

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**  
**held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 14 February 2019**

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)  
Councillor B Kaur  
Councillor L Kelly  
Councillor D Kershaw  
Councillor J Lepoidevin  
Councillor A Lucas  
Councillor C Thomas

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson  
Mrs K Jones

Cabinet Member: Councillor P Seaman - Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

By Invitation: Matt Gilks, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CRCCG)  
Chris Evans, Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust (CWPT)  
Anita Morgan, Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust (CWPT)  
Leeya Balbuena, Coventry and Warwickshire Mind (CW Mind)

Employees (by Directorate):

People S Bates, J Gregg, S Kinchen, J Moffat, H Nagra,  
L Pardy-McLaughlin, S Watson, R Wilshire

Place M Rose, A West

Apologies: Councillor L Bigham and P Male  
Councillor K Maton and Councillor T Skipper

## **Public Business**

### **44. Declarations of Interests**

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

### **45. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November, 2018 were agreed as a true record.

Further to minute 41 the recommendations of Scrutiny Board were considered by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills on 17th January, 2019 and he had decided to reduce library staff with a review in 3 months.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board request that this report also be considered by Scrutiny Board 2 as this remained a concern**

**46. Early Help Hubs**

Further to minute 28/18 the Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided a follow up report on the Early Help Offer of the Family Hubs including statistical data; evaluation data, examples of good practice, information about the use of satellite venues and outreach work including engagement with schools and education and, how the impact of the work was being assessed and evidenced.

The report noted that there were 8 Family Hubs operational in Local Authority venues across the city, serving local communities and focusing on delivering early help to children aged 0-19 (and up to 24 for young people with SEN) and their families. The Family Hubs had been operational since November 2017 and delivered a range of services targeted at families who need early help, and also host universal services for all families such as well baby clinics. Family Hubs represent interagency working and aimed to deliver the right help at the right time, and the practitioners working from the Family Hubs included local authority Children Services staff, health visitors, midwives, school nurses, Adult learning, Coventry Independent Advice Service, Ignite (in Willenhall) and, a range of other partners.

The Early Help offer aimed to identify and support children and families in need of early help as early and responsively as possible, and hence reduce the number of children needing statutory intervention (such as social care). Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was the current assessment framework for identification of needs and development of a bespoke family support plan. The report noted the number of CAFs by ward and ethnicity and the reasons for the need for early help. The primary reason for early help support was when there was low level needs and the threshold for statutory intervention was not met. At closure of the CAF the reason was identified, evidencing that 24% of assessment resulted in no further support required following CAF assessment; 44% early help plans were completed and no further action was required at that time, and 26% of cases required step up/escalation to social care.

The report noted early help support offered through family hubs included school readiness. The report also covered the following; quality assurance and the impact of Family Hubs in the first year, sharing good practice case examples from each hub, use of satellite venues and outreach work, engagement with schools and education and what needs to happen next.

Members noted that the meeting was due to be held in a family hub again following the success of the previous visit but this was not possible this time for logistical reasons.

The Board questioned the Cabinet Member and officers present on the following:

- Improving school readiness
- Working with schools and education colleagues
- Strategic joined up thinking trickling down from management

- Nursery provision
- Uptake from those over 16 particularly data around those over 18
- Re-referral and time limits
- Awareness
- Funding

Officers reported on strategic partnership working and the improvements to the stability of the workforce and the benefits this brings.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board request the following:**

- 1) An early help progress report in 12 months.**
- 2) A briefing note with further detail regarding the good level of development measure at the end of Reception and school readiness, including information about how Education (nurseries and schools) and Children's Services hubs are working strategically to deliver improvements.**
- 3) A briefing note with further information regarding data about support for those over 16 accessing the service and also re-referral data.**
- 4) The dashboard to include those over 19 using the service.**

#### **47. Sign Off of the Final Children's Services Improvement Board**

Further to Minute 33/18 the Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) regarding the sign off of the Children's Services Improvement Plan reported to the Children's Services Improvement Board on 24<sup>th</sup> January, 2019. Appended to the briefing note was the Children's Services Critical Performance Indicators and the Improvement Plan which detailed progress on 109 actions.

