

Minutes of the Meeting of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 2.00 p.m. on 26th September, 2013

Present:

Board Members: Councillor Akhtar
 Councillor Bains
 Councillor Blundell
 Councillor Clifford (Chair)
 Councillor Hetheron (substitute for Councillor M Mutton)
 Councillor Lakha
 Councillor Mrs Lepoidevin
 Councillor Mrs Sweet (substitute for Councillor Mrs Abbott)
 Councillor Thomas

Co-opted Members: Mrs S Hanson
 Mrs K Jones
 Mr R Potter

Other Members Present: Councillor Sawdon

By Invitation:

Councillor A Lucas – Leader
Councillor P Townshend – Deputy Leader
Councillor G Duggins – Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)
Councillor J Innes – Deputy Cabinet Member (Children and Young People)
Councillor C Fletcher – Chair of Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee
Councillor D Kershaw – Cabinet Member (Education)
Councillor Gingell – Cabinet Member (Health and Adult Services)
Councillor Andrews – Deputy Leader of Conservative Group

A Weir – Independent Chair for Coventry Safeguarding Children Board
Dr N Fraser – Independent Chair of the Serious Case Review Panel
R Lock – Independent Author for the Serious Case Review Overview Report
M Dalton – Independent Chair for the Serious Case Review Sub Committee
J Barnes – Executive Nurse, NHS Coventry & Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group
S Doheny – Director of Nursing, NHS England
A Nicholson – Borough Commander, West Midlands Police
T Bacon – Detective Superintendent, West Midlands Police
M Radford - University Hospitals Coventry & Warwickshire NHS Trust
Dr S Binyon – Medical Director, Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust
R Newson – Chief Executive, Coventry & Warwickshire Partnership NHS Trust

Employees (by Directorate):

Chief Executive's: M Reeves (Chief Executive), V Castree, A West

People: B Walsh (Executive Director), D Haley, S Roach, M Godfrey, L Sanders

Resources: C Forde, M Rose, S Bennett

Apologies: Councillor Mrs Abbott
Councillor M Mutton

19. Chair

In the absence of the Chair, Councillor Mrs Abbott, in accordance with paragraph 4.5.10 of the Constitution, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Clifford, Deputy Chair of the Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee.

20. Declarations of Interest

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests declared.

21. Daniel Pelka Serious Case Review

The Scrutiny Board considered a Serious Case Review (SCR) report of the Coventry Local Safeguarding Board regarding Daniel Pelka. A briefing note attached to the SCR report provided background information, presented the findings and explained the next steps. The report would also be considered at an Extraordinary Meeting of the City Council to be held at 2.00 pm on Thursday 10th October, 2013.

Daniel Pelka was murdered in March 2012 by his mother and stepfather. Following their conviction in July 2013, and subsequent sentencing in August 2013, the Daniel Pelka Serious Case Review (SCR) report was published on Tuesday 17th September 2013.

In line with statutory guidance a SCR was commissioned to investigate and analyse the circumstances into Daniel's abuse and death. A SCR is held whenever a vulnerable child had died or been seriously injured or impaired and abuse or neglect was known or suspected to have been a factor. The purposes of this SCR reflected the relevant government guidance at the time to: -

- Establish what lessons were to be learned from the case about the way in which local professionals and organisations work individually and together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children;
- Identify clearly what those lessons were both within and between agencies, how and within what timescales they would be acted on, and what was expected to change as a result; and

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- Improve intra and inter-agency working to better safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

The SCR report made 15 recommendations to local partners, covering domestic abuse, referral and assessment processes, training of staff, practice in schools and health as well as the requirement to disseminate messages to the Children's Workforce.

The Scrutiny Board questioned the officers and the invited panel of partners, including Amy Weir, the Independent Chair for the Coventry Safeguarding Children Board and Ron Lock, the Independent Author for the Serious Case Review Overview Report, about issues raised in the report which included:

- Progress and actions
- Issues relating to domestic violence
- Referral and assessment, information sharing and communication
- The Voice of the Child
- Learning lessons, action and accountability

The Scrutiny Board's questions were detailed and responded to in depth by the appropriate people present, the discussions included:

1. Progress and changes already made within the City Council and partner agencies following Daniel Pelka's death that had already made a difference to concerns expressed in the report and the monitoring of progress.
2. Responses to a letter from the Children and Families Minister (Edward Timpson) which had expressed concerns about information recording, information sharing and assessments.
3. Ensuring that Child Protection issues were considered in conjunction with information relating to reported domestic violence incidents and alcohol misuse.
4. Sharing of information between agencies.
5. Audit Processes and Quality Management systems in place when agencies respond to domestic abuse.
6. The impact of changes to police capacity on partner agencies.
7. The SCR's recommendation that the Council provide assurance that Safeguarding was clear and robust and the fact that an Ofsted inspection report had given assurance that the school Daniel attended had good safeguarding procedures.
8. Amending reporting protocols /guidance for School staff.
9. Head Teachers procedures for contact with external services.
10. The linking of assessments made by different agencies such as social care, and midwives.
11. The criteria for conducting investigations (Section 47) and Child Protection Case Conferences.
12. Record keeping and use of Information Technology.
13. 'The Voice of the Child' improvements to relevant paperwork so that a section acts as a reminder when assessments were made to ensure that we view the 'Life of the Child through the Eyes of the Child'.
14. The future strategic role of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and

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Terms of Reference.

15. Leadership and performance management of the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
16. Responsibility for following up actions from recommendations in previous Serious Case Reviews.
17. Quality assurance of information shared.
18. Quality of work rather than completion in order to meet targets.
19. Recruitment and retention of social care key staff, caseloads and volume of work and whether resources matched demand.
20. Learning from this case, the importance of empowering staff and how this would be achieved within the different agencies.

During the discussion it was agreed that the following documents would be shared in written format with the Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2):-

- Evidence of progress and changes within the City Council referred to by the Executive Director, People, Coventry City Council.
- The Executive Nurse, NHS Coventry & Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group agreed to circulate the outcome of an audit undertaken to review the actions implemented following domestic violence recommendations made as a result of previous Serious Case Reviews.
- The Director of Education and Inclusion agreed to look at the cause of the time lag from a previous Serious Case Review recommendation which indicated that information about domestic violence should be shared with schools. The recommendation was first made in 2008 and it was reported that a pilot had only recently begun.
- The Independent Chair for Coventry Safeguarding Children Board agreed that a written response would be more appropriate to questions regarding the strategic role of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and terms of reference, along with Leadership and Performance Management details of the Board.
- The Independent Chair for Coventry Safeguarding Children Board agreed to provide information on following up actions of Serious Case Reviews, including monitoring which recommendations had been implemented and responsibility for the implementation of actions.

In addition:

- The Independent Chair for Coventry Safeguarding Children Board agreed to consider publishing the response to the Children and Families Minister following formal agreement.
- The Local Safeguarding Children's Board agreed that including a section for 'The Voice of the Child' in any relevant paperwork would be an excellent idea.

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Clifford, Councillor Mrs Lucas, Leader of the Council, addressed the meeting and gave a commitment that any recommendations from both the Scrutiny Board's meeting and the Extraordinary Meeting of the City Council on 10th October 2013 would be adopted by the City Council.

RESOLVED:-

- (i) That reports on progress be received by the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) in 3 months and 6 months' time.**
- (ii) That the City Council be requested to give consideration to any further recommendations they wish to make at the Extraordinary Meeting of the City Council on 10th October, 2013.**

22. Any Other Items of Public Business

There were no additional items of business.

(Meeting closed: 4.15 p.m.)