

1. K Hampson

Question:

Why is it I have attended scrutiny many times and in one of the meetings last year June, Lucy Smith she breached my confidentiality and my data in scrutiny meeting and I log this and since June last year I am still waiting official response despite chasing this many times.

Response:

The Monitoring Officer has responded to this complaint. If the complainant wishes to discuss the outcome of the complaint the Monitoring Officer is happy to do so.

Other members of the public were in attendance and asked questions:

2. J Kinloch

Question:

My question is to ask Councillors views on the recent turn over of senior staff in the Childrens Services Team. I would be interested to know if Councillors are aware of the hugely negative impact the departures have on SEND Parents in Bury because behind statistics presented to Councillors are parents, children and families who are struggling hugely and often find it impossible to get answers from the Childrens services team.

Response:

In response Councillor Smith Cabinet Member for Children and Young People wished to place on record a thanks to the senior officers outlined in the question for the work they have done in Bury. Members were informed that these officers have driven through improvement, and advised the Committee that as Cabinet Member I am equally confident that officers in their place in the future will build on these improvements. We have had leadership in place who are committed to change, and this will continue.

3. A Marrek

Question:

A few months ago, my MP James Daly made a comment in the press around struggling children being the result of 'crap' parenting. I understand the Committee have no jurisdiction over Mr Daly, however it is a clear example of rife parent blame that is evident across all Children's Services in Bury. My question is to know how Councillors feel with Bury being held out in the national news attracting headlines because of this type of comment.

Response:

In response Councillor Smith Cabinet Member for Children and Young People thanked the questioner for highlighting this matter. Whilst Mr Daly is not a member of the Council, I would like to put on record that his comment is incorrect and inaccurate. This was brought at a full Council meeting following the incident.

4. K Delaney

Question:

With concerning information circulating including recent findings from special needs Jungle showing that only 2% of Bury's safety valve funding for SEND can be traced to spending on actual SEND provision, the rest being spent on service transformation consultants (£1.26 million) and recruitment agencies (£500,000).

Can you please comment how this type of spending provides support for families in Bury? Can you please confirm that the reduction in out of borough placements and EHCP's refusal to assess cases are not due to a restriction imposed on the safety valve funding and if there are such restrictions, please can members of the Committee and parents be provided with a copy of those for scrutiny.

Answer:

In response Councillor Smith advised she had seen the document referred to within the question. Councillor Smith confirmed that a copy of the breakdown will be provided to the member of the public following the meeting as this had been provided to Bury2Gether.

Councillor Smith clarified that the money is for transformation and not service delivery and to bring down spend and improve sufficiency within the department.

The purpose of Project Safety Valve is to obtain efficiencies in the services. Whilst we as a Council do need to get value for money, we still have the child at the heart of everything we do.