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## GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### CORPORATE PARENTING SUB OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday, 11 January 2016

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillor M Brain (Chair)
	Councillors: B Oliphant, B Clelland, D Robson, C Simcox, Sasha Ban and Jeremy Cripps

#### **CP16 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor S Craig, Cllr McNally and co-opted member Julie McCartney.

#### **CP17 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2015 were approved as a correct record.

It was requested that future minutes explicitly reference 'Foster Carers', rather than 'Carers', when referencing that particular group.

#### **CP18 EDUCATION ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee received the annual report on the work of the Virtual School over the last year. It was noted that the REALAC team contributed to the recent Ofsted inspection and also completed the data dashboard, which compiled the key data information around educational outcomes. There has also been focus on the PEP process and in particular around the roll out of the new Key Stage 5 PEPs.

An Educational Psychologist was appointed from April 2015 for 0.2 of the week and is skilled in providing training. In addition a new teacher has been appointed with effect from April 2015 to work on the team four days per week. It was noted that the team is still missing a mentor to support young people in terms of behaviour and emotional problems.

A new governance committee has been set up for the Virtual School, with the first meeting being held in October. This group is made up of local authority professionals who provide challenge to the Virtual School. Work is ongoing around how to get the messages back to schools and increasing challenge and dialogue with schools.

There is tighter monitoring of the use of Pupil Premium, funding will only be released once evidence of PEPs has been received from the school.

Work continues to monitor pupil progress, this is through weekly meetings and Ofsted recognised there was robust tracking in place. There is an increase in the number of LAC accessing work experience through the Pathways2work programme. It was noted that this continues to be a high priority for the team because working with pupils from year 10 can help steer them, this has resulted in an increase in the number of LAC going on to college and university.

It was reported that Ofsted recognised the improved quality of PEPs, in particular the strategic way of evaluating Pupil Premium, and stated that it was evident the team was prepared to challenge schools. Challenge continues around ensuring planned progression routes for 16-21 (or 25) year olds to tackle the number of young people not in education, employment or training.

It was noted that the number of permanent exclusions for LAC continues to be low, however work is ongoing to tackle the number of fixed term exclusions. For LAC, if there is a risk of permanent exclusion, there is the power to move that young person outside of the Fair Access procedures. However, schools are also encouraged to refer cases to the Fair Access Panel so that other schools can challenge them before referring them to the Virtual School Head, this ensures a level of accountability.

It was reported that, at the end of reception year, only 42% of LAC made a good level of development. However, improvements begin to be seen in Key Stage 1, with 83% of the cohort in 2015 meeting the correct level at reading, 86% for reading. Therefore it was acknowledged that there is currently a strong position for LAC at primary school. In terms of secondary schools there was a dip in performance since 2013, this is due to the high percentage of SEN pupils in the cohort. The provisional 2015 figures have improved in terms of 5 A\*-C for LAC, however it was acknowledged that further improvement is required in order to narrow the attainment gap.

It was recognised that more support is needed to support young people to overcome problems in years 10 and 11.

It was confirmed that work is underway to look at a restructure of the team to ensure more teaching time than administration time and guarantee the service is more responsive. It was acknowledged that the biggest issue is disruptive young people, which is due to difficulties in coping emotionally. It was noted that this needs to be addressed in the secondary sector in particular.

The point was made that the numbers of permanent exclusions and fixed term exclusions has increased and is not specific to LAC. Behaviour Support Team has been working with those pupils displaying low level disruption, however it was noted that LAC should be given further consideration and that is why the Virtual Head continues to challenge schools that wish to permanently exclude LAC.

It was queried what was meant by 'alternative education'. It was confirmed that this includes planned programmes in the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or alternative programmes elsewhere. This is aimed at young people who have disengaged through their attendance or behaviour so alternative provision attempts to get them

re-engaging. It was confirmed that there is no home education in relation to the current cohort of LAC.

The figures in the report relating to GCSE results for LAC in Gateshead were questioned. It was confirmed that there has been a 5% improvement in achievement in LAC since 2014 and it was acknowledged that the text in the report would be corrected accordingly.

It was questioned whether there continues to be transition work for LAC moving from primary to secondary school. It was noted that a lot of schools currently address this creatively, Foster Carers are trained by REALAC on this issue and this is also looked at through PEP reviews.

