

Children, Education and Skills Sub Committee

Thursday, 21 November 2019

Present: Councillor M Thirlaway (Chair)
Councillors J Cassidy, M Madden, S Phillips, N Huscroft,
J O'Shea, E Parker-Leonard and M Wilson

Mr S Fallon - Church Representative
Rev M Vine - Church Representative
Mrs M Ord - Parent Governor Representative

Apologies:

CE16/11/19 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors T Brady, S Brockbank and P Oliver

CE17/11/19 Appointment of Substitutes

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the appointment of the following substitute Member was reported:

Councillor J O'Shea for Councillor T Brady

CE18/11/19 To receive any declarations of interest

Councillor E Parker-Leonard declared a registerable personal interest in Item 5, Children's Social Work Assessment and Fostering Teams, as she was a foster carer with another local authority.

Mr S Fallon declared a personal interest in Item 8, Special Educational Needs as he was a Head Teacher.

CE19/11/19 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 September 2019 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CE20/11/19 Children's Social Work Assessment and Fostering Teams

The Sub-committee received a report from the Principal Social Worker and members of the Social Work Team on the work of the Children's social work assessment teams, including the fostering team, the workforce profile, the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE) support available and the Post Qualifying (PQ) and other continuing professional development (CPD) opportunities to social work staff.

The social work teams were organised to follow the journey of a child or young person who was referred to children's services. The Model of practice embedded in children's social care was Signs of Safety which focused on the strengths and relationships within families.

Within the Safe and Supported Area, there were currently six social work teams; each had one team manager and seven social workers. There was a variety of experience across the teams ranging from a large cohort of newly qualified social workers undertaking their ASYE to progressed social workers who were also practice educators.

The Safe and Supported teams managed a variety of case work including Child In Need, Child Protection, Looked After Children (both long term looked after children and those who had on-going legal proceedings), and also had cases where adoption was being progressed and Private Law applications to determine where and with whom a child should live following parents separating or to support applications for one parent to see their child should there be family discord.

The role of the social worker in a Safe and Supported Team was a complex one with risk management being evident in what they did to support families.

A Member enquired whether the fourteen social workers who had left the Council in a twelve month period had been given exit interviews and it was noted that the vast majority went to other Councils in the North East for progression and different salary packages. Local Authorities in the North East were in competition for social work staff and North Tyneside endeavoured to be an employer of choice, offering investment in training and attractive work conditions. North Tyneside was the only local authority in the north east who did not have agency social workers.

It was explained that the Fostering Service had two teams offering services to both mainstream and connected carers, which included assessments, training and post special guardianship order support and that 93% of looked after children were with local authority foster carers.

Reference was made to workloads and the Social workers stated that case work built up gradually, that it was a challenge sometimes but continuous support was available, case loads were risk assessed, concerns could be raised with line management and in the first year of employment an average of sixteen children were allocated to each Social worker.

It was noted that following assessment, transitions for clients and families to a longer term social work team were inevitable but it was sometimes frustrating for families when they had built up a relationship with a social worker and the social worker was changed and that continuity was important.

The Social Workers commented that they hoped that the Council would continue to manage the case loads and offer assistance from experienced workers and that good quality

training, salary and career progression and a friendly environment was important.

A Social worker noted that the support received from staff was excellent and they welcomed using the Signs of Safety model to help support families.

The Chair thanked Officers for the informative report and for members of the Social Work Team for attending the meeting.

It was **agreed** to note the contents of the report.

CE21/11/19 Child Sexual Exploitation Update

The Sub-Committee received an update on the work being undertaken to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in North Tyneside. The Report provided information relating to what work was being undertaken across the Authority and with Partners.

North Tyneside Children's Services worked closely with the police who would co-ordinate a neighbourhood officer response and determine if a Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) could be served on a property where a young person under 16 might be going and there were worries around exploitation. Should this disruption not work to reduce the worries, or the worries escalated then the case would be referred in to the Missing, Slavery (MDS), Exploitation and Trafficking (MSET) Panel for workers who had a worry that a child or young person was at risk through being missing, involved in slavery, being exploited or trafficked.

Pre-MSET meetings were held once a month to review referrals and agree actions. The meeting consisted of the police, a senior manager in children's services, residential managers and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO). All referrals were screened and the meeting discussed what work had been undertaken to disrupt and what further work could be recommended. If it was agreed to progress to the full MSET panel, then the meeting was held the following week with full multi agency attendance.

