

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 4 April 2019

Present:

Members: Councillor M Mutton (Chair)
Councillor L Bigham
Councillor D Kershaw
Councillor J Lepoidevin
Councillor A Lucas
Councillor P Male
Councillor P Seaman
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: C Evans, Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust (CWPT)
J Francique, Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Partnership Trust (CWPT)
M Gilks, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CRCCG)

Employees (by Directorate):

People: J Essex, V Finlay, S Giles, J Gregg, T Jacques, H Nagra, K Nelson

Place: G Holmes, L Knight

Apologies: Councillor B Kaur

Public Business

64. Declarations of Interests

There were no disclosable pecuniary interests.

65. Emotional Well-being and Mental Health support to Children and Young People in Coventry

The Scrutiny Board considered a joint briefing note of the Council, Coventry and Rugby Clinical Commissioning Group (CRCCG), Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust (CWPT), Coventry and Warwickshire Mind, and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), which provided an update on CAMHS and the wider system, with a particular emphasis on how children were being supported in schools.

The note indicated that, nationally, the CAMHS system operated at four levels:

- Universal Services (tier 1) – this included GP's, primary care services, health visitors, school nurses, schools and early provision.
- Targeted Services (tier 2) – this included mental health professionals working singularly rather than as part of a multi-disciplinary mental health team.
- Specialist Services (tier 3) – these were multi-disciplinary teams of mental health professionals providing a range of therapeutic interventions for children and young people with complex, severe or persistent mental health needs.
- Highly Specialist Services (tier 4) – these included day and inpatient services and highly specialist services for children and young people with the most serious problems. It could also include crisis or home treatment services which provide an alternative to hospital admission.

Appendix 1 of the note submitted showed the services that were delivered in Coventry, making up the CAMHS system locally. It was particularly noted that tier 3 supported children aged from 0-18, was funded by the CRCCG and delivered by CWPT. There were a range of other mental health services in the city, funded by both the Council and the CRCCG. Coventry and Warwickshire Mind was another significant service provider.

Across the UK, child and adolescent mental health problems had been a significant concern for successive governments and it was recognised that problems could have a range of negative impacts on individuals and families which could continue into adult life. Challenges included a significant increase in demand, which outweighed available capacity and resources.

Since 2015, Government had increased NHS funding nationally to support mental health for children and young people through the CAMHS Transformation Fund. A multi-agency CAMHS Transformation Board led by the CRCCG was established and a CAMHS Transformation Plan developed. The Plan was designed to drive improvements across the CAMHS system locally and was refreshed and signed off annually by NHS England.

The NHS 10 year plan was published in January 2019 and made reference to expanding children and young people's mental health services and made a commitment to the following:

- Improved early intervention / prevention
- An increased digital offer
- Mental health funding for children and young people would rise faster than overall funding
- Mental health support embedded within schools and colleges, funded by central government from the Public Health Grant
- Crisis and home treatment functions
- Reduced waiting times for children and young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

The Scrutiny Board noted that the local CAMHS Transformation Plan had made progress over the first three years in relation to the following:

- Improved service responsiveness by CWPT specialist services
- Implementing the new ASD pathway for school-aged children
- The ongoing development of the Dimensions Tool, which provides an on-line resource to help parents and professionals gauge a child or young person's emotional well-being and signpost them to appropriate help.
- Delivery of support in schools, particularly through the enhanced Primary Mental Health Officer and positive outcomes this has achieved.
- Launch of an integrated CAMHS Looked after Children (LAC) Service, with consultation and advice to social workers
- Establishment and on-going development of the community eating disorders service and the implementation of access and treatment target timescales.
- Sourcing additional clinical capacity via an independent provider to offset recruitment challenges.
- Launch of a new website, plus utilisation of social media (Instagram, Facebook and Twitter)
- Positive feedback from service users in many areas via the Experience of Service User Questionnaires, as well as feedback on CAMHS LAC and Primary Mental Health Services
- Enhancement of the response for children and young people in crisis, including the creation and expansion of the Acute Liaison Team.

The note also set out the concerns in relation to the provision of service in Coventry. The national picture was reflected locally, where there has been an increase in demand alongside difficulties in recruiting staff. To date, during 2018/19 there had already been an increase in referrals to the tier 3 service of 66% compared with 2017/18. It was estimated that this would rise to 81% by the end of the financial year. Although the responsiveness of the specialist service had continued to improve, there was a concern about the ongoing waiting time for children and young people accessing services given the increased demand. In addition, assessments for Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) had increased by 23% to date during 2018/19 and, as there was a relatively limited availability of clinical capacity with diagnosing skills, children and young people were having to wait longer for an assessment.

