

Minutes of:	CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Date of Meeting:	2 February 2023
Present:	Councillor C Boles (in the Chair) Councillors A Booth, U Farooq, N Frith, L McBriar, T Pilkington and J Rydeheard
Also in attendance:	Councillor E FitzGerald and Councillor T Tariq (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health, and Wellbeing) Will Blandamer, Sean Walsh, Isobel Booter, Jane Case, Jacqui Dennis and Chloe Ashworth.
Public Attendance:	Two members of the public were present at the meeting.
Apologies for Absence:	Councillor D Berry, Councillor J Lancaster, Richards and Councillor M Whitby, Councillor E FitzGerald, Jeanette Richards and Helen Chadwick

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies are noted above.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Pilkington, declared an interest with CAMHS as he has a child registered with an EHCP within the authority.

3 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 24th November 2022 be approved as a correct and accurate record.

Matters arising:

1. At the last meeting a recommendation on "Foster Carer Professional Fees, Maintenance Allowances and Incentives" was put forward for Cabinet on 11th January 2023, this has since been moved to 15th March.
2. An update on CAMHS be brought to the next Committee and this is on the agenda.

4 PUBLIC QUESTIONS

Notice had been received of 2 questions.

Questioner	Topic	Responding
Ms. Sarah Garbett	EHC Email account	Councillor Smith
Mr. Clarence	CAMHS	Jane Case

In addition, two members of the public attended, and one member of the public asked a question.

Ms Delaney attended and asked the following question.

As the success rate of local authority tribunals was recently documented to be around 3.7% does this go against your duty to support and identify needs of the most vulnerable. Instead, often forcing unrepresented parents to tribunal for review following EHC needs assessment is detrimental to many and could be considered negligent of your duties. To establish trust with parents and carers would it not be better to avoid the stress of tribunal in the first place?

In response Councillor Smith apologised and advised that she understands tribunals can be very stressful. Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills advised, the service has worked quickly to work in co-production with parents and have seen that since bringing in the parent voice there is a significant reduction in tribunals. Isobel advised that Bury Council currently has two historic tribunals and have not had any new tribunal requests for six months. As a service Bury is delighted with the progress following the establishment of the new team. Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead, Inclusion & Special Educational Needs & Disabilities advised because of learning from tribunals he has commissioned an officer to do an audit screening of all tribunals over the last three years, reasons why and the outcomes. Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead, advised once this work is complete, he will feed it back into the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

5 MEMBER QUESTIONS

There were no member questions.

6 ASSURANCE REPORT ON CAMHS SERVICE AND LINKS BETWEEN HEALTH AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Councillor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing began by introducing the item on Children and Young Peoples Mental Health in Bury and the link between Children's and Health services. Councillor Tariq highlighted multiple joint working practices between health and Children's services including joint portfolio meetings.

Will Blandamer, Executive Director for Adult Care and Health and Deputy Place Based Lead provided an overview of his role, the work he supports regarding CAMHS and the work on health and children's services working together. He advised that he jointly Chairs the Children's Strategic Partnership meeting with Jeanette Richards, Executive Director of Children and Young People, routinely attends the Children's Improvement Board to support the delivery of the Improvement Plan and a partner on the Bury Children's Safeguarding Board.

Will Blandamer, Executive Director for Adult Care and Health and Deputy Place Based Lead also passed on notes submitted in advance by Councillor FitzGerald, Chair of Health Scrutiny Committee. He advised Councillor FitzGerald wished to highlight that the Health Scrutiny Committee has had multiple opportunities to review Children's services in the context of the review of NHS Services. Health Scrutiny ensures a focus on children and young people and currently have two sub committees that both focus on children and young people. Councillor

FitzGerald also wished for it to be noted that she will be attending the next Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Jane Case, Programme Manager, NHS Greater Manchester provided an overview of the presentation submitted within the agenda pack.

Councillor Boles thanked officers and Councillor Tariq for their updates and opened to questions.

Councillor McBriar asked what approach Stockport Council are taking to have their reduction in waiting times. Jane Case, Programme Manager advised they have significantly invested in their service. Part of Bury's plan is to get early help in by ensuring triage is done correctly, needs are met, and children are on the right pathway to begin with.

Councillor Frith questioned how quickly the levelling up investment will take to make an impact. In response Jane Case, Programme Manager advised work has now been done with Pennine and now needs to be taken to a Greater Manchester level, however recruitment is an issue and there is a shortage of staff.

Councillor Rydeheard asked where the mental health support team currently covers. In response Jane Case, Programme Manager advised the team covers 32% of our schools in Bury who will then move on to other schools. Councillor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing advised this is typical of all Greater Manchester authorities and is the standard process.

Georgia Murphy, Youth Cabinet representative asked questions about children and young people receiving support, reducing waiting times and how schools without the support are being helped. Jane Case Programme Manager advised referrals can go through at any time and then cases are triaged. The Committee were informed that support for Schools who are not included currently is still available. An initiative around mental health practitioners is being considered for additional support to work with children and young people via self-referral and drop-in services.

