

**GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL**  
**FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Thursday, 30 January 2020**

**PRESENT:** Councillor  
Councillor(s): M Hall, D Bradford, C Buckley, B Clelland,  
P Craig, L Kirton, K McCartney, E McMaster, M Ord,  
R Oxberry, I Patterson and Reay

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS** Jill Burrell

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor(s): G Haley

**F33 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor L Caffrey, Councillor S Craig and Councillor S Gallagher.

**F34 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 November 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

**F35 SUPPORT FOR YOUNG CARERS**

Committee received a report on the Young Carers Service. It was reported that this is one element of a three-part Carers contract which started in May 2019. Carers Trust Tyne and Wear were awarded the contract to support young carers aged under 18 years.

It was noted that in the first two quarters of the contract, 50 referrals were received from a number of sources. There were more females than males, with a 31 – 19 split. In terms of ages there were some referrals made for carers as young as 5 years old. The biggest cohort of young carers are within the ages of 8 and 13 years old.

At the end of quarter two there was a total of 400 young carers receiving support. 351 of these were receiving active support, this is frequent and activity based. 30 young carers were receiving short term support, which is quick intervention and advice. 19 of the young carers were receiving non active support, this is where they have been registered but are not undertaking any intervention support. It was noted that a number of young people are signed up but there has been difficulty in engaging them.

A number of interventions are offered to young carers. In the first two quarters these interventions included; group activities, drop in sessions, peer support, one to one emotional support, Expert Young Carers Group and in-house training in such things as cookery skills. The aim of the interventions is to give young carers an opportunity for a break and to meet other young carers, to gain experience in new skills and tackle new challenges.

It was noted that some young people do not see themselves as carers and therefore proactive work is underway through schools and social media to contact as many potential young carers as possible. Awareness raising is also done through leaflets and talks at other agencies.

It was questioned what things young people were doing in terms of caring for their parents. It was noted that this varies and referrals are made to Adult Social Care to look at what other services can be put in place. The service works with the family as a whole. It was acknowledged that partnership working is at the core of the contract.

It was reported that the service does not work in isolation and allows for a full young carer assessment so that interventions can be tailored for individual needs.

The cost of the contract for the first year is £200,000, of which the Council pays 39% and the CCG 61%. This amount decreases over the five year duration of the contract. Committee was concerned about this decreasing funding, it was felt that this is saving the Council work and therefore it made no sense to reduce funding to it. It was confirmed that the contract will continue to be reviewed, a quality assessment has started and this will be carried out annually.

It was questioned whether there is a contingency plan for the later years of the contract when the funding has decreased. It was noted that the specification is written to expect more young carers will come into the service and as Carers Trust Tyne and Wear is a registered charity it will monitor spend and bids are being made for a number of grants.

The point was raised that some young carers will be in households dependent on Universal Credit and it was questioned whether this is feeding into the work of the service. It was confirmed that if any household was suspected to be in financial difficulty the service would follow this up through the multi-agency group.

Further information was requested on the savings that the service makes to the Council. It was agreed that officers would look into what analysis was carried out when the contract was being drawn up and report back.

It was questioned whether there are any trends with the number of young carers. It was reported that the youngest carers are between 5 and 7 year olds, this cohort makes up 10-15% of the 400 young carers. Support plans are tailored to each young person depending on their circumstances and there is a reliance on providers to ensure the support caters for all young carers. It was also noted that the number of young carers is increasing and it is expected that this trend will continue as this will also be linked to the promotion and marketing of the service.

It was queried whether there is any time limit for working with each child. It was confirmed that there is nothing prescribed in terms of the length of time that the service can work with a young carer. An assessment must be done within 28 days of referral and support plans are regularly reviewed. It was noted that it is a very fluid service with some young carers leaving the service and then returning at a later date.

It was requested that this report be brought back to Committee on an annual basis.

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the content of the report.

### **F36 OFSTED - ANNUAL REPORT**

Committee received a report outlining the outcome of the most recent Ofsted inspections. Last term three inspections were carried out under the new Ofsted framework.

It was reported that Rowlands Gill Primary School remained as 'requires improvement'. The LEA agreed with the judgement but officially raised issues with Ofsted over the conduct of the inspector. It was pointed out that the school is in a good place and the new Headteacher was only in post for a week before the inspection was carried out.

Washingwell Primary School remained 'good' and Dryden Special School maintained its 'outstanding' rating.

Committee was advised that inspections are currently underway at Ryton Juniors and St Mary and St Thomas Aquinas Primary School.

