

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

**Thursday, 16 June 2016**

**PRESENT:** Councillor B Oliphant (Chair)  
  
Councillors: John Wilkinson, B Clelland, J Graham,  
E McMaster, S Ronchetti, C Simcox, S Green, M Hall and  
J Kielty

**CO-OPTED MEMBERS:** John Wilkinson

**F1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hawkins, Mullen, Adams, Kirton, Caffrey, S Craig and McHatton and co-opted members Sasha Ban, Jill Steer and Maveen Pereira.

The Chair welcomed new Councillors on to the Committee.

**F2 MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

**F3 CONSTITUTION**

The Committee agreed the constitution of the Committee and the appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair for the current municipal year.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**F4 ROLE AND REMIT**

A report was received outlining the remit and terms of reference of the Committee.

RESOLVED - That the remit and terms of reference be noted.

**F5 THE COUNCIL PLAN - YEAR END ASSESSMENT OF PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY 2015-16**

The Committee received the end of year performance report, highlighting performance against the strategic outcome indicators and additional indicators that underpins the work of Children's Services.

Overall achievements were outlined, including an increase in the level of engagement in Children's Centres, an improvement in the number of children

achieving a good level of development at age 5 and also the take up of three and four year old places. The Gateshead Youth Offending Team has won a national award for its First World War Art Project. It was also noted that the introduction of the 'MOMO' app (Mind of My Own) has helped young people engage with the service better. It was reported that overall performance for social care remains strong at a time of increased demand.

Areas for improvement were outlined, these include; the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils at Key Stage 4, the rate of under 18 conceptions, self harm rates and also the rate of permanent exclusions.

In terms of the target for reducing excess weight in primary children in year 6 it was reported that performance is just above the national average, however the rate for Gateshead is on a downward trend and the figures for reception age children are lower than the national average.

Educational attainment at primary school is meeting the target of 82%, with primary schools performing above the national and regional average. It was noted that Gateshead was ranked 44<sup>th</sup> out of 152 local authorities, with 35% of primary schools in Gateshead being judged as 'outstanding'. Also, GCSE performance remains stable.

The number of young people not in education, training or employment (NEET) is an improving picture, the service is tracking these young people well and the number of young people 'unknown' to the service is decreasing.

In relation to the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system, this currently stands at 47 young people per 100,000. However, there is a data lag so this relates to the period October 2014 – September 2015, this is a 46% reduction from the same period the previous year.

Targets have also been met and are improving in relation to child poverty rates.

The Strategic Outcome Indicator around reducing the number of children subject to a child protection plan has not been met. However, the percentage of children subject to a plan for a second or subsequent time is 11.8%, against a target of 15%, this equates to 40 children out of 338. Performance in terms of placement stability is measured by the percentage of children living continuously in the same placement for two years, performance is currently improving and is well above target. It was noted that the number of children subject to a child protection plan was 273 at the end of the year, this is a 23% increase over the last six months and is above the national average. Work is ongoing to unpick why there has been such an increase in the number of referrals, there is no specific pattern however there has been an increase in large sibling groups.

It was reported that the target has not been met in relation to timeliness of adoptions. There were 25 adoptions over the last year, however a small number of these took a significantly longer time due to sibling groups and complexities of the cases.

There has been some improvement in relation to hospital admissions for self harm although there are still some issues. Hospital admissions are down but are significantly higher than the national picture. There is a lot of work ongoing with the 'Expanding Minds, Improving Lives' project, with Newcastle Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), to redesign the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), there are strong messages coming from this around early intervention. From this project additional counselling support has been put in place for this year.

It was noted that there is still a gap in GCSE attainment for vulnerable young people, there has been a drop in attainment for those pupils on free school meals and children with special educational needs. Also, attainment for looked after children did not meet the target, however performance was better than last year.

There has been an increase in the number of under 18 conceptions, with Gateshead now the second highest within Tyne and Wear, this was an increase of 16 conceptions. Work is continuing to develop a sexual health strategy for Gateshead.

The rate of permanent exclusions in Gateshead has increased significantly over the last year, there have been 52 over the last year, two of which were from primary schools. The majority of permanent exclusions have been a result of drugs, violence and disruptive behaviour. A task and finish group has been set up by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) to look at this issue in more depth.

