

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING SUB COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 3 October 2019

Present: Councillor Susan Southworth (in the Chair); Councillor R Caserta, Councillor J Grimshaw, Councillor K Hussain and Councillor M Whitby

Also in attendance:
Sue Harris - Strategic Lead for Placement Services
Bart Popelier - Strategic Lead Practice Improvement, Children Young People and Culture
Janice Barr - Strategic Lead - Safeguarding, Children Young People and Culture
Julie Gallagher – Democratic Services

Apologies for absence:
Councillors M Powell and C Walsh;
Tony Decrop – Assistant Director Safeguarding

CS.01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CS.02 MINUTES

It was agreed:

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2019, be approved as a correct record.

CS.03 MATTERS ARISING

Minute - CS.03 Oasis Team update; following discussions of this item at the last meeting, the Service Development Manager, Early Help provided additional information in respect of the number of repeat referrals within the no further action cohort as well as case studies.

Members discussed the information provided and requested further clarification in relation to the support that is in place for this cohort.

It was agreed:

The Assistant Director Early Help and School Readiness be invited to attend the next meeting to provide further information in respect of the concerns raised by members.

CS.04 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE RESTRUCTURE

The Strategic Lead, Practice Improvement, attended the meeting to inform members of the work undertaken to restructure the Children and Young Peoples Directorate. The Strategic Lead reported that the restructure will help the directorate to better manager demand; allow

management capacity to drive forward transformation and assist with the recruitment and retention of staff.

There will be three new divisions; Early help and school readiness; Social care and safeguarding and Education and Inclusion. Each division will be headed by an Assistant Director supported by a reduced, reconfigured tier of Strategic Leads.

Responding to a Member's question, the Strategic Lead reported that the new structure; including the transfer of staff from early help to a place based model of service delivery will generate some budget savings.

The restructure will enable the Local Authority to provide support to the increasing numbers of Academies within the Borough, this work will be led by the interim Assistant Director Education and Inclusion.

It was agreed:

1. Members resolved to invite the following Assistant Directors to the next meeting;
Assistant Directors for Early Help; Education and Inclusion and Safeguarding.
2. Following implementation of the restructure the Assistant Directors must provide a briefing note for the Committee detailing:
 - What will success look like and how will it be measured?
 - What is being delivered and where?
 - What is the success criteria?
 - What is not working and how fluid is the structure to allow for alterations/review?

CS.05 SOCIAL CARE STAFFING

Bart Popelier, Strategic Lead Practice Improvement and Janice Barr Strategic Lead, Safeguarding, provided a members with an overview of the current staffing structures within social care. Recruitment is ongoing across a range of posts including: service managers, team managers, assistant team managers and social workers.

Bury has a fairly stable workforce; however the restructure will cause some internal movement.

The Strategic Lead, Safeguarding reported that there still remains some areas of challenge including more qualified staff choosing to work for agencies than take a permanent contract, quality and resilience of newly qualified staff and social work reform and innovation.

Responding to a members question in relation to the use of agency staff, the Strategic lead reported that the restructure will provide a clear career pathway for staff and support retention. The Strategic Lead reported that Bury has a good reputation as a good place to be a social worker and a steady number of agency workers choose to transfer to become permanent members of staff.

In light of the amount of recruitment and the time taken up by Strategic Leads in undertaking this recruitment, Members sought assurances that there was no slippage in terms of management oversight and general

performance management and support to social work staff. The Strategic Lead reported that although there has been an emphasis on recruitment, performance and assurance meetings including insight meetings still continue. Following the peer review and the Ofsted inspection there has been a refocus within the organisation with a clearly developed action plan with a refocus on quality.

It was agreed;

Bart Popelier, Strategic Lead Practice Improvement and Janice Barr Strategic Lead, Safeguarding be thanked for their attendance.

CS.04 FOSTERING TEAM UPDATE

Sue Harris - Strategic Lead Corporate Parenting, attended the meeting to update members on the fostering team. The presentation contained the following information:

- Family and Friends Care
- National minimum standards
- Family and friends foster care
- Special Guardianship Orders
- Fostering Panel

The Strategic Lead Corporate Parenting reported that the Authority must give preference to a placement with a relative, friend or other person connected with the child and who is also a Local Authority foster parent. A robust assessment process is undertaken and information is gained via a number of avenues including schools, ex partners, police and observations are undertaken when training and when placed unannounced visits would take place.

Responding to a Member's question the Strategic Lead Corporate Parenting reported that complaints against foster carers are escalated to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO); all complaint information is reported in the Fostering Annual Report.

It was agreed:

Sue Harris, Strategic Lead be thanked for her attendance.

COUNCILLOR S SOUTHWORTH

Chair (Note: the meeting started at 5pm and ended at 6.50pm)