It was noted that a lot of training and support is in place to help schools through the change of framework.

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the position of schools in relation to Ofsted inspections.

### **F37 SECONDARY ACADEMIES PERFORMANCE - PROGRESS UPDATE**

A report was presented on the performance in relation to secondary academies. It was noted that there remains only one maintained secondary school in Gateshead, with all the others having converted to academy status.

It was reported that, in terms of Ofsted ratings, on the whole secondary schools are performing well. However, there are ongoing issues around the continuation of a Sixth Form at Heworth Grange, a briefing note will be circulated to members in due course around this matter.

In terms of GCSE results it was reported that Gateshead has the highest in the region, Gateshead is also top in comparison to statistical neighbours. Progress 8

measures progress pupils have made since year 6, this is low in some schools in Gateshead. However, it was acknowledged that the issue is due to primary schools doing so well in Gateshead that it is difficult to meet progress grades.

In relation to permanent exclusions Lord Lawson of Beamish was the highest excluder during the autumn 2019 term. During the term there was a total of 25 permanent exclusions, this figure was 36 for the same term last year.

Parental preference remains high for Cardinal Hume and is increasing for Grace College following it becoming part of Emmanuel College's Multi Academy Trust.

RESOLVED - That the Committee noted the position of secondary schools and academies on this range of data.

### **F38 LIAISON WITH GATESHEAD YOUTH ASSEMBLY**

Representatives from Gateshead Youth Assembly attended the meeting to discuss their annual report and the priorities set for 2019/20.

It was noted that the priorities for the coming year are in line with the Council's Thrive agenda.

Committee viewed a presentation and video on the work carried out by Youth Assembly in recent years and the representatives discussed what they have gained from being part of the Assembly.

RESOLVED - (i) That Committee requested to note the information presented in the report and by the Young People.  
(ii) That the Committee noted the invite to the Convivial Supper on Tuesday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

### **F39 SMOKING IN EXPECTANT MOTHERS**

Committee received a report and presentation on the sector led improvement work being carried out. A number of topic areas within the conception to 2-year offer were considered as needing to improve and any particular gaps were identified.

Following a self-assessment smoking in pregnancy was chosen as an area to initially focus on. The risks of smoking in pregnancy were highlighted as;

- Risk of complications
- Risk of stillbirth
- Baby more likely to be premature and/or born with a low birth weight
- Risk of SIDS

It was noted that the smoking status at time of delivery data is self-reported across Gateshead and Newcastle and shows a general downward trend. In order to tackle

the problem of smoking during pregnancy, 28 GP practices and 37 pharmacies across Gateshead now have stop smoking advisors. In addition, over half of the 0-19 service is trained as stop smoking advisors. The QE hospital participated in the PREP trial which was successful in recruiting the largest number of women in all the trial sites. There is also a Quality Improvement Lead based at the QE who is crucial in keeping work moving. The Quality Improvement Lead has led training on a programme of Very Brief Advice.

In addition, a stop smoking service has been opened at the pharmacy within the QE hospital. Carbon monoxide screening is also being carried out at every maternity appointment so this allows for the smoking conversation to take place.

It was reported that the 2019/20 quarter 1 and 2 data shows a sustained reduction in smoking at the time of delivery whereas the national picture has stalled.

It was noted that going forward monitoring will take place of progress against the bespoke action plan. Post-natal work will continue to prevent relapse, this will be through Health Visitors and midwifery service. Work will also continue to ensure that services are looking at the evidence base in order to offer relevant support.

It was questioned why there has not been more of a drop in the number of expectant mothers smoking given that there has been a rise in the number of people vaping. It was confirmed that there is no data to show how many expectant mothers are vaping. However, the advice is that it is better than smoking tobacco as it is the chemicals from tobacco which cause harm to unborn babies.

The point was made that there is evidence that some young mothers desire low birth weight as they believe this will make for an easier birth. It was acknowledged that in order to tackle this, midwives no longer refer to unborn babies as being 'small' and instead use terminology such as 'weak'. It was noted that there is now a script in use across the maternity service so that all services are using the same terminology.

RESOLVED - That Committee noted the contents of the report and the work that has taken place to support pregnant women and their families to stop smoking.

#### **F40 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received the work programme report setting out the provisional work programme for the Committee for the year 2019/20.

RESOLVED -

- (i) That Committee noted the provisional work programme.
- (ii) That Committee noted that further reports on the work programme will be brought to the Committee to identify any additional policy issues, which the Committee may be asked to consider.