

## Kirklees Council

### Scrutiny Lead Member Report

**Lead Member:** Cllr Cahal Burke

**Panel:** Children's Scrutiny Panel

**Period of Update:** January to April 2019

#### Panel Highlights

The Children's Scrutiny Panel has considered the following key areas during the period January to April 2019:-

- SENDACT – The Parent's Perspective (findings report and recommendations)
- Virtual School
- Kirklees Annual Educational Quality and Standards Report 2017-18
- Schools as Community Hubs
- CSE, Safeguarding and Licensing

#### Outcomes:

The Panel approved the draft findings report and revised recommendations of the SENDACT report – the Parent's Perspective and agreed that the report and recommendations be forwarded to the parents and carers who contributed to the work of the Panel for their information and agreed that progress updates be provided to the Panel in the 2019/20 municipal year. The report was approved by Cabinet on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Members welcomed the report on the role of the virtual school in Kirklees and its statutory duties and agreed that the information had raised the Panel's awareness of the Virtual School and recognised the positive and continuous improvements being made to achieve better educational outcomes for looked after children.

Members requested further information on the educational attainment challenges ahead, attendance, isolations and exclusions.

Concerns were raised by the Panel that engagement with elected members by some of the Community Hubs in Kirklees had not always been satisfactory or effective and Councillors had on occasion not been invited to events and meetings. A commitment was given that Community Hubs would be clearly briefed on the essential engagement with Councillors.

#### Panel Meetings

##### 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019

- EHE Update
- CAMHS Transformation Plan and Autism waiting list update

##### 25<sup>th</sup> February 2019

- Introduction to Mel Meggs, Director of Children Services
- Number of Children in care
- Virtual School

- Kirklees Annual Educational Quality and Standards Report 2017-18
- Schools as Community Hubs

#### 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019

- CSE, Safeguarding and Licensing

#### 1<sup>st</sup> April 2019

- Number of Children in Care
- Learning Support Strategy
- Early Support Partnership (Informal meeting)

### **Work Programme Highlight**

Members considered a joint presentation from Senior Officers from the Children's Services, Licensing and West Yorkshire Police outlining that due to emerging concerns for young people, Kirklees and the West Yorkshire Police had changed their approach to contextual safeguarding which was to understand and respond to young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. The presentation also included an update on the current and future role and priorities for the Risk and Vulnerability Team and a report by the Licensing Team in connection to CSE and Safeguarding, taxi drivers and raising awareness within communities and in particular, the night-time economy. A report will be considered in the near future by the Licensing and Safety Committee recommending that refresher training (including safeguarding) for taxi drivers becomes mandatory every 3 years.

The Director of Children Services advised the Panel that a response on the Dr Peel Review was expected towards the end of April and assured the Panel that Scrutiny would be engaged as part of the work plan.

Members agreed that it was reassuring to see the joint work taking place to share good practice and requested that the Panel be kept informed and engaged so that they could continue to contribute to the future work on CSE, Safeguarding and Licensing.

### **Monitoring Work**

- The Elective Home Education (EHE) ad-hoc panel is ongoing and work will progress in the near future to gather evidence from a number of other witnesses including a leading elective home education expert, other local authorities in the area to consider their offer for elective home educators, parents of those local authorities mentioned above to explore their experiences and if possible Head Teachers forums (primary, secondary and special schools);
- Regular progress updates on the SENDACT recommendations will be provided to the Panel during the 2019/20 municipal year.

### **Looking Ahead**

- Members of the Panel put forward some key areas for focus by the Panel in 2019/20 and Cllr Burke will meet with the Director of Children's Services and Cabinet Members for Children and Learning to discuss the Panel's future work programme and potential areas for consideration.
- It was also agreed that visits to services and teams would be arranged to enable the Panel to get a better understanding of key areas of the Children's Service for the children of Kirklees.
- Regular Performance reports had been provided to the Panel which have been considered in the Informal meetings. Further discussions will take place between Cllr Burke and the Director of Children's Services to discuss the future presentation of the

information and how the Panel can hold the service to account and actively challenge any areas of concern.

**Comments**

I would like to acknowledge and thank the Panel members and the Governance Officers for their work, commitment and support throughout the year.