

Minutes of:

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE -
CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING SUB COMMITTEE**

Date of Meeting: 28 January 2020

Present: Councillors Susan Southworth (in the Chair); J Grimshaw, K Hussain and M Whitby M Powell and C Walsh;

Also in attendance: Councillor T Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children and Families
Tony Decrop – Assistant Director Social Care and Safeguarding
Sandra Bruce – Assistant Director Early Help and School Readiness
Julien Kramer – Interim Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion
Chloe McCann – Democratic Services

Apologies for absence: Councillor R Caserta.

CS.01 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The minutes of the meeting held on 03 October 2019, be approved as a correct record.

CS.02 MINUTES

It was agreed:

The minutes of the meeting held on 03 October 2019, be approved as a correct record.

CS.03 MATTERS ARISING

There were no matters arising.

CS.04 Briefing from the Assistant Directors for Early Help; Education and Inclusion and Safeguarding

All members began by introducing themselves and their background.

It was agreed that all members have read and digested the PowerPoint and the meeting would consist of questions to the attendees; Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness, Tony Decrop, Assistant Director (Social Care and Safeguarding) and Julien Kramer Assistant Director (Education and Inclusion).

Following questions and answers the following themes emerged:

Early Help and School Readiness

Sandra Bruce advised that there is a long term legacy which takes time to change culture. But it is envisaged one year is how long it will take to establish the new way of working.

Councillor T Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children and Young people advised that referrals and re-referrals should be reduced as part of the impact from the restructure. He informed members that the Council have integrated our Troubled Families Team (SCIL) and our Place Based Teams to synthesise our offer to families locally.

Sandra Bruce advised that Bury pitched for the Stockport Family Model as part of a Greater Manchester incentive. This model involves linking teams around schools. Bury has three hubs over the six townships.

Discussions on the waiting times for crisis support was discussed. Sandra Bruce advised that Children's and Adults Mental Health is reshaping and the vision is to link Mental Health workers with schools and into localities.

School Exclusions

The issue of school exclusions was discussed. Julien Kramer advised that schools have now been offered pastoral support to try and reduce the prevalence of permanent school exclusions. This is because there is greater awareness of the detrimental impacts a school exclusion may now have on a young person's life and future.

Questions arose regarding the impact of not excluding some students may have on the quality of education other students receive and the teachers are able to give. Members were informed that in this case alternative provisions are explored. This may be courses that provide life experience and opportunities to gain alternative qualifications. This is a key aspect of the Local Authority working better with partners to look at holistically supporting students to gain the best outcome for them as individuals. There was also reference to the 'Red Box' project which invites qualifying young people the opportunity to participate in work experience which attaches itself to many successes such as securing paid employment at the end.

Social Care and Safeguarding

Tony Decrop informed members that successful implementation of children's social care and safeguarding is determined by a reduction in referrals and re-referrals due to better support being in place before this point. Tony also advised members of the committee that Bury Council are putting in place policies and support systems to be a 'Fostering Friendly' Council which seeks to remove any stigma or incorrect prejudice relating to fostering young people and children.

The scope of the restructure for the family contact service based a Victoria Children's Centre was discussed. It was agreed that modernising the system to consider alternative places for contact between birth families and children is better for both families and children.

The members were informed about the establishment of a Principal Social Worker to develop a Practice Hub of Excellence. It was concluded that the restructure seeks to reduce the duration of time a social worker is required to be behind a screen and increase the time they can spend with families.

Committee members were informed that GM have now worked together to develop a Greater Manchester wide Care Leaver Offer. Along with the

Mayors Campaign which has made Care Leavers exempt from paying Council Tax.

Learning and Inclusion

Julian Kramer advised members that the review due to start is a large lean service review. He informed all members that learning outcomes take time to measure, however, in the interim officers have trained every school on the new Ofsted framework. This is a starting point for Bury Council to defend their reputation and continue to achieve high parental satisfaction. Members were informed that Karen Dolton, Executive Director Children and Young People, has commissioned a peer review of work.

Discussion about EHC plans took place and it was confirmed that officers have met with the Department for Education and have now made good progress. A joint commissioning team now meets regarding EHC plans prior to them being published.

A question arose regarding elected member involvement on the SEN Partnership Board. It was advised that the Board had achieved the compliance function. A recent report on governance has been concluded by Karen Dolton, Executive Director Children and Young People.

Transport

Julien Kramer informed the members that a review of transport is taking place which seeks to understand the Council's statutory duties. He stated that current transport offers go beyond statutory requirements with emphasis on a wide spread offers as opposed to targeted in-depth support. An interim report has been produced and it evidences that policies seem to lack the clarity required to make effective decisions.

Financial efficacy is an area within the service review. Transport is being reviewed to modernise services in line with a 21st Century service. An early review of transport suggests we seek further understanding of both in Borough and out of Borough placements. To reduce out of borough placements by bringing provision internally. This will support children and young people to stay closer to home, along with being more economically friendly.

Key areas for delivering this aspect of service redesign was outlined:

- Increasing the local placement offer including improving the skills and economy
- Reducing transportation costs
- Promoting and empowering independent transport costs
- Commissioning parents and carers to use their own transport

It was agreed:

1. Tony Decrop to attend the next meeting to update following the launch of a Practice Hub of Excellence on the 04th February 2020.
2. That members should be on the SEN Partnership Board
3. Julien Kramer to share the Governance paper with members of the Committee.
4. To share the paper with details of the lean service review.

5. Julien Kramer to check if penalties for taking a child out of school in term time will be increasing.
6. That in the Borough placements would be better for children and young people as long journeys do not set students up well for a school day.
7. Councillor T Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Tony Decrop – Assistant Director Social Care and Safeguarding, Sandra Bruce – Assistant Director Early Help and School Readiness and Julien Kramer – Interim Assistant Director of Education and Inclusion all be thanked for their attendance.

CS.05 FUTURE MEETING DATES

Future items to appear on the agenda were discussed and decided upon.

It was agreed:

The next meeting will focus on data:

1. Permanent exclusion figures (for the last five years) including analysis on age and if possible School.
2. Managed moves
3. Home Schooling
4. Persistent absences
5. MASH and Referrals

COUNCILLOR S SOUTHWORTH

Chair (Note: the meeting started at 5.30pm and ended at 19.05)