

**Coventry City Council**  
**Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**  
**held at 10.00 am on Thursday, 13 July 2017**

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)  
Councillor S Bains  
Councillor D Kershaw  
Councillor A Lucas  
Councillor C Miks  
Councillor K Mulhall  
Councillor P Seaman

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson

Cabinet Members: Councillor J Clifford  
Councillor B Kaur  
Councillor E Ruane

Employees (by Directorate):

V Castree, Resources Directorate  
R MacKenzie-Wilson, People Directorate  
M Rose, Resources Directorate  
P Smith, People Directorate

By Invitation: P Collard – Carers Trust  
M Graham – Carers Trust

Apologies: Councillor J Lepoidevin and P Male  
K Jones and R Potter

## **Public Business**

### **5. Declarations of Interests**

There were no Disclosable Pecuniary Interests.

### **6. Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 were approved.

### **7. Support to Young Carers**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Director of Children's Services regarding young carers in the City as there had been concern about children becoming looked after as a consequence of having carer responsibilities at home.

The briefing note recognised young carers as children and young people under 25 who provide regular and on-going care and emotional support to a family member

or friend who is physically or mentally ill, disabled, frail or has a behavioural disorder or misuses substances. This could be a parent or sibling.

Young carers may take on practical or emotional caring tasks that an adult would normally do. Instead of seeing friends, enjoying hobbies and doing homework, children as young as 10 are cooking, cleaning, managing medication, shopping, looking after brothers and sisters.

The impact for a young carer can be significant, regardless of the type of care they provide or how often they provide it. It can take a toll on their physical and mental wellbeing as well as impact on their own development and opportunities.

Young carers do not always identify themselves as a carer because they see it as part of their everyday life and something they have always done. Often young carers may be reluctant to tell anyone about their caring responsibilities for a variety of reasons including family loyalty, stigma, bullying or simply knowing where to go for support. There is broad recognition that young carers who support parents with mental ill-health or problems with drugs or alcohol were particularly at risk of remaining hidden from view because of concerns about being taken into care, or at least a belief that this is the case.

The report detailed the National Context which included legislation and government plans to support carers. The report also gave information about Coventry's Support to Young Carers which included the internal targeted service for young carers who were 'children in need or above' and also the close partnership working with Carers Trust Heart of England, a local voluntary organisation who work with all young carers regardless of level of need.

The Board were reassured that young carers were not being taken into the care of the Local Authority because of their carer responsibilities.

The Board welcomed representatives from the Carers Trust to the meeting and were interested to hear about support for young carers.

The Board discussed the following with officers and representatives from the Carers Trust:

- Hidden numbers of young carers in Coventry
- That some young carers choose to remain hidden for fear that a consequence of disclosure could be the involvement of Social Services and the young person being taken into care. The Board were reassured that there were currently no children in care as a result of being a young carer
- Working with schools and health partners to encourage the disclosure of hidden young carers to enable support to be provided
- Resources and funding – some of the funding currently accessed by the Carers Trust was coming to an end and the possible impact of that
- Partnership working, including looking at models of delivery in neighbouring authorities
- Statutory responsibility

The Scrutiny Board thanked the Carers Trust for their contribution to the meeting and support to young carers in the City.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) The Scrutiny Board note the report**
- 2) The Scrutiny Board make the following recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Cabinet Member for Education and Skills**
  - a. Make the streamlining of services to young carers a priority with a view to working alongside the Carers Trust to providing a “one stop shop” for the young carers needing support**
  - b. Consider further the identification of young carers, working with partners including schools and health agencies and the promotion of available support to young carers as well as the management of resources to ensure adequate support for all young carers in Coventry**
- 3) The key messages about ways people can help, such as communicating the support and identification available, be circulated.**
- 4) A Young Carer report back to the Scrutiny Board in 6 months**

**8. Improvement Board**

Further to Minute 3/17 the Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People) which informed the Board of progress with the Children’s Services Improvement Plan reported to the Children’s Services Improvement Board on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2017. The report was based on data from April, 2017 and the next Improvement Board would be on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2017.

The Ofsted re-inspection of Children’s Services in March, 2017 judged overall services in Coventry as “requires improvement to be good”. Services for Children were no longer inadequate, which was a key point in the improvement journey and demonstrated the improvements made over the last few years. The service was no longer subject to an improvement notice and the Department for Education removed the intervention on 13<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 when the Ofsted inspection was published, however support would continue to be provided for the next 12 months.

The report highlighted nine recommendations and areas for further development, in response to this a Children’s Services Improvement Plan had been developed. The plan included the actions to deliver the recommendations and areas for development for children who need help and protection; children looked after and achieving permanence; leadership, management and governance. New performance measures had been developed to demonstrate improvement and impact and would be included in the monthly performance report.

The report identified a number of issues for partners including the application of thresholds and the appetite for risk across the strategic safeguarding partnership. The Improvement Board would work to strengthen and provide assurance and governance role of partners and the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB). The LSCB would report on progress made in respect of the required areas of improvement that relate to partners.

The final Improvement Plan would be submitted to Ofsted and the DfE by 20 September 2017. The report and revised Improvement Plan would be shared with staff and partners and progress against the plan reported to Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board at quarterly intervals.

At the meeting on the 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2017 the Improvement Board was reviewed and Board Members agreed to continue to operate a Children's Services Improvement Board to meet every 12 weeks as oppose to 6 weeks and the Shadow Board and Implementation Group would also be every 12 weeks.

The briefing note also provided information about the following:

- Re-design of Children's Services
- Quality Assurance and Practice
- More detail requested by the Board regarding return home interviews, children placed with foster carers and in residential care and newly appointed social worker retention
- Performance overview
- Communication

The Scrutiny Board discussed the redesign of Children's Services and return home interview concerns with officers and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) The Scrutiny Board request that redesign of children's services be considered at their meeting in September, 2017.**
- 2) The redesign of children's services consultation document be sent to Members of the Board including co-opted members.**
- 3) The Chair of the Board and the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People and Deputy Chair to meet with the Deputy Chief Executive for People and the Director of Children's Services to discuss the redesign before it is considered by the Board in September.**

## **9. Work Programme**

The Board discussed the Work Programme and members were interested in the following:

- progress on the Retention of Social Workers Task and Finish group,
- private fostering
- special and alternative education provision including home schooling
- challenging issues in Secondary Schools including Stoke Park Support and progress on the Tile Hill Wood and Woodlands Merge
- political management of schools receiving inadequate ratings from Ofsted

**RESOLVED that**

- 1) The following be considered further by the Board**
  - **the task and finish group**
  - **private fostering**
  - **special and alternative provision including home schooling**

- 2) **Further consideration be given to an item on challenging issues in secondary schools including**
  - **Stoke Park support**
  - **Progress Tile Hill and Woodlands merge**
  
- 3) **Further consideration be given about whether any school which receives an inadequate rating from Ofsted should have their action plan automatically considered at the Education Scrutiny Board**

10. **Any Other Business**

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 12.00 pm)