In North Tyneside Children's Services, the case recording system allowed for identification of children who were at risk of being missing involved in slavery, exploitation or potentially were being trafficked and regular reports allowed for active review and monitoring of cases. This enabled discussion in supervision; appropriate referrals being progressed, or disruptive action progressed.

There was currently scoping taking place around having a multi-agency data set which would better facilitate strategic and operational understanding of the extent of the worries and the impact of the arrangements.

In recognition of the need to better understand Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) across the Borough, the Police had commissioned a problem profile. This would inform the Council's response moving forward.

Under the new North Tyneside Safeguarding Children's Partnership arrangements a report would be provided to the Quality of Practice Standing Group. This group would meet every two months and have oversight of the Local Authority response and provide any further recommendations for this area. The Corporate Parenting Forum also received a six-

monthly report on missing episodes.

On average there were ten young people who were at risk of sexual exploitation in North Tyneside.

Members enquired about comparative figures of child sexual exploitation with other local authorities and it was confirmed that the larger metropolitan Boroughs tended to have a greater number and more complex cases.

The Sub-committee was informed that in relation to the close proximity and porous borders with the other local authorities in the North East, Operation Sanctuary was a joint working arrangement with police and social work colleagues to share knowledge, information and intelligence on named persons. The Youth Offending Team also shared information with colleagues and the joint working arrangements and close working relationships, including the work with the North of Tyne was a big strength.

It was reported that any safeguarding concerns in North Tyneside needed to be raised/signposted to the multi agency safeguarding hub and Members noted that training had been set up for taxi drivers to raise awareness of how to escalate concerns.

Intelligence had been received that the Metro Transport System was being utilised to move drugs and this information was being communicated to partner agencies to raise the profile of criminal exploitation.

Members expressed concerns regarding criminal activity taking place on the Metro System which was unregulated and in response the Sub-committee was advised that the Youth Justice Team had regular meetings with the Metro and Nexus and were building relationships with the Community Protection Team.

The Chair thanked Officers for the informative report and for attendance at the meeting.

It was **agreed** to note the contents of the report and that an Update on the Youth Justice Team be circulated to the Committee.

CE22/11/19 Troubled Families Programme

The Committee considered a report on Prevention and Early Help; including the Troubled Families Programme and the objectives for the final five months of the programme.

The Teams had continued to work positively with families supporting them to embed sustained changes, to help them to be equipped to adapt positively to challenging life experiences.

Even though the approach was now mainstreamed into the work, the Teams had continued to evidence the progress of the families to be able to claim the Payment by Results (PBR).

In order to maximise the income from the Programme, the Teams were expected to work with and turn around a minimum of 1480 families, with income being available at the identification and attachment phase as well as when sustained changes by the families could be evidenced. The Teams had attached over the expected number of families, with 3000 families attached to the Programme. 'Additional' families would continue to be

supported in the same way, in line with service transformation work, showing how the approach had been mainstreamed.

The last claims deadline for PBR had a cut-off date of 31 August 2019, to enable cases to be audited. At this point the Team had currently claimed for (78%) with a trajectory of claiming 100% by March 2020, which was the end of the programme.

In terms of Service Transformation, the Teams had continued to demonstrate the differences that had been made to not only how they worked, but also the use of data. Due to the developments, the policy and performance lead had been invited to showcase the systems and processes at several events in other parts of the country. This had been well received and these systems were not just used within Early Help, but also the wider Council.

A further accolade had been received from regional leads from the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG), visiting to see the work undertaken and the service transformation achieved.

The Teams had also passed the 'spot check' from the MHCLG, where they conducted an unplanned visit and drilled down on cases.

The Troubled Families Programme had not only been part of the way in which the Teams had shaped the identification of and intervention with the most vulnerable families; but also enabled the Council to look at how work could be undertaken with partners in a different way to ensure support offered to these families was done so at the earliest opportunity. It had also been used to inform and improve the approach as well as the use of data. This was something the team would continue to develop, to be able to show the impact of the early help work across the borough.

It had now been confirmed by MHCLG that the Programme would continue for an extension of a further 12 months (until March 2021). However the Teams were waiting to hear what this would look like as there were some changes to the Programme.

There was some discussion about continuity for the service when this significant funding ceased and reassurance was given that North Tyneside had continued to invest in Early Help and funding also came from different grants.

The Chair thanked Officers for the informative report and for attending the meeting.

