority had asked to be an employer working alongside a special school.

Multi Academy Trusts (MATS) – it was noted that there had been a good buy-in from MATs and special schools that sit on the SEND Board. Additionally both main stream and specialist Academy Trusts were members of the Doncaster Association of Secondary Heads which continued to meet regularly.

Work based learning for young people with SEND – a Member wished to thank organisations for taking young people with disabilities and wished to see more businesses taking part, highlighting that bureaucracy created a barrier. These sentiments were echoed by the Panel.

Reconciliation of future commissioning decisions and resource allocation – It was explained that immediate funding would be used to bolster the team but in the longer term, the SEND Strategy would address key priorities to be enacted through commissioning. There

	<p>needed to be a good understanding and to the best of everyone's knowledge of requirements for the next 6 years so resources and support could be made available. It was noted that some work may need to cease to ensure support for all families was available. It was suggested that a further update be provided to the Panel in the future.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u> that:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the amount of work to be undertaken to address SEND, be acknowledged; b. the comments made by the panel be taken on board and inform the SEND Strategy; c. The SEND strategy be revisited by the Panel, once complete and progress be provided to the Panel; d. The Early Help Strategy be shared with the Panel and regular updated be provided; and e. An update on the SEND Board, be provided to a future meeting. 	
22.	<p><u>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLAN AND THE COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN AND KEY DECISIONS</u></p>	
	<p>The Chair reminded the Panel that it would hopefully be meeting with Headteachers on 26th April at 9am to discuss front door referrals.</p> <p>The Senior Governance Officer reminded the Panel that it was nearing the end of the current Civic Year and if any Member had an area they wished to discuss then to email both the Chair and the Senior Governance Officers.</p> <p><u>RESOLVED</u>: That the discussion, be noted.</p>	