The report detailed:

- The background from when the Improvement Board was established and subsequent inspections and interventions
- The progress and the Improvement Plan
- Performance including the summary of critical performance indicators
- Continuous Improvement Executive Group

In summary the concluding of the current plan marked a significant point in the journey of "Getting to Good". The plan demonstrated significant progress across Children's Services in collaboration with partners to improving good outcomes for Children and Young People.

The Board congratulated all those involved in the journey so far.

The Board questioned the Cabinet Member and officers on the following:

- Partnership working
- The review of the Child Sexual Exploitation risk project
- The new Executive Group and reporting
- The high number of days taken for a child to enter care and move in with their adoptive family for children that have been adopted
- Reducing the number of older children entering care
- Unaccompanied asylum seeking children

Officers commented on positive strong partnerships and the changing challenge of the health landscape. The high number of days taken for children to move in with their adoptive family was noted as a positive news story for the children involved as they were of teenage.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board:**

- 1) Formally thank all those involved in the improvement journey**
- 2) Receive a briefing following each Executive Group meeting**

**48. Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health of Looked After Children**

The Scrutiny Board considered a joint briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) and the Director of Commissioning Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CRCCG) which provided an update on the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service Looked After Children (CAMHS LAC) Service. The Scrutiny Board also considered information presented by Voices of Care regarding a project the participation team were exploring that would help young people support other young people's mental health.

To improve access to mental health support, a dedicated service for Looked After Children (CAMHS LAC) was jointly commissioned by Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group and Coventry City Council. The service was formally launched in April 2017 and more recently the service had expanded to support care leavers from July 2018.

The Scrutiny Board welcomed Health partners from CRCCG, Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust (CWPT) and Coventry and Warwickshire Mind (CW Mind). The CAMHS LAC service is an integrated mental health service, which was delivered via a partnership between Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust (CWPT) and Coventry and Warwickshire Mind (CW Mind).

The briefing note highlighted:

- key features of the service
- future plans for integration with the Through Care team
- 2019 priorities
- Impact of the service changes
- Next steps

The Board questioned the Cabinet Member and officers on the following:

- Waiting times
- The impact on schools of Mental Health Issues
- Proactive prevention, for example, support for children from countries experiencing war
- Access to services for others who had experienced disruption such as families who Foster and Adopt

The Scrutiny Board were reassured that there had been improvements to waiting times although this was slower than it had been hoped and there were still improvements to be made. Also initial health assessments included mental health.

The Scrutiny Board were very positive about the Voices of Care project to empower young people and requested an update on whether Looked After Children receive the funding.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board recommend to the Cabinet Member that adoptees and adopters receive the same access to emotional wellbeing and mental health services as Looked After Children and Care Leavers**

#### 49. **Signs of Safety Implementation Manager Attendance at Conference**

The Scrutiny Board considered a Briefing Note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which provided information regarding the attendance of the Signs of Safety Implementation Manager, at the Signs of Safety Conference held in Dublin on the 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018. The report detailed the costs and benefits of attendance.

The Signs of Safety approach to Safeguarding and Protecting Children was widely recognised internationally as the leading available participative approach to child protection casework. Since 2017, there had been a significant strategic approach to embed Signs of Safety across all multi-agency Children's Services; and practice Signs of Safety as the overarching practice framework model within Coventry.

The learning and knowledge from the conference had been included in the multi-agency training sessions to promote the continuous improvement work and the quality and consistency of practice and services provided to Children, Young People and their Families. Networking with other Practice Leads from across the UK had enabled Coventry to lead on a new 'Signs of Safety East / West Midlands' Practice Development group. Telford, Solihull and Sheffield had all showed an interest in working with Coventry in sharing learning, supporting new initiatives and building confidence within children's services.

The Scrutiny Board discussed the innovation and costs.

**RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Board request that a training session for members be arranged on Signs of Safety**

50. **Work Programme**

The Scrutiny Board noted the work programme.

51. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business

(Meeting closed at 3.55 pm)