

GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL
FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Thursday, 2 December 2021

PRESENT: Councillor M Hall (Chair)

Councillor(s): H Kelly, D Bradford, C Buckley, D Burnett,
B Clelland, P Craig, S Craig, C Davison, S Gallagher,
K McCartney, J Mohammed, M Ord, D Robson,
Rachel Walton and Ayodele Akin

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor(s): G Haley

F17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor McMaster, Councillor Caffrey and Councillor Oxberry.

F18 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

Matters Arising:

It was questioned whether any local authorities are emerging as an example of good practice in terms of home schooling. It was confirmed that at the recent ILAC inspection the home school team came out very well and that there are no local authorities emerging as better than Gateshead. However, it was noted that Doncaster has very small numbers of electively home educated children and therefore officers were keeping an eye on that authority for any examples of good practice.

F19 CORPORATE PARENTING TRAINING

The Committee took part in a training session delivered by Young Ambassadors around their experiences of the care system.

From the training the following actions were identified;

- Care Leavers to be able to contact their local Councillor direct, even if they move out of Gateshead as they remain the responsibility of the authority and Councillors.
- Case studies around Social Worker decisions and what the LAC is told about their family circumstances to be included in a future report to Committee.

RESOLVED - That Committee noted the information presented and actions identified.

F20

OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT INSPECTION UPDATE

Committee received a report on the outcome of the ILAC framework visit. The focused visit was carried out on 22 and 23 September 2021 and evaluated the health and protection of young people and families at the 'front door' – the integrated referral team (IRT) and in the assessment and intervention service (A&I).

The visit looked at; how children and young people are triaged, support services, out of hours and safeguarding.

It was noted that this was a focused visit and not an inspection, therefore no judgement is received at the end. The visit identifies areas for improvement and priority action, for which there were none for Gateshead. Two areas of improvement were identified; the quality and impact of supervision and contingency planning for children in need and the routine inclusion of the views of children and their families in audits. The service was already aware of the first area for improvement identified and a plan is being developed around contingency planning for children in need.

The report following the visit was very positive with 'strong praise' for Gateshead. Social workers were described as 'highly skilled, committed and caring' and assessments were seen to be 'comprehensive and analytical'.

The visit also highlighted the closely aligned partnership working and the service continuing to innovate throughout the pandemic. The visit also showed that staff felt valued.

Committee congratulated the service on the visit.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Committee noted the outcome of the Ofsted visit in September 2021 and the implications for children in Gateshead.
 - (ii) That the Committee receives a post Ofsted inspection plan so it can monitor progress against the areas Ofsted identified for improvement.

F21

WORK PROGRAMME

Committee received a report on the work programme for the remainder of the 2021/22 municipal year.

At the request of the Committee the meeting scheduled for March has been reinstated to look at Permanent Exclusion data and EHCP process and data.

It was requested that this Committee look at budget proposals for next year, in particularly with regards to the large spends in Children and Families budget.

It was also requested that affordability of school uniforms and poverty proofing schools be added to the work programme for a future meeting.

Committee also asked for a report on the changes to the Music Service to be added to next year's work programme.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Committee noted the provisional programme.
 - (ii) That the 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.

Chair.....