

Minutes of: **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING OVERVIEW PROJECT
GROUP**

Date of Meeting: Monday 27th February 2017

Present: Councillor Susan Southworth (in the Chair); Councillor Caserta; Councillor Kerrison.

Also in attendance:
Martyn Burrell, Strategic Lead, Safeguarding
Bart Popelier, Strategic Lead Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Kirsty Walton, Oasis Team Leader
Julie Howarth, Oasis Social Worker
Julie Gallagher – Democratic Services

Apologies for absence:
Councillor Jones, Parnell and Whitby
Karen Dolton, Assistant Director Social Care and Safeguarding

The Chair began by welcoming everyone to the meeting. Members agreed to re-arrange the agenda and consider the Oasis Team Update first.

CS.12 APOLOGIES

Apologies were addressed above.

CS.13 OASIS TEAM UPDATE

Kirsty Walton, Oasis Team Manager and Julie Howarth Oasis Team Social Worker attended the meeting to provide Members of the group with an update in respect of the work undertaken by the Oasis Team. The verbal update included the following information:

The Oasis team was established in October 2013 and provides non statutory support and early intervention. The team consists of four social workers, two family support workers, a mental health counsellor and an early help consultant.

The support is provided on a voluntary basis, from pre-birth to 17years, help provided will include: empowering families, training for professionals and parents, support with cleaning/day to day tasks, whole family support as well as individual sibling and parental support.

Members of the Group were given the opportunity to ask questions of the social workers and the following points were raised:

In response to a question with regards to the threshold for intervention, the Team Manager reported that the Team manager would make the assessment and that would be based upon formal supervision and case discussion. Some

families that receive support have previously been involved with statutory services. The service is not prescriptive and there is no defined time that a family can be involved with the Team.

The support provided is needs lead, if the client is not making the required progress or not engaging with the service as expected or agreed, then the client may be referred on to a statutory service. The plans are developed with the family and are constantly reviewed. The service is currently providing support to 132 families; that compares with 94 referrals in 2013/14; 183 in 2014/15; 128 in 2015/16 and in 2016/17 152 referrals.

With regards to the referral process, the Team Manager reported that referrals are received via the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The oasis team will in conjunction with the family devise an action plan.

In response to a Member's question, the Team Manager reported that once the work with the family had concluded that the case may be either closed, or stepped down to another professional, for example a designated teacher.

The type of support required, the ages and the gender of the support provided fluctuates and varies and will include support with mental health issues and neglect. The Oasis Team Social Worker reported that at this present time the majority of their clients are boys; and a large proportion of 10 and 11 year olds.

The Team Manager reported that an electronic system is used to store the early help family support plans. The Plans are quality assured and representatives from the Oasis Team provide training to schools, health visitors and school nurses in respect of their work and the support they can provide.

The Team Manager reported that the Elton Secondary school approached the team prior to the start of the academic year to ask the team to provide them with details of any children receiving support from the service. This is an area of good practice that the team would like to see replicated in other schools across the Borough.

The Team Manager reported that she would like to expand the work undertaken with pregnant mums, pre-birth, as a number of clients are referred into the service aged 0 to 2 which suggests there is a need for some early awareness raising work.

The Team Manager reported that because the service is a non-statutory service, this reduces the red tape/bureaucracy.

The Oasis Team Manager reported that early intervention is the most cost effective form of support.

It was agreed:

Kirsty Walton and Julie Howarth, from the Oasis Team be thanked for their attendance.

CS.14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CS.15 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

It was agreed:

1. That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 15th September 2016 be approved as a correct record.
2. In respect of minute number CS.09 Home Education- Safeguarding Issues, Debra Wood would be asked to provide a further update to the group in respect of identified themes/higher number of parents choosing to home school in a particular area as well as demographic information, democratic services to advise.
3. That Klaro Rufo, Assistant director be asked to provide an update with regards to minute number CS.10 Educational Achievement at KS2 and KS4 and as to whether any progress has made in respect of the "Closing the Gap" group.

CS.16 QUARTER THREE PERFORMANCE REPORT

Bart Popelier gave a presentation setting out Children's Social Care Performance in respect of the key performance indicators for children's safeguarding. Performance information was set out in respect of the following indicators:

- Referral/Conversion rate
- Contacts and Conversion to Referrals
- Contact Outcomes Breakdown
- Conversion rate of Referral to Assessments
- Re-referrals
- Assessment Timescales
- Section 47 Enquiries
- Child Protection Plans Data
- Numbers of Looked after Children

Members of the Group discussed the presentation, members agreed that the information was very much concerned with initial contacts in to the system and they would benefit from further information in relation to the child's progress through the system, demographic and age specific information as well as peak times for the service.

With regards to the gradual rise in the number of assessment authorised within 45 working days, the Strategic Lead reported that some of the assessment work undertaken by the social workers, although of a very high quality has taken too long.

In respect of the re-referral rate, this peaked earlier in the year, senior management has audited the spikes in re-referrals, this may be due to several factors including; high pressure, quality of assessments and a high proportion of agency staff in post at the time.

It was agreed:

The Principal Democratic Services Officer would liaise with the Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance in respect of how future performance reports will be presented to the Safeguarding OPG.

CS.17 OFSTED ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Strategic Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance attended the meeting to provide members with a verbal update in respect of the Ofsted action plan.

The Strategic Lead reported that a series of meetings to update on progress in respect of the Ofsted action plan have been scheduled. Karen Dolton, the newly appointed Assistant Director will lead the implementation of the plan.

Work is underway in respect of data and quality assurance as well as reviewing pathways and ambitions going forward.

It was agreed:

A further more detailed OFSTED Action Plan update will be considered at the next meeting the Safeguarding Overview Project Group.

Martyn Burrell and Bart Popelier left the meeting.

CS.11 NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE MEETINGS

Members of the Group discussed possible items for future consideration:

- Continued scrutiny of the performance data and Ofsted Action Plan
- Children's Safeguarding Board
- Focus on Mental Health Issues
- Reach out Project
- Unauthorised absence and truancy

It was agreed:

That the next meeting of the Safeguarding Overview Project Group will be held on 26th April 2017 at 5.30pm.

COUNCILLOR S SOUTHWORTH

Chair

(Note: the meeting started at 5.30pm and ended at 7.10pm)