

Kirklees Council

Scrutiny Lead Member Report

Lead Member: Cllr Andrew Marchington : Children's Scrutiny Panel

Period of Update : From October 2022 – December 2022

Panel Highlights

Bi-monthly Lead member briefings with:

Senior Officers in Children's Services

- Service Director – Learning and Early Support
- Service Director – Resources Improvement and Partnerships
- Service Director – Family Support and Child Protection
- Strategic Director for Children's Services

Cabinet Members

- Children (Statutory responsibility for Children)
- Learning, Aspiration and Communities

Panel Activity and meetings -

- Panel meeting on 31st October 2022 – Outcomes of the Joint Area Targeted multi-agency Inspection; Performance Management data; (Informal meeting - Educational Outcomes and GCSE results)
- Informal Panel meeting on 12th December 2022 – Alternative Provision (AP) Education in Kirklees
- Visits to –
 - Homestart Kirklees AGM 13th October 2022,
 - Children's Social Care Team (Dewsbury) 14th October 2022
 - PCAN Social events in November and December 2022
 - PCAN AGM on 17th November 2022
 - Local Offer AGM on 17th November 2022
 - Children with Disabilities Team on 13th December 2022
 - Children's Social Care Team (The Valleys – Slaithwaite) on 13th December 2022

Outcomes:

Outcomes of the Joint Area Targeted multi-agency Inspection

In October 2022, the Panel considered a report on the Joint Area Targeted multi-agency Inspection that highlighted the following -

- The inspection took place from 27th June 2022 to 1st 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 were provided by letter which summarised the headline findings and provided areas that needed improving.
- The letter from Ofsted explained that the inspectors had found that Kirklees safeguarding children's partners had significant knowledge of their local area and demand, practice with their agencies and the experiences of children.

Mature relationships within the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Partnership enabled partners to challenge each other effectively which demonstrated the well-established respect for, and equality of, partners views.

- 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 which was to be a multi-agency response.

The Panel acknowledged the "What needs to improve" and thanked Kirklees staff and partners for the hard work they undertake.

Partnership Visits:

Children's Social Care Team (Dewsbury)

The Panel attended the Social Care Team in Dewsbury on 14th October 2022 as part of the work programme to meet in-person and speak to front line staff and Team Managers. The Panel asked questions relating to management of data collection and performance, working with partners, the voice of the child and how this was taken into account, good practice, and delivery of quality service. The team expressed that although there were vacancies in their team, they felt well supported by their managers and from other teams.

Parents of children with additional needs (PCAN)

Following the visit to PCAN in September, some members of the Panel attended PCAN social meetings in November and December 2022 to engage with parents /carers of children with SEND. A range of professionals attended the social meeting in December 2022, with a representative from the Local Offer Team requesting feedback on their new booklet that had been produced.

Children with Disabilities Team

The Panel attended the Children with Disabilities team on 13th December 2022 as part of the work programme to meet staff in-person and speak to managers. The main points considered at the meeting were around data collection, partnership working, the voice of the child, good practice and delivery of quality service. The Panel also spoke to Team Managers about future development and supervision of staff.

Children's Social Care Team (The Valleys – Slaithwaite)

The Panel attended the Social Care Team in Slaithwaite on 13th December 2022 to meet in-person and speak to managers and asked questions around data collection and performance, partnership working, the voice of the child and examples of where this was put into practice and delivery of quality service. The Connected Persons Team had transferred to the Valleys in July 2022 which included special guardianship or foster carers who wanted to become special guardians. Approximately 500 children were not in care as a result of special guardianship orders.

Looking Ahead

At the meeting scheduled for 23rd January 2023, the Panel will consider a report on the Budget process (Children's Services).

At the meeting scheduled for the 20th March 2023, the Panel will consider a report providing a progress update on Mental Health in Schools and CAMHS waiting times,

and an update on Children's Services Care Reforms.

The Panel have been invited to attend the Educational Outcomes Committee on the 10th January 2023 and the Quality Assurance Panel on 17th January 2023.

Members of the Panel will visit the Mental Health in Schools Team on the 21st February 2023 and the Huddersfield Child Protection Team on the 23rd February.

General Comments

Since our last update to council, we have continued our visits to groups and services, as well as extending their scope. The visits have provided vital corroboration (triangulation) of information presented at panels and in briefings. They also provide opportunities for overview and gathering additional information about needs, outcomes, and service delivery. In addition, there have been opportunities to gain vital insights into the lived experience of children, young people, parents, carers, and those working with and for young people.

Once again, I extend the thanks of the panel for everyone's conscientious work and for the warm welcome we have received and openness in our discussions.

Cllr Andrew Marchington
Lead Member for Children's Scrutiny Panel