In terms of those areas that were working well, it was indicated that Education partners within Coventry had recognised that promoting good mental health and wellbeing in children from the earliest age required a whole system approach, of which CAMHS was one of many components. There were examples of good practice across both the primary and secondary sector, with the following identified as common areas of practice:

- The Thrive Approach
- ACES (Adverse Child Experience Survey)
- Primary Mental Health in Schools roll out
- Specialist Services – Educational Psychology and the Social Emotional and Learning Team

- School Partnerships

In addition, it was evident that schools invest significantly in internal pastoral support and specialist interventions, drawing on an increasing range of strategies and expertise.

The Scrutiny Board recognised the improvements that had been made and noted that work continued to further improve the service and the next steps proposed. Further work was required to ensure that the interrelationships between the tiers was understood; to understand the capacity and demand gaps in service; to continue the work of the Primary Mental Health Team in up-skilling and building capacity in the wider workforce through training and consultation along with in-school training for staff on Mood, Attachment, Self-harm, and Eating Disorders and the training of facilitators for the Boomerang 5-week resilience course. The roll out of the Dimensions Tool, including ongoing development and engagement work across key stakeholders needed to continue along with testing and evaluation work involving CWPT Internal Audit and the Warwick Business School. In addition, work within the Education Service would focus on monitoring the Lancaster Survey for effectiveness and its impact on children, evaluating the ACES Survey and how this could inform secondary initiatives.

RESOLVED that, the Education and Children’s Services Scrutiny Board (2):

- 1. Note the progress to date and endorses the plans to further progress the mental health and emotional wellbeing support available to children and young people living in Coventry.**
- 2. Request that a further progress report be submitted to the appropriate Scrutiny Board in 12 months time.**

66. Coventry Parenting Strategy 2018-23

Further to Minute 50/17, the Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note of the Deputy Chief Executive (People), which provided an update on progress made against recommendations and the year 1 parenting action plan.

The note indicated that, as children and young people develop, families may face a number of challenges and the extent to which they are able to cope would differ from person to person. It was recognised that in Coventry the future for young people was not as good as others across the West Midlands and the country as a whole, particularly for more deprived children. The total number of children and young people 0-19 was 89,200 and equated to approximately 25% of the City’s population.

As a Marmot City, those delivering support to families in Coventry were committed to tackling health inequalities, where increasing deprivation was associated with poorer health. Coventry’s vision for parenting was to have ‘more Coventry children and young people grow up within supportive families and communities’. The Coventry Parenting Strategy 2018-2023 identified areas for improvements and made key recommendations, bringing together the views of parents, stakeholders and evidence.

Ten years ago there was a key drive by the Council to invest in parenting programmes such as Triple P (an evidence based programme for parents of children aged 0-19 years). There was strong evidence that there were many benefits associated with Triple P parenting support and, consequently, staff at all levels within the Council were trained in delivering this support to families. The standard Triple P programme had been shown to prevent crime, violence and anti-social behaviour.

Upon completion of the programme parent's wellbeing was measured using the Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale (DASS: Lovibond and Lovibond, 1985), a 42 item self-report assessing symptoms of anxiety and stress in adults. Data for the last 6 years had been analysed for those parents who had completed a Triple P programme to understand the impact of the support offered. From 2012/13 to 2017/18, the scores for depression, anxiety and stress were consistently higher before completion of the programme. This showed that the investment into parenting support over the past six years had a positive impact on parents and carers in the City.

The note summarised the progress made against the key recommendations from the Coventry Parenting Strategy 2018-2023, along with a high level summary of the five year strategic plan at Appendix 1. The full action plan, developed by the Parenting Strategy Task and Finish Groups was also set out at Appendix 2.

The Scrutiny Board noted that feedback from parents / carers was positive, with many indicating that they had benefitted from attending the parenting programme.

Having considered the information provided, the Scrutiny Board sought clarity regarding who could make referrals in relation to parents attending the Triple P programme, and particularly whether referrals could be made from GP surgeries and from housing providers, who may be in receipt of information which suggests parents may benefit from attending the programme. They were advised that there is an open referral system for attending the programme and therefore parents could make a self-referral or other organisations could make referrals on behalf of the parents. Officers indicated that further work could be undertaken specifically with GP's and housing providers to promote the Parenting Strategy and the Triple P programme.

