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DONCASTER METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

TUESDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2015

A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL was held at the COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC OFFICE, DONCASTER on TUESDAY, 8TH DECEMBER, 2015 at 10.00 AM

PRESENT:

Chair - Councillor Rachel Hodson
Vice Chair – Councillor Neil Gethin

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

Co-optees – Damien Thorpe and John Hoare

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

Mark Douglas – Chief Operating Officer (Children’s Trust)
James Thomas - Head of Performance and Business Intelligence (Children’s Trust)
Peter Featherstone - Business Manager (Learning and Opportunities: CYP)
Christopher Toyne - Head of Service: Education Data, Intelligence & Performance (Learning and Opportunities: CYP)
Kathryn Wild - Principal Standards & Effectiveness Officer (Learning and Opportunities: CYP)
Paul Thorpe - Head of Service: Performance Improvement (Learning and Opportunities: CYP)
Lianne Hornsby - Head of Business Transformation and Management Support (Learning and Opportunities: CYP)

APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bev Chapman

		<u>ACTION</u>
17.	<u>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</u>	
	Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Bev Chapman.	
18.	<u>TO CONSIDER THE EXTENT, IF ANY, TO WHICH THE PUBLIC AND PRESS ARE TO BE EXCLUDED FROM THE MEETING.</u>	
	None	
19.	<u>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST, IF ANY.</u>	

	There were no declarations of interest made.	
20.	<u>MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17TH SEPTEMBER 2015</u>	
	The minutes were agreed and approved as a true record.	
21.	<u>PUBLIC STATEMENTS</u>	
	There were no public statements made.	
22.	<u>QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE TRUST UPDATE REPORT</u>	
	<p>The Chair welcomed Mark Douglas, Chief Operating Officer and James Thomas, Head of Performance and Business Intelligence from the Doncaster Children’s Trust to the meeting to provide an overview of the Quarterly Performance Trust Update and respond to questions.</p> <p>The Panel was reminded of the monitoring arrangements of Governance Assurance being undertaken within the Children’s Trust, which included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quarterly Performance Meetings • Monthly Operational Progress Group • Monthly Financial Monitoring Group • Annual Review <p>Members were told that there was an intention to bring the Monthly Operational Progress and Financial Monitoring Group meeting closer together to establish links and develop a better understanding. It was added that the Annual Review had nearly been completed looking at issues such as the Trust’s monitoring arrangements and performance indicators.</p> <p>Members were informed that at the end of the Quarter 2 (which marked the first 12 months of the Trust’s operation) there were 11 at or above target and 4 outside tolerance. These included the time taken to complete assessments when children were referred to as a child in need, case file auditing activity and two relating to financial monitoring and forecasted projected spend against budget.</p> <p><u>Case File Auditing:</u> - It was explained that the Trust had improved consistency and introduced more rigour and challenge to its case file auditing activity, with Managers having received additional training and deployment of a new audit tool. It was expected that this performance indicator should improve by the next quarter.</p> <p><u>Stability of Placements:</u> - A Member asked about the stability of placements (for placement breakdowns of 3 or more moves), which had reported as having a rise at Corporate Parenting Board meetings.</p>	

Members expressed their concern about the effect of less stable placements on children in care outcomes such as education. Members were informed that this had shown a slight increase during the last couple of months and was now being measured and monitored for specific trends. It was added that further work would be undertaken on the reasons behind the increase although no specific local research was available in respect of educational outcomes.

Foster Change Project – Members were told that a regional lead had been recruited and that any delay in progress had not been caused from within the Trust.

Single Assessments Completed in Timescale – Members were informed that this was due to a combination of increased referral rates, a small number of short term vacancies (which had temporarily increased demand on services), the speed at which workers were able to complete assessments and finally an increased challenge to staff to complete high level quality assessments. Members were also told that there had been a reallocation of case files, rewriting of scheduling reports, support provided to Managers and use of agency staff. As a result of these steps, the performance indicator was now back up to tolerance levels and back on track.

Careers Information Advice and Guidance (CIAG) of Children in Care: – Members were informed about what was in place to provide CIAG to children in care, this included signposting to routes such as apprenticeships schemes, full-time education and organisations such as A2E. It was also added that every looked after child has a Personal Education Plan completed in partnership with the school and provider. It was acknowledged that this was a challenge and a Member commented that CIAG needs to be impartial and independent. Members expressed an interest in looking at this issue in more detail as part of the Panel's workplan.