Councillor Pilkington raised questions surrounding the petition "Stop children and adolescent mental health services denying support for autistic kids" and asked how much we can influence the support of the services for Bury residents. He also asked what support is available for mental health for an autistic child and if CAMHS now offers this. He welcomed the language used by Jane Case, Programme Manager regarding neurodevelopmental pathways but highlighted that CAMHS website does refer to autism and ADHD as a problem. In response Jane Case, Programme Manager advised work is currently undergoing to see how much in our gift from commissioning level however she assured members she wants to build up the therapeutic level and there is also a need for psychological therapies for children with autism. She confirmed there is work taking place on the wider language used as part of the SEND agenda. Michael Kemp, Strategic Lead advised there is an autism in schools project to bring together the parent community, schools, health and social care to shape how we deliver services in school, and there are plans to grow this provision. Work is happening on the assessments process which is to support children and families whilst they are working on an intervention or diagnosis, by adding in early help. Councillor Pilkington finished by adding; can neurodivergent children be part of the decision making and conversations.

Councillor Farooq questioned what an appropriate waiting time is for CAMHS and what is our aim. In response Jane Case, Programme manager advised that there are national guidelines, but no Greater Manchester team are meeting these guidelines, she did advise a meeting is soon taking place to discuss what our aspirational target should be and this will be provided once decided.

Councillor Boles questioned how the improvements documented will continue; in response Jane Case, Programme Manager advised work will continue to take place and regular contact will be maintained. Michael Kemp Strategic Lead advised work is taking place to create transformation and a legacy between both services.

In conclusion Councillor Boles, Chair praised good growing relationships between children's and health services and thanked all for their attendance and contributions.

7 SCHOOL SYSTEM REPORT INCLUDING AN UPDATE ON THE LEVELLING UP FUNDING

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People provided an overview of the School System Report. The report provided an update on the Bury school system and the commitment and aim for all Bury's children to be safe, happy, healthy and lead successful lives through improving education outcomes.

The Local Authority has an agreed approach to the risk assessment of Bury schools with a remit to intervene in maintained schools that do not offer a good quality of education and a responsibility to work closely with schools that are at risk or require additional support. A preventative model of early intervention, rooted in local intelligence and evidence of impact, is at the heart of Bury's approach.

Councillor Smith then opened up to questions from Committee members.

Councillor Rydeheard asked questions regarding school clusters and if we know when sponsored academies will have their inspections. In response Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People advised that there are clusters that are being reintroduced on a strength and geographical base. Isobel Booter Director of Education and Skills advised she can calculate the dates of expected reinspection following the meeting.

Cllr McBriar stated over 50% of students in Bury are not at a good or better school, he asked how we are trying to narrow the gap to the national average. In response Councillor Smith advised the schools are no longer with the remit of grant-maintained Schools so it is more difficult to influence. Isobel Booter, Director for Education and Skills advised the directorate focuses on the statutory function around attendance, SEND and providing good quality advice polices to its schools including quality assurance you can ensure an improving performance of schools.

Councillor Frith asked a question regarding the recording and communication to parents to have their say in performance. In response members were advised by Councillor Thorpe, Deputy Cabinet Member for Children and Young People advised leadership in schools is critical and if they have good leadership, they are likely to be a good school.

Councillor Frith asked about when Skills Strategy will be implemented. Councillor Smith advised the register of children who are not in attendance in school is being worked on and being centrally recorded. Councillor Smith also advised the skills strategy is within the leader's portfolio. Isobel Booter, Executive Director for Education and Skills advised that a Skills lead has been appointed and will be leading on the all age strategy.

Georgia Murphy, Youth Cabinet Representative asked what influence the teacher's opinions on reasons for failures are given. In response Councillor Smith advised the teachers role is important and they provide a leadership role.

Councillor Boles as Chair of the Committee thanked members for their contributions.

8 IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Councillor Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People provided an update on the Improvement Plan. Members were provided with an update on the progress of the Children's Services Improvement Plan that was put in place in response to the findings of the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) carried out by Ofsted between 25 October 2021 and 5 November 2021, which judged services to be inadequate.

Members were advised a letter from the Department for Education was received moments before the meeting but from first look it was positive and as expected.

Councillor McBriar, wished to welcome and commend the recruitment of the candidates from South Africa who will work in Bury. However, he asked how many positions are yet to be filled. Sean Walsh Director of Social Care Practice advised 23 have been recruited and their experience is vast. We expect around 20 as not all may come to fruition. With the recruitment of these prospective staff members Bury Council could half their agency recruitment rate. Councillor Farooq asked if this initiative can be explored to improve our whole workforce. In response Sean Walsh, Director of Social Care Practice advised we need to wait to see if this is still successful in the upcoming years, and if so, there is no reason this can be used again if it is the best way to recruit.

Councillor McBriar asked what the average Social Worker case load is currently. Sean Walsh Director of Social Care Practice advised the average is around 18, however the figure is subjective as some staff do not work full time, so the reality is the highest is around 25 and the mean is around 20 so the trajectory is coming down.

Councillor Boles asked about advertising costs and if they will be reviewed following alternative methods used. In response Sean Walsh, Director of Social Care Practice advised all methods of recruitment and advertisement is being reviewed constantly. The social media footprint is being worked on and is a relatively cost-effective option currently.

Members asked if they receive a copy of the letter received from the Department for Education.

Councillor Boles thanked everyone for their attendance.

COUNCILLOR C BOLES
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.07 pm and ended at 8.50 pm)

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