RESOLVED that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2):

- 1. Note the content of the report and the progress made.**
- 2. Request that officers explore ways to promote the Coventry Parenting Strategy and the Triple P programme, particularly with GP's and the City's housing partners.**
- 3. Indicate that there are no specific recommendations to make to the appropriate Cabinet Member at this time.**

67. **Children's Services Ofsted Focused Visit**

The Scrutiny Board considered a briefing note by the Director of Children's Services, which detailed the outcome of the Children's Services Ofsted Focused Visit held on 26th and 27th February 2019.

Ofsted re-inspected Children's Services on 6th to 30th March 2017. The outcome published on 13th June 2017 indicated that Children's Services were judged as 'requires improvement to be good'. Children's Services were no longer considered inadequate.

A report on the future arrangements for continuing and sustaining improvements in Coventry was presented to the Improvement Board by the Independent Chair and the Director of Children's Services on 3rd October 2018. It was noted that the Children's Services Improvement Board would be replaced by an Executive Group to retain political and corporate oversight of Children's Services Continuous Improvement.

The note indicated that the Continuous Improvement Executive Group would ensure tighter focus on continuous improvement and Ofsted preparation. The impact of performance would be managed and monitored by the Group. This was an interim measure before returning to business as usual in accordance with the revised arrangements for Children's Safeguarding, and subject to satisfactory inspection by June 2020.

Ofsted's revised framework included focus visits to local authorities who were judged as 'requires improvement' and the first visit was held on 30th and 31st January 2018. Two inspectors spend two days reviewing the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and speaking to social workers and partners. Visits were also made to two area social work teams to review children in need cases. The letter confirming the outcome of the visit was published on 22nd February 2018.

A further Ofsted Focused visit was held on 26th and 27th February 2019. The visit focussed on permanency planning and achieving permanency. This involved two inspectors reviewing leadership at all levels and specific areas of Return to birth family; Connected (family and friends) care; Adoption; Long term fostering; and Special Guardianship.

Feedback from the visit overall was positive with strong evidence of an improving service. The redesign was having a positive impact for children who experienced less turnover of social workers, life story work was improving and fostering to adopt was an emerging strength.

Ofsted stated that the Council knew themselves well, and that the self-evaluation was accurate. Ofsted recognised that there was a strategic drive to achieve permanence for children, but for some children this took too long and some children experienced too much drift and delay. In addition, the audit and quality assurance function was complemented, which reinforced how important it was that audits were undertaken each month and the learning fed back into practice.

Ofsted identified a number of areas for improvement and the Scrutiny Board were advised that these were in areas where the service expected rather than newly identified areas, and that work was ongoing within these areas to ensure that the improvement continued.

Ofsted published a report on the outcome of the visit on 21st March 2019 and a copy was appended to the briefing note submitted.

The note indicated that a further focused visit would be undertaken prior to the next standard inspection, which was likely to take place between December 2019 and June 2020.

The Scrutiny Board sought clarification on an issue identified in the Ofsted report which suggested there were delays in family finding where there was a plan for adoption and this was due to a linear approach in which prospective adopters' reports were shared one at a time with social workers by Adoption Central England. The process carried out to find families for children with an adoption plan was explained and the Scrutiny Board were assured that the Council were confident that the practice identified by Ofsted was not what happens within Coventry.

In addition, there was concern that there appeared to be a consistent comment from Ofsted at all inspections and focussed visits regarding the consistency of paperwork and Care Plans. The Director of Children's Services indicated that there had been improvement in the completion of paperwork and Care Plans but acknowledged that there would always be some level of inconsistency due to the volume of contacts and open cases being managed.

The Scrutiny Board expressed their appreciation of staff within Children's Services for the work they are doing and the improvements made within the service and requested that this be conveyed to them.

RESOLVED that the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2):

- 1. Note the letter form Ofsted detailing the areas for development.**
- 2. Indicate that there were no further recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member at this time.**
- 3. Request that their appreciation be passed to staff within Children's Services for the work they are doing and the improvements made within the service.**

68. Work Programme

The Scrutiny Board noted the work programme and noted that any outstanding matters would be carried over to the work programme for 2019/20.

Two potential items of business were identified for consideration during 2019/20, these being 'Knife Crime' and 'Research on the effect that use of extra strong cannabis in the home has on children residing there. Officers were requested to

investigate which Scrutiny Board would be the most appropriate for the consideration of these items and referrals made to those Boards.

RESOLVED that the work programme be noted and the additional items indicated above be referred to the appropriate Scrutiny Board for inclusion on their work programme for 2019/20.

69. **Any Other Business**

The Scrutiny Board requested that their congratulations be passed to Chantelle Murray and Rachel Owen, employees in Children's Services for winning the Role Model of the Year and Employee of the Year respectively in the recent Phoenix Awards.

(Meeting closed at 3.50 pm)