Regarding Average Social Caseworker Load, Members were advised that information reported on average numbers of caseloads might not present a clear and realistic picture. It was explained that some Social Workers might have more complex assessments than others and it was expected that Managers would effectively manage the team's caseloads accordingly.

Measures relating to workforce: - In respect of staff supervision, Members were informed that this will be looked at through the annual review and a new suite of indicators will be agreed and reported on. In terms of staff satisfaction, Members were informed that there were a number of routes that could be used for staff to contribute through a two way conversation that had resulted in good outcomes. These routes had included;

- STEP Engagement Forum

- Staff surveys and appraisals
- Ofsted – opportunity to engage during the 4 week process

Measures in relating to finance - Regarding overspends, Members were informed that the cost of children in care placements was due to the reliance of relying on individual foster agencies. It was explained that steps had been taken to bolster in-house provision, overhauling residential homes and utilising capacity better. In relation to children in care, Members were told how Doncaster was unable to provide care for those with more complex specific needs. It was explained that there was a focus on more preventative care, to be able to provide more alternative in-house provision and for foster carers to be able to meet demand. It was advised that this would be included in the annual review of setting the budget for next year.

Members were told that the Trust had no capital budget and as part of capital proposals submitted to Council, the Trust needed to complete a sound business case. Members were informed that in respect of any potential legal challenge to the Council, the problem would only lie when placements in-house were done first without consultation with other options.

Measures relating to Children in Care and Care Leavers – in relation to episodes of children in care missing for 24 hours, in rolling 3 months, Members were informed that there was a return interview process now in place which had experienced a good uptake of children taking part. It was explained that there was a set format dependent upon the level of engagement required and amount of detail the child was willing to provide. It was noted that the forms were well completed and provided meaningful data.

Ofsted Inspection of Services for Children In Need Of Help and Protection, Children Looked After and Care Leavers

A presentation was provided which updated the Panel on the recent Ofsted inspection including recommendations made within the Ofsted report and next steps including the Action Plan. Members were informed that there would need to be some external assurance of progress to ensure it was robust and had some validity. Members were informed of a review being undertaken for Care Leavers.

Members were informed that as part of the next steps, the Children's Trust will be looking to improve their performance management framework and upskill staff to drive this forward and ensure that there was a clear vision to be cascaded down.

THE PANEL RESOLVED to: -

- Note the Quarterly Performance Trust Update report.
- Receive an update on a review of services for Care Leavers at

	<p>the Panel's meeting on the 29th February 2016.</p> <p>iii. Review Action Plan at the Panel's meeting on the 29th February 2016.</p> <p>iv. Include Career Information Advice and Guidance for children in care to the CYP O&S Workplan.</p>	
23.	<p><u>LOCAL AUTHORITY DONCASTER EDUCATION ATTAINMENT SUMMARY 2015 AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY/KEY STAGE 2 STRATEGY AND PROGRESS REPORT</u></p>	
	<p>The Panel received a report that provided information on the 2015 Doncaster Attainment Summary for children and young people aged 5, 7, 11 and 16 and School Improvement Strategy/Key Stage 2 Strategy and Progress Report. The Panel discussed the following areas: -</p> <p><u>Early Years Foundation Stage:</u> – Members were informed that the Early Help offer would make an impact in this area and that a Senior School Standards Officer had been appointed that would link with Early Help to carry out work alongside the Commissioning Service.</p> <p><u>Phonics Testing at ages 6 and 7:</u> – Further to the report detailing that the performance of Doncaster's 6 year old children was 7% lower than the national average; Members were informed that there was a Phonics Action Plan in place and initiatives were being introduced which included the delivery of training and phonics leads within schools.</p> <p><u>Key Stage 1 Attainment (Children aged 7)</u> – Members were informed that this presented a more positive picture. In relation to pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support, Members were told that all academies Education Standards and Effectiveness provided a particular focus on SEN children.</p> <p><u>Key Stage 2 Attainment (Children aged 11)</u> – Members were concerned that for Key Stage 2 children aged 11 and over, it had not been a positive year for results, in particular for Maths (top at KS1 and bottom at KS2). It was explained that part of the reason behind this was in relation to a mismatch between teacher assessments and outcomes. In respect of the Maths results, it was explained that what was happening in Doncaster mirrored national results and international research that children were being pushed too soon before truly understanding the depth of the subject. Members were informed that at Key Stage 2 the Rapid Improvement initiative had been launched which would collect live data to enable issues to be identified.</p> <p>Other actions being taken to address issues at Key Stage 2 included: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pyramid Plans – data being used to supply and improve outcomes. • Procuring Tracking Systems – target setting 	

- Data Sharing Agreement – circulated data to schools

It was also noted that Rapid Response was needed to address issues and included: -

1. Securing accuracy of teacher assessment mismatch to test outcomes.
2. Accelerating progress of schools under pressure to deliver new curriculum.
3. Securing high quality leadership – look at how it impacts on teaching and learning and undertaking effective monitoring and evaluation.

