

## **SCRUTINY - 20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2022 PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

Q1. Andrew Luxton

Bury Council recently had an inadequate OFSTED rating with the report stating 'there are serious failings which leave too many children at risk of harm in Bury'

At the Council Cabinet meeting last week, the Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills said this was a managerial issue and not a political issue. Given they are the Cabinet Member who have final responsibility for ensuring children's services are fit for purpose, do they not believe that they are responsible or accountable in any way?

RESPONSE –

The Cabinet Member reported that this was a management failure not a political failure.

As Cabinet member I have facilitated a Peer Review, lead by Linda Clegg which identified a number of significant challenges, including workforce and caseload issues.

A number of these issues were also identified by Ofsted.

Subsequently I have as Cabinet Member engaged with the staff and taken a report to Cabinet which included details of the improvement journey which has already commenced.

As Cabinet Member I have addressed developing and improving the relationship with those working in the Local Authority and social care. As well as meeting with Head Teachers, attendance at Scrutiny tonight, meeting with the Department for Education and Ofsted.

Q2. Emmajane Okocha

How many SEND children are currently out of school in Bury including: those with no school place and those with an allocated place but are unable to attend or attending an alternate provision due to their needs not being met?

RESPONSE – The question is a complex one and a response requires more detailed consideration which can be picked up when the Scrutiny Committee receives an update on SEND and Project Safety Valve at its next meeting. In addition, a written response will be sent directly once the specifics asked for have been further clarified.

That said, significant work to transform the experience of children with SEND, and that of their parents is being undertaken through Project Safety Valve.

This includes strengthening capacity and improving systems and processes in relation to Education Health and Care Plan assessment.

In addition, there is work underway to improve Special Educational Needs and Disability sufficiency including enhancing the continuum of provision by increasing access to SEMH (Social Emotional Mental Health) Resource provision, and the establishment of two new Special Schools.

In respect to the specific question, there are a number of historic SEND cases including some quite complex SEND cases that are currently being reviewed. A small number of these are going through the tribunal process where there is dispute over the provision within the EHCP plan.

We are in the process of reviewing all complex cases including children without a place, and those with poor attendance.

Alongside this, we have co-produced an anxiety-based school avoidance pathway with extensive input from the Education Psychology service to support children back into school.

As I have already stated we will ask for clarification over some of the numbers asked for and respond directly. I am also conscious that I do not want to give information which allows for individual children to be identified. Therefore, as stated, officers will respond directly once they have sought clarification on the specific asks and we will report on SEND in the next scrutiny meeting when a full report will be tabled and will include the steps being taken to resolve individual cases where parents and children feel that they are unable to access the named provision.

Q3. - Emma Scott

QUESTION – Bury is the only Borough in Greater Manchester which does not provide an Epilepsy Nurse, when will constituents be given access to this service like other authorities and what is the timeframe for this vital service?

RESPONSE – A review into this matter has been initialised by Health. Timescales for completion of the review are not yet firm as the system is still responding to compounding pressures in health due to the pandemic. However, we are committed to completing this by April 22.

Q4 - Jack Turner

QUESTION – “How many contracts has Early Break received without a public tender process taking place, through Bury Council and Health; Please can you name the contacts, their lengths and their amounts per year.”

RESPONSE - Early Break is part of a consortium that has a contract with Bury Council for provision of a Drugs and Alcohol Substance Misuse Service. It is an all-age service of which Early Break provides the service for children and young people (it includes Holding Families). It was a fully tendered process.

Early Break have 2 contract variations via the CCG

Contract name MHIE (GM funded)

This contract was for emotional health and wellbeing practitioners in high schools this currently provides practitioners supporting all 13 high schools.

This contract length is (1/10 2020-1/8/ 2022)

Contract value £149,872

In response to the mental health crisis investment was secured last September to increase provision in children’s mental health services. A contract variation with Early Break for the services of increased

Community based CYP mental health support

Closing the Gap community transition support

Bereavement and Loss Counselling

Proud Trust (LGBTQ) support

Pre and Post Diagnostic support

Contract length is 1/10/21 until the 30/09/24. Value is £166.025 per annum.

Q5. Ermen Trout

QUESTION – The post diagnostic contract is a subcontract of CAHMS (formally Healthy Young Minds), commissioned by Pennine Care. The contract holder is First Point Family Support Services. Where is the scrutiny over the quality of this service?

RESPONSE – Quarterly contract monitoring meetings are in place with Pennine and First Point

Q6. April Fenton

The annual report for Virtual Schools references that a Prince's Trust course was brought to Bury.

Can the Cabinet Member for Children Young People and Skills explain what this course was and how the course supported young people.

**RESPONSE** This was a four-week personal development programme for 16-25 year olds which focused on improving key skills such as confidence, teamwork and communication. It was specifically aimed at hard-to-reach young people who were not in education, employment and training and very unlikely to become engaged without additional support. It ran twice-weekly in June at the New Kershaw Centre and included activities such as cooking, money management, outdoor activities, teambuilding, employability skills, first aid, food hygiene and sport, tailored to the group's needs and wishes. We linked with the CCG to offer follow-on work experience and the Prince's Trust supported the young people after the programme. It was offered to our care experienced young people. Four of them enrolled on the programme, two completed it and one went on to become enrolled in education, employment or training (EET).

Q6. Kiera Delany

SEND Provision

RESPONSE

The Director reported that the Council is on a journey with SEND there are a number of challenges, as Director I will focus on reviewing all aspects which has commenced with a recently commissioned Speech and Language review. Mental health – understand that people will wish to only tell the story once. As Director I have met with yourself and will continue to meet and will ensure action and the Council continues to reach out to parents, and include them in the development of the local strategic area action plan. Please be assured there is real commitment and energy for change.