

Contact Officer: Yolande Myers

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday 9th October 2017

Present: Councillor Cahal Burke (Chair)
Councillor Donna Bellamy
Councillor Fazila Fadia
Councillor Paul Kane
Councillor Amanda Pinnock

Apologies: Councillor Robert Light
Fatima Khan-Shah (Co-Optee)

Co-optees Dale O'Neill

In attendance: Councillor Masood Ahmedd, Cabinet Member - Childre
Councillor Shabir Pandor, Deputy Leader
Louise Gatfield, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Moorend Academy
Val Flintoff, Learning Partner (System leadership)
Learning Services Lead
Lee Hamilton, Prevent Co-ordinator
Sal Tariq, Service Director - Children and Families
Alison Clarkson, Prevent Education Officer
Sue Grigg, Directorate Performance Lead - Children's Services & Public Health

1 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting of the Children's Scrutiny Panel held on 9th August 2017 were approved as a correct record subject to amendment at item 4 where the Panel recognised that Social Worker recruitment was not just about financial recompense, but the package of support that went alongside.

2 Membership of the Committee

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robert Light and Fatima Khan-Shah.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

It was agreed that all agenda items be considered in public.

5 PSHE / Prevent in Schools and Further Educational Settings

Val Flintoff, Learning Partner (System Leadership) provided the Panel with a report around the current work in schools relating to Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) and Prevent. Lee Hamilton, Prevent Co-ordinator, Alison Clarkson, Prevent Education Officer and Louise Gatfield, Designated Safeguarding Lead at Moorend Academy also attended for the meeting. Cllr Shabir Pandor attended the meeting as the Cabinet lead for Prevent.

The report highlighted the work being carried out around:-

- The inclusion of Prevent within PSHE education and citizenship education in Kirklees schools
- How students feel and react following receipt of Prevent teaching
- The inclusion of far right extremism in Prevent resources for schools

Ms Flintoff informed the Panel that Kirklees Council was a local authority partner of the PSHE Association until 2018. Being a member of the association gave schools access to free guidance and resources, however it was up to each individual school as to which resources they used and in what way.

Following questions from the Panel, it was noted that there was not a consistent approach throughout schools and that it was down to each individual school as to what, when and if they taught PSHE and Prevent. The teaching of the subject was not statutory, except for citizenship which was a statutory subject in secondary schools.

Ms Flintoff advised the Panel that there were very different models of PSHE being taught across Kirklees, and they varied in quality. Cllr Shabir Pandor informed the Panel that Cabinet was in the process of reviewing Kirklees Council's relationship with schools to clarify expectations, and what they could expect from the Local Authority, with a view to standardising a programme.

Lee Hamilton informed the Panel that the Prevent team could offer support and can go into schools to deliver Prevent training, which included subjects such as belief, tolerance and building resilience. Alternatively, a school could choose to get a third party organisation to deliver the training. The Panel questioned whether far right extremism was addressed in the training, and Mr Hamilton confirmed that unless school's make specific requests all forms of extremism are covered. Mr Hamilton also informed the Panel that Kirklees had secured funding to employ a Prevent Education Officer, until 31 March 2018. The postholder, Ms Clarkson, would focus purely on school support. The Panel asked Mr Hamilton how the Prevent team measured its success and impact. Mr Hamilton explained that the team request feedback on the training from students and schools.

Children's Scrutiny Panel - 9 October 2017

The Panel then heard from Louise Gatfield, designated Safeguarding Lead at Moorend Academy. Ms Gatfield praised the work done by the Prevent team and informed the Panel that the team was very accessible and would look at the whole picture presented to assess whether the school had dealt with the situation sufficiently or whether a referral was required. Ms Gatfield explained that the curriculum was very full, but Moorend Academy felt it was important to include the teaching of PHSE and Prevent. All students at the school were taught PHSE which included British values, safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism. Ms Gatfield explained that it was often the pupils themselves that came up with the questions they wanted answering. One of the questions would be taken forward and everyone would become involved in the discussion. Ms Gatfield explained that children have enquiring minds and their conversations should not be closed down.

The Panel asked how Moorend Academy measured its success and Ms Gatfield explained that the school captured this a number of ways, including using Survey Monkey and paper evaluations. Ultimately success was measured by pupils feeling empowered to talk. The Panel questioned whether the school had received any criticism around the training, or whether pupils had been offended by the content. Ms Gatfield explained that they had not experienced any negativity and the schools experience was that the pupils wanted to talk about the issues contained with PHSE and Prevent. Ms Flintoff advised the Panel that it was important to have skilled, competent and confident teachers.

