

At a meeting of the CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ADVISORY PANEL of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Tuesday 6 October 2015

Chairman:
p Councillor David Keast

p Ann Briggs
p Rita Burgess
p Roz Chadd
p Jacqui England

p Marge Harvey
p Jackie Porter
p Malcolm Wade
p Christopher Wood

57. BROADCASTING ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman announced that the press and members of the public were permitted to film and broadcast the meeting. Those remaining at the meeting were consenting to being filmed and recorded, and to the possible use of those images and recording for broadcasting purposes.

58. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest and, having regard to Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal Interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered, having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 4 of the Code, whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

60. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 9 June 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

61. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's Announcements on this occasion.

62. EDUCATION OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

The Panel received a presentation of the Director of Children's Services (Item 5 in the Minute Book) regarding the educational attainment of children in care.

The role of the Virtual School was highlighted to members, explaining that they worked with schools to monitor the progress of all looked after children.

The context of the results was given to members, specifically that the 2015 figures are currently provisional and so are subject to change. Due to the small number of Looked After Children involved, any change in the cohort will have a significant impact on the data and therefore these statistics need to be treated with caution. The Department of Education will return validated data in December 2015.

Members noted the outcomes for the assessed age groups which were outlined in detail.

Members heard that in response to these results the Virtual School will undertake a detailed analysis of predictions and those who did or did not achieve them, taking into account a wide range of contextual data and information. The Virtual School plans to look for achievement patterns from the last 3-5 years and will examine progress of those within the cohort who were also in care in previous years. For GCSEs, a series of anonymised case studies will be produced along with a comprehensive action plan to improve GCSE attainment.

The Virtual School would also monitor autumn predictions and undertake quality control.

RESOLVED: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the report and the actions being taken.

63. **'PREVENT' PRESENTATION**

The Panel received a presentation of the Lead Officer for Preventing Terrorism (Item 6 in the Minute Book) from Hampshire Constabulary. This provided an overview on the 'Prevent' initiative, a strategy to tackle terrorism at the grooming and radicalisation stage, before criminal action takes place. Members heard that 'Channel' was a national programme that was part of the Prevent strategy to safeguard children & adults from being drawn into terrorism. The Panel heard case studies of two successful Hampshire Channel cases and were informed that Channel became statutory from February 2015.

Prevent works towards this aim by taking a safeguarding approach and working in partnership with multiple agencies. Referrals can be received from any safeguarding professional but are mainly coordinated through the Police and via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.

The Panel heard how the next step was to develop Prevent delivery boards and conduct Counter-Terrorism Local Profiles. This would be joined by developing engagement plans and ensuring good referral mechanisms. Frontline staff are currently being trained in this area, including teachers who have training days planned with the view for staff to cascade this knowledge through schools.

Members received and discussed the following documents from Glynis Wright, Safeguarding Lead for Schools; 'Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools' and 'The Prevent duty - Departmental advice for schools and childcare providers'.

In response to member's questions it was confirmed that cyber-bullying was closely tied with Prevent's aims along with the ties to social media, all of which were hard to manage. It was also noted that the method for recognising radicalisation was contained in the acronym 'Big Mac' – Behaviour, Identity, Grievance, Motivation, Attitude and Capacity.

RESOLVED: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the presentation and the work being undertaken by the Prevent initiative.

64. HAMPSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2014-15

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) on management and outcomes of the Adoption Agency from 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Over the year the team had dealt with 687 enquiries of individuals seeking to adopt, compared to 485 for the previous year. 413 of the enquiries were not able to be progressed for a variety of reasons, including non response to calls back, lack of physical space for a child, lack of child care experience and health issues. 189 applications were received and of these 149 were forwarded to the adoption assessment team.

Over the year the Adoption Assessment Team completed 78 assessments with 73 sets of prospective adopters being approved within the year. The average timescale for the assessment was 7.9 months compared to 8.9 months the previous year.

Members heard how inconsistencies remain between the preferences of prospective adopters and the needs of children requiring adoption, with the average time for a match following approval is 3.3 months.

In response to questions members heard that;

- Where there is a lack of childcare experience, applicants are directed towards training and opportunities to volunteer.
- Applicants tended to be between 35 and 40 years old and some may have made repeated attempts at IVF if unsuccessful.
- If a Foster Carer were to wish to adopt a child they would go through the same process, however it may be faster due to their experience and position.
- The Adoption team tries to place siblings together, however this may not be possible if it's not in the best interest of the children.
- Sickness problems within the team were not short term but due to a couple of long term periods of sickness.

- Wherever possible, the relationship with the extended birth family members is maintained, with support for both direct and indirect contact available.

65. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting during the following item of business, as it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information within Paragraphs 1 and 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, and further that in all the circumstances of the cases, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, for the reasons set out in the report.

66. **HAMPSHIRE ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT 2014-15 (Exempt Appendix)**

The Panel received the exempt appendix.

RESOLVED: That this report is noted and supported by the Children and Families Advisory Panel.