

## Family Friendly Sub-committee

Thursday, 7 September 2023

Present: Councillor E Parker-Leonard (Chair)  
Councillors V Jamieson, C Johnston, J Mudzingwa,  
M Murphy, R O'Keefe, P Oliver, B Pickard, A Spowart  
and J Wallace

Apologies: Councillors S Burtenshaw and I Grayson

### FF5 Appointment of Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the following substitution was reported:

Councillor A Spowart for Councillor I Grayson

### FF6 Declarations of Interest

Councillor M Murphy declared a registerable personal interest in Item 5 – Attendance Strategy, as his wife works for North Tyneside Council in an education role.

### FF7 Minutes

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 July 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

### FF8 Attendance Strategy

The sub-committee received a presentation in relation to the Attendance Strategy. School attendance had previously been identified by members as an important topic to focus on. It was noted that the Department for Education had issued guidance *Working together to improve school attendance*. The guidance

focuses on managing attendance by:

- Preventing patterns of absence from developing by promoting good attendance
- Intervening early by using data to spot patterns of absence before they become persistent and working with families to remove the barriers to attendance
- Targeting support for persistent and severe absentees with all local partners working together to reengage pupils

A North Tyneside Attendance Strategy was currently being drafted, which involved consultation with a range of stakeholders.

In relation to attendance in North Tyneside schools, it was noted that there was an increase in emotionally based school non-attendance and term time holidays. It was noted that the transition between school phases, i.e. first to middle, middle to high, could trigger school attendance issues and that fixed term and permanent exclusions was also a factor in non-attendance figures.

It was highlighted that to deliver the Authorities vision of '*making North Tyneside an even greater place for children and young people to thrive; where all can access a high-class education with a culture of inclusion and achievement*', children and young people need to engage with the learning process. Key features of the policy would include: clarity of roles and responsibilities; effective school attendance improvement and management; and development of an approach to emotionally based school non-attendance.

In relation to roles and responsibilities, it was highlighted that the Local Authority, Schools, All Trustees and Governors, Parents and Pupils have a role to play in improving school attendance. Consultation with Headteachers in relation to the strategy was ongoing and an attendance delivery group and strategic group would be established. It was noted that the strategy would go to Cabinet for approval and the sub-committee had the opportunity to comment on the proposed strategy.

The following points were raised by members:

- The sub-committee recognises the importance of excellent school attendance and welcomes the introduction of the strategy;

- The sub-committee noted that fixed term exclusions have gone up and that work should be done with schools, both Headteachers and governors, to develop a detailed approach to try and reduce enforced absence;
- It was noted that some schools will have a better rate of attendance than others and that some schools will need a higher level of support. Whilst there will be an overall strategy that covers all schools, the sub-committee feel it is important for there to be some bespoke support on offer for schools with the most challenging attendance problems;
- The strategy should encourage schools to embed improving attendance into the school improvement journey;
- In monitoring the impact of the strategy, the view of families impacted should be included

It was suggested that the comments above be sent to the Cabinet for Education, Inclusion, Employment and Skills for consideration when finalising the strategy.

It was **agreed** to note the presentation.

## **FF9 Youth Justice Plan**

The Committee received an update on the North Tyneside Youth Justice Plan. The Youth Justice Service sits within the wider Children, Young People and Learning Directorate within the Local Authority.

It was noted that local authorities have a statutory duty to submit an annual youth justice plan relating to their provision of youth justice services. The plan should address the functions assigned to a youth justice service, including how services will prevent offending behaviour and reduce reoffending.

The sub-committee was invited to discuss the priorities in the plan and how they reflect what members know from their communities.

It was noted that the five key strategic priorities are as follows:

1. All children will have access to appropriate health and wellbeing services at the right time;

2. Develop and deliver a Serious youth violence strategy and plan;
3. Further development of prevention into the pathway;
4. Every young person will have access to appropriate ETE that meets their needs; and
5. A comprehensive and consistent service will be available to all victims

The committee was informed that the services delivered by youth justice take a holistic approach and include the child and the parent throughout the process. Youth justice provision is multi-agency, involving police, social workers and education. The service undertakes a comprehensive assessment on every child. The youth justice service recognises that children are firstly children and secondly that a child has offended. It was also recognised that change is only possible by working with families.

It was noted that the Youth Justice Plan is aligned to the our North Tyneside Plan, with a focus on "A Family Friendly and a Caring North Tyneside". The Plan and objectives are also identified and aligned to the overall objectives of the Community Safety Partnership draft plan.

It was highlighted that the youth justice service has a higher rate of children with SEND than that of the general population and that this is also reflected nationally. The service is supported by a speech and language therapist and clinical psychologist and works closely with the SEND team.

Members raised concerns in relation to organised crime and the targeting of vulnerable young people. It was noted that the potential for criminal exploitation is recognised and that there is a bespoke service to target those on the cusp of being exploited. This work is integrated into the youth offending team. The team continues to work in an imaginative and bespoke way in order to develop and maintain meaningful relationships with service users. It was recognised that persistence is key in finding ways to engage people.

The Committee highlighted the importance of the role of the community and voluntary sector in delivering and supporting services relating to youth justice.

It was **agreed** to note the information presented.

**FF10 SEND Performance**

At the beginning of the municipal year, the sub-committee identified SEND as an important area for Members to look at.

Performance measures were circulated to the sub-committee and an opportunity was provided to ask questions in relation to this data.

This related to resources and process relating to EHCPs. Officers were in attendance to answer questions raised by members of the sub-committee.

It was **agreed** to note the information.

**FF11 Work Programme 2023/24**

The Chair informed Members that the items due for consideration at the next meeting of the sub-committee were the Children and Young People Plan and 14-19 skills post lockdown.