Key Stage 4 Attainment Summary (children aged 16) – Members were informed that the educational performance of children in care for Key Stage 4 with 5 + A*-C including English and Maths was at 9% and had bucked the national trend which had dropped by 1%. It was added that one of Ofsted’s recommendation was to ‘improve outcomes for Children in Care through the Virtual School’ which was in place.

In respect of Data Protected Characteristics it was asked why there were no Children in Care included. Members were informed that this would be released later this year and would be shared with the Panel.

It was questioned whether exam routes were suitable for all children who may be more suited to other routes for learning.

Schools becoming academies: - In relation to the local authority encouraging primary school governing bodies to become academies, Members were informed that from a local authority perspective the decision sits with individual schools to make a decision of where they want to be within that agenda. It was outlined that consultation was being undertaken and that schools were being encouraged to consider the direction of travel. It was added that schools were being provided with a number of incentives.

Concern was raised that governing bodies didn’t understand where to look in regards to this agenda and also that they didn’t like what they saw. Reference was made to the Department of Further Education’s view that large academy chains were impacting on outcomes and it was questioned whether this was happening in Doncaster. In terms of the capacity of schools to deliver, Members were informed that there had been little evidence to suggest that academies were an effective solution. It was recognised that becoming an academy was time consuming and required investment. It was commented that those schools that had become academies may not have the time to support other schools. It was added that it was about building capacity to support a number of schools. It was confirmed that work was being undertaken with the Diocese to agree the work forward as well as a dialogue currently underway at Director level.

	<p><u>Newly Qualified Teachers (NQT's):</u> - It was commented that the Key Stage 2 Raising Achievement strategy was a worthy ambition. Concern was raised that one of the challenges governing bodies face was making good appointments of teaching staff, especially where experience was sought. It was raised that there were many NQTs who although showed promise, needed help and leadership. In relation to what the Local Authority was doing to attract good teachers to Doncaster, Members were told that this was one of the key strands within the Local Authority Rapid Assessment Plan. Members were told about a recent proposal to undertake a recruitment campaign that had received 100% backing from the Schools Forum. It was added that this had then been rejected by the DFE due to an inappropriate use of funds. It was explained that recruitment campaigns although essential needed resourcing.</p> <p><u>Role of School Governors:</u> - There was a conversation around the changing role of School Governors and that support that was offered in terms of providing additional information, data and training courses. It was recognised that governing bodies had been weakened by governors who had chosen to resign in view of changing expectations. It was added that the Local Authority had stepped in for those schools not deemed as good and where governors had not appropriately challenged.</p> <p>RESOLVED that the Panel: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Notes that in response to declined performance at KS2 the Local Authority has implemented a robust 'Key Stage 2 Rapid Improvement Strategy' requiring all schools to participate in bespoke and general initiatives to boost performance. ii. Notes the challenges that are in place to the DFE, Governing Bodies and School Leaders to improve performance at all levels, including proposals for the growth of Multi-Academy Trusts. iii. Agreed to maintain an overview of progress to improve Educational Attainment through the Panels workplan. 	
24.	<p><u>CHILDREN AND YOUNG OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PEOPLE'S PANEL WORK PLAN REPORT 2015/16</u></p>	
	<p>The Senior Governance Officer presented the current Overview and Scrutiny work plan highlighting areas of work undertaken by the Scrutiny Panels since the last meeting including an update on the Disabilities review.</p> <p>The Senior Governance Officer also presented the recommendations from the Joint Children and Young People/Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel informal meeting on Sexual Health -</p>	

	<p>Signposting for Young People/Partnership Working.</p>	
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RESOLVED that:

- i. the 2015/2016 Overview and Scrutiny workplan, be noted
- ii. the recommendations from the Joint Children and Young People/Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Panel informal meeting on Sexual Health - Signposting For Young People/Partnership Working, be agreed.