At the recent inspection Ofsted raised the issue of care leavers not in education, employment or training. Work is now ongoing across the Council to increase the number of apprenticeships.

Re-offending rates remain steady, at 36.9%, however the service still faces significant issues with young people re-offending.

It was questioned whether the rate of mothers drinking alcohol during pregnancy is monitored, in the same way that smoking is. It was confirmed that the midwifery service do monitor this but it is not reported, although if there were significant issues a referral would be made through the Referral and Assessment Team with the potential of an unborn child protection plan being put in place. It was suggested that this should be reported as there has been increases in babies being born with foetal alcohol syndrome. It was acknowledged that there is still a lot of education work to do around this issue to get the message out around the effect of alcohol in pregnancy. It was confirmed that a case study on alcohol in pregnancy is due to come to this Committee in October 2016.

It was queried why a child would be subject to a child protection plan a second time. It was noted that the first plan may have ended previously and the family has come back into the service, it was confirmed that it is uncommon for a second plan to come in to force within one or two years of the first plan coming to an end. It was noted that a second plan may for example be due to a change in a relationship, this could trigger a reassessment.

The point was made that there has been no improvement in teenage pregnancy

rates. It was confirmed that there has been a decrease since 1998. Although there has been an increase from 2013-14 overall Gateshead is the second lowest in the region for the first quarter. Also, the Family Nurse Partnership is continuing to work with under 19 mothers, this offers an intense service. The point was made that the Council is having little impact in this area and it was suggested that this be looked at in further detail by the Committee.

It was suggested that looked after children's attainment should also be looked at in further detail. It was confirmed that this is being picked up through the Corporate Parenting OSC work programme this year. The point was made that more focus is needed on improving the experience and progress of care leavers, as highlighted by Ofsted. It was acknowledged that there is still a lot of improvement needed in this area, and work is ongoing to develop an action plan for care leavers. It was confirmed that a case study on support for care leavers is due to come back to this Committee in March 2017.

In terms of closing the attainment gap for vulnerable young people at Key Stage 4 it was questioned how one school in Gateshead can have no gap. It was recognised that more sharing of best practice between schools is needed.

It was queried whether the increase in permanent exclusions is occurring in the same school. It was noted that there is a definite increase, however there is no pattern. Outreach work is underway to support schools to deal with behaviour better and ensuring there are better pathways for young people who are excluded.

It was questioned whether it was usual to have care leavers who do not remain in touch with the service. It was confirmed that this is not unusual and it may be the young person's choice not to be involved with the service anymore, however programmes are in place to encourage young people to 'stay put'. It was also questioned whether any care leavers with special educational needs are looked after until the age of 25. It was confirmed that this depends on the level of need, there are a number of support mechanisms in place for young people up to the age of 25. There is an expectation that the service will have a pathway plan to adulthood when a looked after child becomes 16, therefore any special requirements would be supported through their individual pathway plan.

It was questioned what effect there has been on support as a result of Operation Encompass. It was confirmed that from a school perspective this has been very useful, this has enabled the school to be aware of what additional support is necessary.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Committee considered that the activities undertaken at year end 2015/16 are achieving the desired outcomes in the Council Plan 2015-2020.
  - (ii) That the Committee agreed that the report be referred to Cabinet on 12 July 2016, with the recommendations from the Families OSC for their consideration.
  - (iii) That the issue around teenage pregnancy be a focus of the Committee's next performance report in six months time.

**F6****CORPORATE STRATEGIC TRACKER AND TARGET INDICATORS 2020**

The Committee received a report outlining the proposed service targets for the period up to 2020. It is proposed that the strategic indicators be split into 'tracker' or 'target' indicators; 'target indicators' are those issues where there is direct control by the Council and its partners, targets can be set and improvements measured regularly. For these indicators a fixed 2020 target will be set and progress towards this target will be reported on. 'Tracker indicators' are those targets that the Council and its partners have no direct influence to make changes quickly, these indicators will be tracked and benchmarked and the longer term trend will be monitored. The indicators set for 2020 were highlighted in the report.

It was queried whether, at a time of decreasing resources, this is asking too much of staff. This was noted and it was agreed to be fed back to Chief Executives.

