

Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL

Monday 31st October 2022

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

In attendance: Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources,
Improvement and Partnerships)
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director - Learning & Early
Support
Elaine McShane, Service Director - Family Support and
Child Protection
Ian Mottershaw, Head of Contextual Safeguarding and
Youth Engagement Services
Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Viv Kendrick

Apologies: Councillor Richard Smith
Graeme Sunderland (Co-optee)
Toni Bromley (Co-optee)

1 Membership of the Committee

Apologies were received from Councillor Richard Smith, Toni Bromley and Graeme Sunderland.

2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

That the minutes of the meeting held on the 6th September 2022 be approved as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests 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 Outcomes of the Joint Area Targeted multi-agency Inspection

The Panel received a report on the Joint Area Targeted multi-agency Inspection which was presented by Ian Mottershaw, Head of Contextual Safeguarding and Youth Engagement Services and Elaine McShane, Service Director – Family Support and Child Protection.

Ian Mottershaw advised the Panel that the inspection took place from 27 June 2022 to 1 July 2022 and was carried out by inspectors from Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and Her Majesty's inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire Rescue Services. The outcomes of the inspection were provided by letter which summarised the headline findings and what needed to be improved. The Headline findings were, that partners at a strategic level enabled a well-embedded practice approach that supported professionals to work well together. Children in Kirklees who were at risk of, or experiencing, criminal exploitation had their needs identified quickly and received multi-agency support to manage and reduce risk to them effectively. What needed to be improved were:

- The recording of the work and decision-making of the Kirklees Safeguarding Children Partnership. (KSCP)
- The training offer from the KSCP to ensure that it provided relevant, localised multi-agency training focused on child criminal exploitation.
- The exercise of professional curiosity from some health practitioners, including GPs and emergency department staff.
- Contingency planning for children in care who were not able to return to their birth families.

The letter from Ofsted explained that the inspectors found that Kirklees safeguarding children's partners had significant knowledge of the local area and demand, practice with their agencies and the experiences of children. Partners had strong aspiration, willingness, and motivation to reduce risks of criminal exploitation for children in Kirklees. Mature relationships within the KSCP enabled partners to challenge each other effectively. This demonstrated the well-established respect for, and equity of, partners views.

Elaine McShane advised the Panel that although the inspection was focussed on exploitation, it clearly demonstrated partnership working across different areas and how services pulled together compared to 4 years ago.

The Panel noted that the inspectors had determined that Kirklees Council was the principal authority and should prepare a written statement of proposed actions responding to the findings outlined in the letter. The statement of action was to be a multi-agency response involving the individuals and agencies that the report was addressed to and received by 25 November 2022.

The Panel acknowledged the "What needs to improve" and commented that the report contradicted itself regarding the training which was provided to staff in all partner agencies, health practitioners and social workers.

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The Panel noted that Health IT systems did not consistently identify children at risk of exploitation through the use of 'flags' and asked if that had now been introduced. Ian Mottershaw advised that health colleagues had confirmed flags had been introduced and that Health Practitioners were able to identify risks.

The Panel commented on issues around children exploited criminally and asked a question regarding current issues locally, and if the interventions worked. Ian Mottershaw advised that the letter was viewed as an endorsement that the KSCP was doing the right things and on the right journey. Elaine McShane advised that if someone was criminalised, the system was to provide support to ensure that they were not criminalised again by drawing them away from extreme situations.

RESOLVED:

- (i) That the report be noted,
- (ii) That staff and partners are thanked for the hard work they undertake.

8 Pre-decision Scrutiny - Cabinet decisions on the horizon

Councillor Marchington advised that Scrutiny's involvement with the SEND Transformation plan was ongoing.

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support explained that coming forward by the end of 2022 would be a report for decision by Cabinet regarding SEND transformation to recommission alternative provision.

RESOLVED:

The Panel noted the potential item for pre-decision scrutiny on SEND transformation to recommission alternative provision that would be considered by Cabinet by the end of 2022 and asked that they be given an opportunity to comment on the report prior to the decision being taken by Cabinet.

9 Feedback from Panel Members on issues considered by Corporate Parenting Board

Councillor Marchington advised the Panel that Corporate Parenting Board last met on 27 September 2022. At the meeting the performance management data was presented in a new way, the Board agreed that the data could be presented quarterly. It was agreed by the Panel that they were also happy to receive the data quarterly.

Councillor Marchington informed the Panel that the number of looked after children had reduced and that ethnicity of children was looked at within the report.

There was an update from the children's ambition board, where Educational Health and Care Plans were discussed. Parents often thought that once an Educational Health and Care Plan had been issued, that it would unlock support and that was not always the case.

There was an update on looked after children who were leaving care, what support was available for them and that aspirations were high, and achievements awarded.

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RESOLVED:

- (i) The Panel noted the updates given regarding matters considered by the Corporate Parenting Board in September,
- (ii) That the Panel consider the performance management data on a quarterly basis going forward.

10 Children's Scrutiny Panel Work Programme 2022-23

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

Councillor Marchington advised that no major changes had been made to the work programme since the last Panel meeting in September 2022. The Panel had visited the Dewsbury Children's Social Care Team cluster and met with Social Workers. Councillor Marchington reminded the Panel of visits that were scheduled and asked Panel Members to contact the Governance Officers for details of the visit if they would like to attend.

Councillor Marchington advised the Panel of the social visit arranged for Parent/Carers of Children with additional needs (PCAN) on Thursday 3rd November 2022 at the Zone, Huddersfield and welcomed Panel members to join him.

RESOLVED:

- (i) The Panel noted the Work Programme and agenda plan for 2022-23.
- (ii) That Panel Members contact the Governance Officers if they wish to attend any of the scheduled visits which will take place during the 2022-23 municipal year.