The Panel continued to explore the take up of Prevent training in schools. Mr Hamilton explained to the Panel that schools were not targeted i.e. asked if they wanted any training, but schools themselves approached the Prevent team, sometimes with a specific area that they would like to be covered. The Panel asked if contact was made with schools to find out the reasons why they don't want to engage. Alison Clarkson, Prevent Education Officer, explained that they now had the capacity to approach schools and she was currently undertaking a school mapping exercise. Ms Clarkson informed the Panel that in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 in Dewsbury, 50% of secondary schools had engaged with the Prevent team, and this figure would increase to 60% by the end of Quarter 3. In Huddersfield the Q1 and Q2 figure was 38% and would be 61% by the end of Q3. Ms Clarkson informed the Panel that the success rate in Batley was lower, but as yet figures were unavailable.

The Panel enquired how many Channel referrals had been made, but Mr Hamilton explained that the information was restricted and held nationally by the National Counter Terrorism Security Office.

Following questions from the Panel around the training of teachers, and Ms Gatfield explained that teachers and associated staff all received training in how to deliver Prevent training. Ms Clarkson also informed the Panel that they had a date to visit PGCE students at the University to speak to them about Prevent.

The Panel asked whether there was a process in place to look at the pathway from identification to conclusion and whether there was a common thread. Mr Hamilton explained that each individual and situation was different and often there was no single factor in common. Cllr Pandor, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Prevent Lead,

explained that there was still work to do and there will be work ongoing around the Prevent brand.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the work relating to the teaching of PSHE and Prevent be noted.
- 2) That the Panel is satisfied with the current content and outcomes of PSHE and Prevent training in Kirklees based schools.

6 Leeds and Kirklees Improvement Partnership Report in BS Folder

The Panel received the Leeds and Kirklees Improvement Partnership Report. Sal Tariq, Service Director for Children and Young People explained that it was still in draft form, but that it had been shared between both Local Authorities and the Department for Education. He informed the Panel that there were a number of small issues to be finalised, but the final report was in essence what had been presented to the Panel. Mr Tariq highlighted the 27 areas that Ofsted set out as major and urgent concerns and emphasised that it would be a whole system response to improve services. The Panel was informed that the indicators gave the picture in key areas.

Children Looked After

The Panel was told that referral rates in previous years had been markedly lower in Kirklees than those of its neighbours and nationally. There had now been a spike in the number of children on Child Protection Plans but this was to be expected as the local issues had prompted a risk adverse approach. Once confidence in the service returned, the number would settle back to an amount similar to that seen nationally.

The Panel noted that the Improvement Programme was based on ten priorities, with an action plan for each priority. In order to understand the issues, a simplified approach was being taken. Mr Tariq explained that this did not mean the plan was missing detail, but it was a way to easily highlight the important information.

Mr Tariq informed the Panel that the service would be looking at external placements outside of Kirklees as these were not necessarily the best option for children, and were very expensive. A review would be undertaken and the proportion of children placed outside of Kirklees would be reduced safely and appropriately.

Early Help and Edge of Care

The Panel heard that the service would be seeking additional funding for Early Help and Edge of Care as this was central to the overall improvement. Mr Tariq explained that if families received help before difficulties became entrenched, it could avoid them drifting into care.

Front Door

The Panel was informed that the Front Door would be examined to see how professionals contacted Children's Services. Currently there are a number of processes that other professionals go through before a social worker responds, and this would be streamlined in future so that professionals had immediate access to a social worker. Following questions from the Panel about how decision making practice would be improved, Mr Tariq explained that currently there was a disproportionate number of referrals undergoing assessment to decide whether services are required. If it became clear that there were no services or further work required, the conclusion would be that the service had the wrong referrals coming through the front door. The Panel asked how this was assessed and Mr Tariq explained that a weekly referral review was taking place so that patterns of referral could be considered.

Workforce

The Panel was told that the number of agency staff was still high and work was underway to reduce the numbers. Mr Tariq explained that a good career development programme had been introduced to attract people to work in Kirklees. A manageable workload was very important to attracting social workers. Mr Tariq explained that the work to reduce agency staff had only just begun but a recent recruitment exercise had seen a number of permanent staff being employed. However it was recognised that it would take time to reduce the number of agency staff. Mr Tariq informed the Panel that he would bring a further update on the use of agency staff to a future Panel meeting.

The Panel was³ informed that the social work team had moved from Riverside Court to Civic Centre 1 and staff were now feeling much more positive about their accommodation. The management team met regularly with front line staff and the staff had begun to receive positive feedback, following a period when they had felt criticised by the process. The Panel heard that staff were ready to draw a line under the past and get on with the next phase where they will be expectations about the quality of service. Mr Tariq explained that staff morale was now improving and there was a feeling of hope amongst staff. The Panel was informed that staff were aware of what was happening in each authority locally, and it was hoped that information would start to filter through that Kirklees is a good place to work.

The Panel asked if clear career paths and succession planning was considered as part of the improvement plan. Mr Tariq advised that there were gaps in leadership, but the service was beginning to identify people to progress. However it is clear that some of these staff did not want to leave the frontline service completely, and so the service would look to create leadership roles that would still incorporate frontline social work.

The Panel commented that in the current climate there was a move away from lower management but felt that when such posts were in place it created a sense of ownership and increased productivity. The Panel also questioned whether a financial package could be put in place to attract more staff. Mr Tariq explained that there was a balance to be struck, it was important to create the conditions for staff to perform at their best, and staff didn't always move or stay in work for financial

reasons. Kirklees had historically been one of the better paying authorities for social work, but this did not attract candidates to the roles. The use of agency staff cost the service more, and did not always provide staff with the quality and commitment required or needed.

Voice of the Child

The Panel were informed that this was an important part of how the design and development of services would progress. There was a balance around the voice of the child, but there needed to be a conversation with the children in the first instance, and for the service to act on what the child has told them. The Panel commented that although the service report that they are seeing increased confidence there was no contribution from social workers in the success measures. Mr Tariq explained that he would ensure that this was added to the plan.

Leadership

The Panel commented that there was no contribution from social workers concerning their confidence in the Leadership. Mr Tariq agreed that he would ensure that this was added to the plan.

Performance and Quality Assurance

The Panel was informed that there was an enormous amount of performance and quality assurance data. The service was working to pull together the most useful information and the key areas of focus. The Panel asked whether the success measures were achievable with the reductions in funding, and if not, whether they should be included in the improvement plan. Mr Tariq explained that the practice of social work was critical to everything in Children's Services. It required manageable workloads and skilled employees. The aim should always be to keep more children at home with their families as this was morally the right thing to do. This would also result in cost savings.

The Panel heard that there had been a spike in the number of referrals received but as practices improved and needs were met; less children would need to come into the care system. Increased investment in early intervention and prevention would lead to significant financial savings. Mr Tariq explained that when Leeds City Council started its improvement journey, the budget was £60m with staffing being £25m. The budget was now £46m with staffing costs remaining at £25m.

The Panel questioned when the new Liquid Logic computer package would be implemented and Mr Tariq agreed to bring back the training programme to the Panel.

The Panel asked questions about the Problem Solving Court, a national initiative supported by Her Honour Judge Hillier. The Problem Solving Court meant that the Judge has a much more active role with families, including regular court appearances, ensuring engagement and the take up of services offered.

RESOLVED -

- 1) That the Leeds and Kirklees Improvement Partnership report be noted.
- 2) That the input of Social Workers be captured and recorded within the success measures where appropriate.
- 3) That the Panel is given further information relating to:-
 - (i) The sequence of training for Social Workers on the Liquid Logic system
 - (ii) The Problem Solving Court
 - (iii) Front Door – data to show pattern of referrals including those referrals deemed to be inappropriate.

7 Corporate Performance Q4 (2016/17)

The Panel heard from Sue Grigg, Directorate Performance Lead - Children's Services & Public Health that there were 140 indicators from the Corporate Performance Report that were being monitored and reported to the Corporate Parenting Board, Improvement Board and the Scrutiny Panel. The service would wish to avoid duplication of efforts.

Ms Grigg provided the Panel with a draft Directorate Management Team (DMT) report which was clearer, simpler to understand and gave a business critical set of indicators. Ms Grigg informed the Panel that the Q1 report would contain headline actions, integrate the improvement plan targets and have core performance indicators. It was agreed that the final DMT report would be circulated to Panel members once completed.

The Panel asked to what degree the social workers understood the data, in particular how to follow the process of collating data and how important that was to indications of performance. Ms Grigg agreed that there had been a big leap forward in expectations and discussions had taken place with social workers around the importance of the data, which was also evidence of how hard they were working.

Mr Tariq explained that work was being carried out to get to the heart of why performance was being measured so that its purpose could be understood. Once social workers understood the reasons why they had to collect the data, the service would see increased compliance. The Panel recognised that there were a lot of reports to prepare which had implications on officer resources. The Panel was content to receive a simplified report that avoided duplication. Ultimately scrutiny should be focussed on outcomes.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the information relating to Children's Services be noted.
- 2) That the Panel receive future performance information in the new layout format provided at the meeting.

- 3) That the 2017/18 Q1 Performance Information be brought to the next meeting of the Panel

8 Work Programme

The Panel considered the work programme for the Children's Scrutiny Panel.

RESOLVED –

That the updated work programme be noted.

9 Minutes of Corporate Parenting Board

The Panel received for information, the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 20th February, 24th April, 15th May and 17th July.

RESOLVED -

That the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 20th February, 24th April, 15th May and 17th July 2017 be noted.

10 Future Meeting

The Panel noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday 6th November 2017 at 10:00am in the Council Chamber, Huddersfield Town Hall. The meeting would be webcast.