It was **agreed** to

- (1) note the progress of the work undertaken to deliver Prevention and Early Help and to achieve the Troubled Families programme outcomes.
- (2) that the Sub-Committee was satisfied as to the effectiveness of the approach and ability to demonstrate improved outcomes for families
- (3) that the North Tyneside Vulnerable Families Outcomes Plan be circulated to all Members of the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee received a Report on Special Educational Needs and Disability.

The Children and Families Act 2014 had reformed legislation relating to children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND). The Act outlined a new SEND Code of Practice (2015) and statutory guidance for organisations that worked with and supported children and young people with SEND.

The Children and Families Act described that a child or young person had a special educational need if they had a learning difficulty or disability which called for special educational provision to be made for them. Special educational provision was provision that was additional to or different from that which would normally be provided for children and young people of the same age in a mainstream education setting.

Prior to the Children and Families Act, children and young people with SEND were supported in schools with a Statement of Special Educational Need. These were particularly focussed on meeting the educational needs of children without sufficient rigour and focus upon the health and social care needs of children. The Children and Families Act required of Authorities, by April 2018, to transfer all eligible children and young people 0 - 25 years with a Statement of Special Educational Need, to an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). North Tyneside had met this requirement within timescale

The SEND Code of Practice (2015) required Authorities to complete a statutory assessment to determine whether an EHCP should be issued, within 20 weeks of request. Working with health, education and social care partners, the Authority's SEND Support Service lead and coordinated the support of all children with an EHCP and was required to ensure that annual reviews and appropriate monitoring of their support took place. The SEND Support Service was one component of North Tyneside's multi-agency SEND network; schools, colleagues, NHS commissioners and providers, all had statutory duties within the code.

In addition to children and young people with an EHCP, there were children with special educational needs who received SEN support. This SEN support met the needs of children and young people's education needs only.

North Tyneside had a current 0-25 population of just over 57,000, of them 5200 had a special educational need and disability, 1500 had an EHCP, an increase of 13% since May 2018 and 3700 received SEN support, an increase of 10% since May 2018.

To meet the rising demand of children and young people with SEND the Authority had recruited to the position of Assistant Director for Whole Life Disability and SEND, strengthening the leadership of the SEND agenda, integrating education and social care services through the life course; and strengthened capacity in operational staff within the SEND Support Service; an additional £350k of permanent funding had been allocated, enabling recruitment of an additional seven SEND Officers, responsible for the statutory assessment and review of EHCPs with the Authority now employing 10 SEND officers.

To strengthen services to children and young people throughout the statutory assessment and review process, the Authority had co-produced, with parents, carers and partners, a new SEND Support Service operating model, established in September 2019. This model strengthened the focus on listening to and identifying every opportunity for children with SEND to share their voices and experiences; the benefits to children and young people of effective relationship-based practice and recognised the impact of service provision for children and young people.

Throughout a young person's educational journey, there was an aspirational team around the individual, supporting them to achieve the best possible educational and other related outcomes and Members welcomed the changes made to the process for referral.

The local authority, Care Commissioning Group (CCG) and North Tyneside Parent Carer Forum had completed a Partnership Self-Assessment, supporting the collective assessment of the impact of the partnership's delivery of services.

The North Tyneside SEND partnership had commissioned an independent peer review of its SEND system and services, in order to review and analyse the strengths and areas for development of services in North Tyneside to identify, assess and meet needs of children and young people with SEND and to improve their outcomes.

The Peer Review identified that strategic planning and leadership was strong, which had a positive impact on the planning for predicted need and delivery of services and there was strong evidence of effective joint working between the local authority, CCG and other partners.

In October 2018, approximately 55% of children had plans completed within the 20 week assessment process timescale and timeliness was improving due to the Support Service Operating Model, however the Care Plans relied on collaboration with the Council's Social Care Team and Partner Agencies including the Trust and CCG.

Members sought clarification on how many children had plans completed within the 20 week assessment process timescale over a twelve month period and in response the Sub-Committee was advised that figures would be circulated.

Members were advised that all Authorities, education providers, NHS and other related services, would take part in at least one Ofsted and CQC Local Area SEND Inspection between 2015 and 2020. North Tyneside had yet to receive this inspection but once the inspection had taken place, the Report would be circulated to the Committee.

One of the priorities would be to evidence the impact of the SEND Support Service, further build on joint commissioning and increase partnership work.

It was **agreed** to note the contents of the report and additional information on the number of Plans completed over a twelve month period be circulated to the Committee.

