



To be submitted to the Council at its meeting on the 18th March 2021

CHILDREN AND LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

28th January 2021 at 4.30 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Freeston (in the Chair)

Councillors Abel, Bramley, Cairns, Hasthorpe (substitute for K. Swinburn), Rodwell, Rudd, Wheatley and Woodward.

Co-opted Member - Maddy Wilson (Non-Voting Youth Voice Representative)

Officers in attendance:

- Joanne Hewson (Deputy Chief Executive)
- Lisa Arthey (Interim Assistant Director Assessment and Safeguarding)
- Sally Jack (Assistant Director Special Projects)
- Karen Linton (Assistant Director – Skills)
- Michelle Thompson (Assistant Director Women's and Children's Services – Clinical Commissioning Group)
- Helen Willis (Safeguarding Children Partnership Coordinator)
- Jennifer Steel (Inclusion Lead)
- Pippa Curtin (Voice and Influence Coordinator)
- Beverly O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)

Also, in attendance:

- Councillor Ian Lindley (Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People)

SPCLL.40 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received for this meeting from Councillor K. Swinburn and Councillor Goodwin.

SPCLL.41 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Wheatley declared a personal interest in SPCLL.47 as an Academy governor.

SPCLL.42 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 19th November 2020 be agreed as an accurate record.

SPCLL.43 QUESTION TIME

There were no questions from members of the public for this meeting.

SPCLL.44 FORWARD PLAN

The panel received the Forward Plan and members were asked to identify any items for examination by this Panel via the pre-decision call-in procedure.

RESOLVED – That the Forward Plan be noted.

SPCLL.45 TRACKING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF SCRUTINY

The panel received a report from the Statutory Scrutiny Officer tracking the recommendations of the Children and Lifelong Learning Scrutiny Panel.

Ms Arthey informed Members that the letter for SPCLL.36 had been drafted and was ready to be sent to Department of Education as well as the letter referred to at SPCLL.38. However, in terms of sending the letter regarding children's oral health, Councillor Lindley believed it would be more beneficial to send it when schools had re-opened . This was accepted by the panel.

RESOLVED – That SPCLL.36, SPCLL.37 and the second part of SPCLL.38 be removed from the tracking report.

SPCLL.46 NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN'S PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT

The panel received the North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report for 2019-2020.

The Chair questioned the figures used within the report and felt that using data that was out of date presented a huge disparity of information.

Councillor Lindley stated that the report showed Members how well our partnership with other organisations was working. Councillor Wheatley

concurred with this and stated that she believed it was the right thing to do to base the report on outcomes instead of priorities.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

SPCLL.47 SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS

The panel received a briefing note on school exclusions.

Councillor Wheatley stated that she was glad to see rates were going down. She asked whether The Academy Grimsby (TAG) was included in these figures as exclusions were high. Ms Steel informed Members that the figures in red in the briefing note showed permanent exclusions at TAG. She explained that it was the duty of the local authority to support them. Ms Steel assured Members that communications were in place to make sure that each child's needs had been discussed and shared with everyone who needed to know.

Members enquired about the support being provided during lockdown for vulnerable children who had been excluded. Ms Steel explained that any young person excluded and deemed vulnerable must still attend whatever school setting they had been placed in. She added that there was regular communication with schools to look at the attendance of excluded children and whether they were accessing virtual learning.

Members asked what the main reasons were for being excluded in the first place. Ms Steel informed Members that there can be a mix of issues that have occurred. In terms of fixed term exclusions this may be around policies not being followed, i.e. uniform, and the high end exclusions tend to be based on violent behaviour, use of drugs etc.

The Chair asked for figures for young people who had failed their managed moves and ended up in alternative provision. Ms Steel confirmed that she did not have them to hand but would send them to the Chair in the upcoming days. Members hoped that they would also be able to receive the figures. The Chair confirmed that he would look at the figures and see whether this needed to come back as a future agenda item for members to scrutinise in more detail.

RESOLVED –

1. That the report be noted.
2. That up to date figures on young people who had failed their managed moved and ended up in alternative provision be forwarded to the Chair of this panel.

SPCLL.48 EARLY HELP OFFER

The panel received a presentation on the Early Help Offer.

Ms Arthey took members through the realignment of the local authority's early help and prevention. She explained how the threshold of need had been updated and what their early help priorities were. Children social care front door and early help front door now had a bridge between them which was now Integrated Front Door. Ms Arthey confirmed that they were well staffed with a range of different professionals. Ms Arthey stated that they now had a very clear early help assessment plan and intervention model. They can track caseloads, skills levels and any other needs that children and young people may have. She went on to explain all the work locality Family Hub provisions provide and how staff were refreshing and retraining in certain areas of knowledge to make sure they had the most up to date understanding of the new support systems. Ms Arthey divulged on the work done around Early Help Assessments and how they engage with parents to show where they think the families were and whether the families agree. She explained that children who move out of the care system were closely monitored and steps taken to make sure that the new early help provision helped prevent any child going into statutory care. A lot of work had been done with schools and midwifery by using online forms. The forms allowed the collection of information to ensure that the right decision was made on service needs to be provided for each family. Ms Arthey confirmed that previously an escalation of needs was resulting in children coming into care. However, the impact of the new Early Help Assessment had shown that the community offer was impacting the number of children entering care.

Miss Wilson asked how much influence children and young people had on the services they received. Ms Arthey stated that they gave constant feedback directly to the young people, communicating via young people friendly apps or offering them face to face services. Miss Wilson added that when she was diagnosed with dyspraxia as a child, she was put through a couple of early help provisions and it really helped her. She stated that she was quite young at the time so she did not have much influence in the decisions made but wondered, now that she was older, whether she would have more of an influence. Ms Arthey stated that they were looking at employing a partnership coordinator who would work in partnerships and directly with young people to receive this sort of feedback.

One member asked what officers have had to do to adapt the service due the current Covid-19 restrictions. Ms Arthey reassured Members that they were still doing doorstep and face to face visits to children and young people who were the most vulnerable. The risk stratification tool guided them on which children would need additional support and if staff were willing and able to go out, they would provide face to face visits to these young people. They had also done a lot of work virtually with young people. Ms Arthey added that there has not been much reduction in the work that they do, they have just had to implement it in a different way to normal.

RESOLVED – That the presentation be noted.

SPCLL.49 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDER

There were no questions for the Portfolio Holder at this meeting.

SPCLL.50 CALLING IN OF DECISIONS

There were no formal requests from Members of this Panel to call in decisions of recent Cabinet and Portfolio Holder meetings

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 6.12 p.m.