It was suggested that there is confusion over the new measures for exam results. It was noted that there training sessions were being held for schools around this and it would be looked at as to whether this would be rolled out to school Governor training.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Committee's comments be noted on the proposed 2020 targets set for the corporate strategic indicators and the available benchmarked performance to ensure the Council's performance is continuously improving to contribute to the delivery of Vision 2030 and the Council Plan.
  - (ii) That the Committee agreed that the report be submitted to Cabinet for approval.

**F7****0-19 PUBLIC HEALTH DEVELOPMENTS**

The Committee received a presentation on the 0-19 children and young people's Public Health services.

It was noted that the findings from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and the Director of Public Health report show that children and young people under 20 make up 22% of the population in Gateshead. Obesity amongst 4-5 year olds is 10.5% and 20.7% for 10-11 year olds, this is above the national average, although locally there has been some improvement. Immunisation rates in Gateshead are above the national average, however hospital admissions as a result of self harm are worse than the national average.

It was reported that public health commissioning responsibilities for children aged 0-5 transferred from the NHS to local authorities in 2015. The main programmes transferred were; Health Visitors 0-5 (Healthy Child Programme), Family Nurse Partnership and School Nursing. The Council has been responsible for commissioning public health services for school-aged children (5-19) since 2013.

The mandated elements for 0-5's are around the five universal checks; antenatal

health promoting visits, new baby review, 6-8 week assessment, 1 year assessment, 2-2 ½ year review. The Council will return data to Public Health England throughout the 18 month mandation period. It was noted that through the mandated elements for 5-19's these interventions are under the Healthy Child Programme and are delivered through the School Nursing team. These elements include; height and weight measurement, hearing screening, visual screening, review vaccination and also reviewing physical, emotional and social development and taking appropriate interventions when needed.

It was acknowledged that the transfer to local authority, offers the potential to join up services across the age spectrum of 0-19 and enables greater integration between public health and children's services. It was also noted that there is more opportunity to remodel early prevention work and align service delivery.

It was reported that there continues to be challenges as there is currently a fragmented commissioning landscape, there are continuing issues with data sharing. In addition, the transfer of the 0-5 service will be reviewed in 18 months and there may not be the capacity to deliver Child Health services.

It was reported that an improvement plan is being implemented, working with the current provider, South Tyneside Foundation Trust, to reduce costs and staffing levels during 2016/17 to make budget savings of £0.459m. A procurement timeline has been established for a new 0-19 service to be in place by April 2018.

RESOLVED - That the Committee agreed to receive future updates as the development of the 0-19 service develops.

## **F8 REVIEW OF CHILDREN'S ORAL HEALTH IN GATESHEAD - SCOPING REPORT**

The Committee received the scoping report for this year's review, which is looking at children's oral health in Gateshead. It was noted that, in the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2015 and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, it was highlighted that poor oral health impacts on children and families' health and wellbeing and is an integral part of overall health in children and young people in Gateshead.

It was reported that oral health remains a local priority, it is related with promoting a healthy diet and appropriate infant feeding practices. Poor oral health can have an impact on self esteem, nutrition and digestion, speech and language. In Gateshead the cost of dental treatment for children is £1.4m. The World Health Organisation has described good oral health as; 'enables an individual to eat, speak and socialise without active disease, discomfort or embarrassment'.

It was noted that poor oral health in children can have a number of effects, including; pain and infection leading to difficulties with eating, speaking and sleeping, missed education and impact on the development of permanent adult teeth. Local authorities have the responsibility to provide or commission oral health promotion and oral health surveys, in order to facilitate the assessment and monitoring of oral health needs and planning provision of dental services.

It was proposed that the review will need to look at the inequality in terms of access to dental care, this is particularly an issue in the east of Gateshead. The review will also look at the prevalence of dental decay in five year olds, the level of hospital admissions for teeth extraction in 0-19 year olds and the approach to sugar reduction in Gateshead. In addition it was proposed that the review will look at commissioning and planning arrangements. The Committee was provided with the proposed timetable for the review, in particular around the evidence gathering sessions and a potential visit to a dental practice.

It was questioned whether there are school dentists in Gateshead. It was noted that there is an oral health team in South Tyneside hospital which goes to schools in Gateshead for the purpose of oral health promotion, however they do not check teeth.

- RESOLVED -
- (i) That the Committee noted the background to the Review and the current issues identified in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2014/15.
  - (ii) That the Committee agreed to the process for the Review.