

Kirklees Council

Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Lead Member: Cllr Cahal Burke

Panel: Children's Scrutiny Panel

Period of Update: 4th April 2018 to 3rd September 2018

Panel Highlights

The Children's Scrutiny Panel met on 11th June during the above period. The main highlights from the meeting were:-

- **Draft Sufficiency Strategy**
- **Work programme for 2018/19**

Outcomes:

- The Panel received the proposed Sufficiency Strategy. The Strategy focused on meeting local demand for family-setting (especially foster) and residential care placements so that children and young people do not need to move. The Panel requested that information relating to the numbers and areas of placements be brought to each panel meeting for consideration. The Panel have been invited to attend a foster carers forum to understand
- The Panel considered the work programme for this municipal year.

Monitoring Work

- The Elective Home Education (EHE) ad-hoc panel is ongoing. Meetings have been set up with parents and carers to gather their experiences of home educating in Kirklees. Evidence will also be gathered from a prominent EHE blogger, Leeds City Council, Calderdale Council and EHE parents and carers in those authorities.
- Ofsted visited Kirklees in July, and the letter to the Director of Children's Services from them will be considered at the Panel meeting on 10th September. The next visit by Ofsted will be a full inspection.
- The Panel received a request to assist with gathering evidence from parents of children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities. An Ofsted visit is anticipated and officers would like to provide evidence that they have actively engaged with, and included the experiences of parents in Kirklees in the services development planning. Meetings have been set up between the Panel and parents and carers.

Looking Ahead

- Cllr Donna Bellamy will continue to attend the meetings of the Improvement Board.
- The new Children & Young People's Plan will now be considered on 3rd December 2018.
- The Panel would like to be assured that staff are well supported to do their job and that retention rates improve. Some evidence of improvement has been seen by the Panel, but further information will be sought at the visit to

Duty and Assessment, and Staff Engagement Events.

- The Panel are beginning to see improvements in Children's Services and look forward to working with the new Director of Children's Services once appointed.

Panel meeting 10th September 2018

- Statistical information / table relating to children in care (standing item)
- Ofsted Letter to DCS
- Strategy for Partnership working - Early Help
- Multi Systemic Therapy
- Family Mental Health Service
- Family Conferencing
- CSE / Safeguarding Update

Key challenges:

- The anticipated inspection of Ofsted for the Special Educational Needs and Disability will challenge the service, but the scrutiny panel is assisting the team by:-
 - scrutinising the development of the SEND team
 - regularly considering the Self Evaluation Form
 - gathering evidence from parents and carers

General comments

The panel has been pleased to see good working relationships develop between the panel and officers within Children's Services.