Committee was advised that there are currently 8 young people at difference stages throughout University, which is the most that Gateshead has seen. Progress has been made in terms of contact with universities, university and college representatives are invited to speak at the Foster Carers Workshop which is held annually. The point was made that there is also a responsibility on universities as there are new targets for LAC which allows them to create UCAS points prior to application. It was suggested however that this could result in young people not being able to last the course and it would be more important to ensure constant support is in place for these young people throughout their time at university. It was confirmed that there is a named support worker at universities which has worked effectively, evidenced through the very small drop out rate.

It was queried whether there are any incentives for Foster Carers to attend training. It was confirmed that Foster Carers are required to undertake a set amount of training within a three year period and there are no problems with this happening at present.

Concerns were raised around the increase in permanent exclusions. It was noted that additional resources, for example the Education Psychologist, are put in place, however there is not always a match between the child's needs and what the service has available. Work continues on a case by case basis with schools to identify needs of the young people and establish what is the need perceived by the school and what needs to be done.

The point was made that there are examples of designated transition workers in other areas and it was questioned whether there are examples of such workers within Gateshead. It was confirmed that there is transition funding and BIP funding available and some schools resource transition work themselves.

It was queried whether all LAC are successful in securing places at their first choice of school. It was agreed that this information would be sought and brought back to a future meeting, however, it was noted that a lot of work is carried out with the School Admission Team and there had so far been no challenge to a LAC not receiving their first choice school place.

RESOLVED - (i) That the comments of the Corporate Parenting OSC on the annual report be noted.

- (ii) That the Committee was satisfied with the areas identified for further development.

## **CP19 MISSING FROM CARE ANNUAL REPORT**

The Committee received the annual update report on the missing from care episodes between April 2014 and November 2015.

It was reported that the risk assessment tool has changed over the last year and is based on the Phoenix model that was developed in Manchester. Depending on the number of missing episodes this can trigger a referral to the Multi agency Sexual Exploitation Trafficking (MSET) meeting. When a young person is missing their care plan and vulnerability factors will be assessed and categorised as high, medium or low risk.

There has been a decrease in the total number of missing episodes compared to the same period last year, however there has been an increase in the number of missing from care episodes. It was noted that there has been three 17 year olds with a high number of missing episodes, one of whom is now in secure accommodation, and this has impacted on the figures.

Northumbria Police also previously did not record 'unauthorised absences' and instead all episodes were recorded as 'missing'. However from early 2016 an 'absent' category will be introduced which will now reflect those episodes where a person is 'not at a place where they are expected or required to be'.

It was reported that between April and October there were 444 missing from care episodes, 139 of which were from Eden View. This was significant because it was where the three 17 year olds were placed.

During the year there were 54 young people discussed at the MSET. Each case was looked at in detail, including diversion plans and there was a focus on return interviews as well as the development of a monitoring framework. In terms of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) 14 young people were assessed as at risk; three males and 11 females all aged over 14 years.

It was queried, in terms of the data breakdown, why there was a peak in missing episodes in November. It was noted that this is a regular pattern, however the reasons for this are not known.

It was questioned whether there are any CSE hotspots in Gateshead. It was noted that if there is anti social behaviour or inappropriate, illicit drinking hot spots these could pose risks, even if not within Gateshead they could still impact on Gateshead children and young people.

**RESOLVED -** That the Committee noted the information presented and agreed to continue receiving an annual report on missing from care issues.

**CP20 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED - That the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the remaining business in accordance with the indicated paragraphs of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

**CP21 CASE STUDY - FOSTER TO ADOPT**

The Committee received a case study on the Adoption Service, in relation to 'fostering to adopt' and in particular the personal experiences of adoptive families.

RESOLVED - That the Committee considered the case study and issues it presents.

**CP22 INSPECTIONS BY OFSTED OF GATESHEAD CHILDREN'S HOMES AND REGULATION 44 VISITS**

The Committee received a report on the Ofsted inspection outcomes and regulation 44 independent visits carried out in the Council's children's homes. The reports written as a result of the visits are circulated to the Service Director, Social Work, Care Wellbeing and Learning, Service Manager for Looked After Children and the Registered Manager of each Home.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

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