

CHILDRENS SERVICES SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Monday 11th March 2019 at 6 p.m.

Conference Room 2, Council House, Walsall

Committee Members Present

Councillor A. Nawaz (Chair)
Councillor M. Statham
Councillor D. Barker
Councillor E. Russell
Councillor S. Neville
Councillor S. Samra
Councillor V. Waters

Portfolio Holders Present

Councillor T. Wilson - Children's and Health and Well Being

Officers Present

C. Boughton	Head of Safeguarding
A. Potts	Assistant Director
J. Jones	Group Manager
R. Homer	Group Manager
B. Barnett-Jones	Family Drug and Alcohol Project Manager
S. Brake	Walsall CCG
Z. Gilbert	Dudley Walsall Mental Health Trust
M. Foster	Dudley Walsall Mental Health Trust
S. Whitmore	CSE Manager
N. Gough	Democratic Services Officer

51/18 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor B. Allen, Councillor T. Jukes, and Councillor J. Fitzpatrick.

52/18 Substitutions

None.

53/18 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

54/18 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to be considered in private session.

55/18 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 28th January 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record.

56/18 Children Missing from Home, Care and Education

The CSE Manager introduced the report, which provided an overview of new arrangements for monitoring, oversight and management of missing children, and return home interviews in Walsall. The Committee were informed of the risks associated with children going missing, and that there may be significant issues behind why a child may go missing which can differ significantly for each child.

The Committee were informed that West Midlands Police had produced a revised policy and procedural guidance, which contained new categories of risk with the removal of the 'absent' category. It was stressed by Officers that the Council did not rely on the police categorisation and made its own assessment of the missing child and took action accordingly.

Members were advised by the Head of Safeguarding that return home interviews were now completed by an in-house team. This team responded to missing episodes and delivered return home interviews. Return home interviews helped the Council to understand and address the reasons a child may run away. It was noted that some children declined return home interviews and that the team worked closely with education and there were plans to link with pastoral support in schools.

A discussion was held in relation to the capacity of Officers to complete return to work interviews. It was confirmed by Officers that if capacity of the team affected performance, action would be taken to address this. A performance framework was being developed to capture the data.

A Member queried whether the reasons why children went missing whilst in residential care and the numbers of children missing were recorded. The CSE Manager stated that this could be circulated to Members outside of the Committee.

Resolved

That the Committee are provided with a briefing note on data in respect of children who go missing from care and/or home.

57/18 Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS)

Representatives from the CCG and Mental Health Trust tabled a report on CAMHS (tabled). It was agreed by Members that this would be taken to the next meeting of the Committee to ensure that full consideration was given to the information presented.

Representatives from Dudley Walsall Mental Health Trust provided an overview of CAMHS and referred to chart 1.1 contained within the report, which outlined the CAMHS team structure. Members were informed that the service was multi-disciplinary and treated a wide range of illnesses. Due to rising demand the positive steps programme had been expanded and the pathway was now streamlined.

The Committee were informed that the number of referrals to CAMHS was unprecedented, in addition at certain periods such as during examinations referrals would also rise. Currently around 12 children a week were diagnosed with ASD in Walsall, a total of 453 since October 2015. In 2017/18 there had been a 13% increase in referrals, and in 2018/19 there had been a 15% increase.

In response to a query from a Member asking why the number of children with ASD/ADHD had increased, the committee were advised that there was no specific explanation and that it may be due to better awareness and improved access to the service. However, Walsall CAMHS were diagnosing more children with ASD/ADHD than the national average.

Complaints received centred around the length of time to diagnose ADHD/ASD and the length of time to diagnose. However Members were advised that the CAMHS service had recently achieved 'outstanding' in the caring category with an overall 'good' as rated by the CQC.

Resolved

That the Committee had a further opportunity to consider the CAMHS report at the next meeting of the Committee.

58/18 Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC)

The Family Drug and Alcohol Project Manager informed the Committee that the report provided an update on the progress of plans to establish a Family Drug and Alcohol Court in the Wolverhampton Justice Centre. This was a collaboration between Walsall Council, Dudley Council and Sandwell's Children's Trust to commission a joint service to deliver the FDAC intervention in partnership with the Wolverhampton justice centre. The Portfolio Holder informed the Committee that a report requesting Cabinet approval was due to be considered the following week. It was hoped that this approach would produce a more positive outcome and offer a different way of working. It was also need that Walsall would be the lead Authority.

The Committee were informed by the Drug and Alcohol Project Manager that the FDAC worked extensively with parents through a multi-disciplinary team with regular

progress meetings. Focus was placed on stabilisation, relationships, and tackling the drivers of substance misuse.

A Member queried who would administer the FDAC and how would it be sustained in the future. The Committee were advised by the Family Drug and Alcohol Project Manager that this would be a commissioned service from a specialist multi-disciplinary team. The Portfolio Holder confirmed that there was a clear commitment from the Council to fund the FDAC. Officers explained that it was anticipated that 15 families would be referred in the first 12 months.

Resolved

That Scrutiny notes and supports the contents of the report and the current activity to establish a collaboration between Walsall Council, Dudley Council and Sandwell's Children's Trust to commission jointly a service to deliver the FDAC intervention in partnership with the Wolverhampton Justice centre.

59/18 Young Carers

The Group Manager informed the Committee that the report provided a national and local introductory overview on young carers. It detailed the current arrangements for identifying and supporting young carers.

The Committee were informed that currently the Council were aware of 158 young carers; although it was thought that, there were more young carers that were not known to the Council, as there were challenges with data collection. The Committee were assured that a lot of positive work was being done with young carers. However the offer to young carer's and their families was being revised and a joint protocol would be introduced to better address their needs. A cross directorate 'Young Carers Task Group' was to be set up to ensure a whole partnership approach was taken. It was agreed that a further report on this would be taken to a future meeting of the Committee.

A Member questioned if the outcomes for young carers were recorded and it was confirmed that this did need considering in the future. Members requested that this was included as part of the considerations of the task group.

Resolved

- 1. The report be noted,**
- 2. A further report on Young Carers is taken to Committee in 6 months.**

60/18 Corporate Financial Performance – Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring Position 2018/19

The Finance Officer stated that the report informed the Committee of the forecast financial position for 2018/19 for services within their areas of responsibility. The forecast overspend for Children’s Services prior to any mitigating action and use of reserves was £1.694m. Corporate and earmarked reserves were being used to fund specific agreed items of £0.843m reducing the forecast overspend to £0.851m. The directorate had implemented an action plan of an equivalent £0.772m, reducing the net forecast revenue position to an overspend of £0.079m.

Recommendation

- 1. The Committee note the revenue and capital forecast for the 2018/19 year-end financial position for services under the remit of the Children’s Services and Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee.**
- 2. The Committee note the actions being taken to address the areas of over spend.**

61/18 Work Programme 2018/19

The Work programme was agreed subject to the inclusion of CAMHS on the agenda of the next Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

62/18 Forward Plans

The forward plans were noted.

There being no further business the meeting terminated at 7.40 p.m.

Signed:

Date: