

Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

## **KIRKLEES COUNCIL**

### **CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL**

**Tuesday 6th September 2022**

Present: Councillor Andrew Marchington (Chair)  
Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds  
Councillor James Homewood  
Councillor Paul White

Co-optees Graeme Sunderland

In attendance: Tom Brailsford, Service Director – Children and Families, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships  
Elaine McShane, Service Director – Family Support and Child Protection  
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning & Early Support  
Stewart Horn, Head of Children’s Integrated Commissioning  
Sara Miles, Head of Homes for Children, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance  
Christine Bennett, Head of Assessment & Intervention & Disabled Children’s service  
Kelsey Clark-Davies, Head of Inclusion & Educational Safeguarding  
Emily Parry-Harries, Consultant in Public Health, Head of Public Health  
Ophelia Rix, Head of Safeguarding & Quality Assurance  
Robert Fordyce, Head of Quality Assurance and Practical Development  
Lucy Wearmouth, Acting Head of Improving Population Health  
Paul Harris, Head of Children’s Improvement, Partnerships & Voice  
Gary Wainwright, Commissioning Manager  
Vicky Stadniki, Public Health  
Councillor Elizabeth Smaje  
Councillor Viv Kendrick  
Councillor Carole Pattison

Apologies: Councillor Richard Smith  
Oliver Gibson (Co-Optee)

#### **1 Membership of the Committee**

Apologies were received from Councillor Richard Smith and Oliver Gibson.

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### 2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 12th July be approved as a correct record.

### 3 **Interests**

No interest were declared.

### 4 **Admission of the Public**

All items were considered in public session.

### 5 **Deputations/Petitions**

No deputations or petitions were received.

### 6 **Public Question Time**

No questions were received from members of the public.

### 7 **Changes to the Young Peoples Activity Team (YPAT) Provision**

The Panel received an update on the ongoing changes to the Young Peoples Activity Team (YPAT) provision as part of the ongoing SEND Transformation Programme and the ongoing development of the Short Breaks Offer, which was presented by Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources Improvements and Partnerships), Gary Wainwright, Commissioning Manager and Sara Miles, Head of Homes for Children, Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

Gary Wainwright and Sara Miles advised the Panel that Children's service, Best Start capital funding had an allocation of £5 million for development of children with disability services; Young Peoples Activity Team (short breaks), Elm Grove (long term) and Orchard View (short breaks) provision in Kirklees. By investing in the most vulnerable children and young people, Kirklees provided support to achieve the best possible outcomes.

The Panel was informed that the Young Peoples Activity Team short breaks service supported disabled children and young people aged 5 to 18 with profound and complex needs. The service comprised of out of school clubs, weekend and holiday sessions, and community sessions, which ran from a large council owned building on Havelock Street, Ravensthorpe. The building was shared with Adult Services, learning disability day service provision, and required significant investment. A need for new premises was identified several years ago.

Gary Wainwright further explained that the former children's Place nursery in Ravensthorpe had been selected as the best option due to its location. It was very close to the current building which minimised disruption to the disabled children, and young people and parents who attended. The building size was ideal, the accessibility offered by a single storey building located on a level site, with a secure enclosed outdoor play area made the former Children's Place nursery the ideal preferred choice.

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The new premises were to open in the summer 2023, and provide an opportunity for the facilities to be used more frequently for new additional and alternative uses as below:

- Parent and carer support sessions
- Training sessions
- Supporting older children who were NEET
- Assistive Technology and VR sessions
- Provide a building for health partners that could deliver specialist children's clinic sessions.

Gary Wainwright advised the Panel that over time, the ambition was to identify and establish a second Young Peoples Activity Team building in South Kirklees. The second building would be based on the learning from the new Ravensthorpe building, and the evolving role that in-house short breaks services would play in the overall short breaks market.

The Panel noted the ambition to open a site in South Kirklees and asked a question regarding a similar provision in terms of geography and what impact that had on the service. Gary Wainwright advised that through consultation a clear message from families was that they would travel to Ravensthorpe if they needed to, but having a facility within 30 minutes travel time would be beneficial.

The Panel acknowledged the involvement of young people and asked a question regarding the mechanisms around including them, how they felt, and how that would feed into another facility in South Kirklees. Gary Wainwright advised that the technical assessment skills had been completed along with consulting with parents. The young people had been taken to different places to try out different equipment in the proposal which concluded what would work and what would not work. The South Kirklees facility would be developed on the needs of the children and would be adapted around them. Sara Miles advised the Panel that even at the point of opening the Ravensthorpe site, consultations would not stop. Any learnings made from the Ravensthorpe site would feed into the South Kirklees site.

The Panel thanked the officers for their hard work that had been carried out and recognised the positive impact the facility would have on young people and their families. The Panel also raised an interest in visiting the site once it was open.

### **RESOLVED-**

- That the Panel noted the update.
- That the Panel arrange a visit to the new premises at the Children's Place Nursery, Netherfield Road, Ravensthorpe when fully operational.

## **8 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection - Action Plan and Inspection Outcomes**

The Panel received a report on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection – Action Plan and Inspection Outcomes presented by Tom Brailsford, Service Director – Children and Families, Resources, Improvement and Partnerships and Paul Harris, Head of Children's Improvement, Partnerships & Voice.

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The Panel was informed that on the 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022, the Ofsted inspection report for Kirklees was published. As a result of the findings of the inspection, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector determined that a Written Statement of Action was required due to two significant areas of weakness in the local area's practice, which were:-

- The poor delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (HCP) which did not support the identification of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in children at the earliest opportunity consistently,
- Weaknesses in the area's ability across services and within settings to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND who were in mainstream settings.

The Panel was informed that Kirklees and a SEND partnership accepted and valued the assessment and feedback provided by the independent inspection and recognised that it provided an important benchmark in the implementation of the 2014 SEND reforms.

In 2021 Kirklees produced a plan to strengthen and improve some of its SEND Services. The report provided the context to the inspection and outlined the approach to SEND transformation which predated the inspection outcome and showed the identified issues were already being addressed.

Paul Harris advised the Panel that the operation of the Healthy Child Programme was being reviewed and would be a priority incorporated into the Transformation Plan as a key workstream going forward.

The Panel acknowledged the Transformation Plan and asked a question regarding re-issuing the plan post Ofsted to incorporate the Ofsted report. Tom Brailsford advised that an annual review of the transformation plan was taking place. Officers from the Children's Service had given their feedback to Ofsted on their views on how the letter had been written, which was different to what had been expected following feedback from Ofsted. The Panel noted that the transformation plan had been commended by the DfE as an example of good practice.

The Panel highlighted the waiting times for children with Mental Health difficulties and asked a question on how improvements would be made. Stuart Horne advised that waiting lists were longer than the Service would like to see. Some services had secured additional investment and had procured assessment resources. In terms of mental health services, there had been significant investment for Mental Health in school's teams which had started to take shape and have an impact, the real progress would show in the next year or 2 as the service expanded. Stewart Horn further explained that with regards to CAMHS, the service was undergoing a review and service re-design to make improvements to pathways to improve the patient journey and experience and increase the confidence in parents.

The Panel noted weaknesses in different settings and asked a question on how improvements to communication were going to be made. Tom Brailsford advised the Panel that there were several areas in the transformation plan that would be addressed, and that it was about a partnership approach. The Panel were advised that some examples of what would need to be addressed would be how schools identified children early, to ensure schools had good Mental Health support teams

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and about making sure schools had a good Healthy Child Programme with a mandate of contacts and early intervention. Tom Brailsford explained that there was a broad group of professionals who contribute to outcomes.

The Panel raised concerns relating to children with Special Educational Needs and the problems that parents experienced when receiving the right support, and the length of time it took to identify a need. Tom Brailsford advised that there was not a problem with identifying needs, the problem was increasing demand for Education Health and Care Plans for the under 5's, along with delays from external agencies. Tom Brailsford also explained that the services wanted to provide the earliest support as quickly as possible. Jo-Anne Sanders advised the Panel that the Transformation Plan was to re-orientate support as early as possible, and Kirklees was fortunate to have a very strong special educational need co-ordination network. There was a lot of expertise in special schools with innovation in terms of special school satellite provisions where they invested in support of schools into outreach teams.

The Panel highlighted that the Ofsted report indicated a lot of families had been let down by the system, with the number of Special Educational Statements compared to Education Health and Care Plans being half the number and that there was a need to acknowledge families had been let down. Emily Parry-Harries requested that the Panel allow her to look further into the figures in the Transformation report that provided information on the increase in number of pupils in Kirklees LA schools and academies with an Educational Health and Care Plan since January 2015 to January 2021.

Kelsey Clark-Davies responded to the Panel regarding actual experiences by some service users and acknowledged that the information captured was over a length of time from some families that had a negative experience who were more likely to come forward. The Panel was informed that some families had come forward who had a positive experience and a key theme within the plan was to ensure that culture across the council was child and family centred, working with, and not doing to.

In response to a question from the Panel regarding what support was available to parents, and how that was being strengthened, along with how mainstream support was provided to parents who had sought a private diagnosis. Tom Brailsford explained that parents were supported through early mechanisms, such as health resources online, that parents could access. There was a need to do more in terms of making sure there was parental support and parental confidence. There was also a support line for SENCO's to receive information and the Panel was informed that One aspiration was to open this up to parents, however, further work was required. Tom Brailsford confirmed that diagnosis reports from private providers would not affect any support received for an Education Health and Care Plan. Stuart Horne advised that one problem with a private provider was the commission provider in SWIFT as their psychiatrist was not able to prescribe medication on an ongoing basis that they felt was not necessary.

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The Panel thanked officers for all the information provided and acknowledged the passion that officers had to improve families lives and that the improvement journey was a high priority for the Council's Administration.

### **RESOLVED-**

- The Panel noted the report on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection – Action Plan and Inspection Outcomes.
- That the Panel receive updates on the improvement journey of the Transformation Plan.
- That Officers in Children's Service provide the Panel with details of partners involved in the Transformation Plan that they can meet with or visit as part of the Panel's scrutiny work.
- That the Panel receive further information on the increased number of pupils in Kirklees LA schools and academies with an Education Health and Care Plan since January 2015 to January 2021.

### **9 Pre-decision Scrutiny - Cabinet decisions on the horizon**

The Panel considered potential areas of pre-decision scrutiny in accordance with any cabinet decisions on the horizon relating to children and young people.

Jo-Anne Sanders explained that coming forward in the Autumn term would be some decision making for Cabinet on Technical School Organisation for Additionally Resourced Provisions.

### **RESOLVED-**

The Panel noted the potential item for pre-decision scrutiny on Technical School Organisation for Additionally Resourced Provisions that would be considered by Cabinet during the 2022-23 municipal year.

### **10 Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Corporate Parenting Board**

Councillor Marchington advised the Panel that a Corporate Parenting Board meeting had not taken place since the last meeting of the Children's Scrutiny Panel on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022. The next Corporate Parenting Board was scheduled to take place on the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2022 and Panel Members could feedback to the Panel in October 2022.

### **RESOLVED-**

The Panel noted the date of the next Corporate Parenting Board meeting in September 2022.

### **11 Children's Scrutiny Work Programme 2022-23**

The Panel considered the work programme for the 2022-23 municipal year.

Councillor Marchington advised that no new amendments had been made to the work programme since the last Panel meeting and that several visits to partners had been arranged to take place during the 2022-23 municipal year.

### **RESOLVED-**

The Panel noted the Work Programme and agenda plan for 2022-23.

