

At a meeting of the CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ADVISORY PANEL of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Tuesday 7 June 2016

Chairman:
p Councillor David Keast

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

p Jackie Porter
p Malcolm Wade
p Christopher Wood

75. 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.

76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Harvey.

77. 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.

78. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 2 February 2015 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

79. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Chairman's Announcements on this occasion.

80. SUFFICIENCY DUTY

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 5 in the Minute Book) regarding the Sufficiency Duty of Hampshire County Council in relation to Children in Care. The duty of 'sufficiency' is explicit within

legislation. It requires local authorities to ensure that, through direct provision or commissioned services, a range of placements sufficient to meet the needs of all children in care are available locally.

There are eight priority areas set out in the report; Early Help, Edge of Care, Foster Placements, Adoption, In-house Provision of Residential Accommodation, Commissioned Residential Placements, Secure Accommodation and Post 16 and Leaving Care.

The panel heard that there has over the last few years, been a 17% increase in Looked After Children, but this has thought to have stabilised. This is against a backdrop of increased numbers of referrals, assessments and Child Protection Plans. It was noted that a high number of first time entrants into care are aged 14 plus, making up 27.4% of Hampshire's looked after children from March 2015 to February 2016.

In response to questions members heard that:

- There is a dedicated Procurement Team that works on the commissioning.
- There is thought to be an increase in older children entering care because of the challenges to parents with parenting at that age and the risks around child exploitation.
- The department has very good threshold criteria and Early Help is still embedding. Threshold criteria are not adjusted due to workload or budget.
- Many of the initiatives launched from the Social Work Innovation Grant Funding have been positive but it is challenging to make them mainstream due to cost. One particular success is the work around Edge of Care.
- That the need to ask prospective adopters about their willingness to adopt a disabled child needs to happen sooner within the process.
- That residential care is having the number of children per setting reduced to four but more homes will open to make up for this. This is thought to provide improved outcomes and quality by delivering a family experience rather than institutionalised care.
- Secure Accommodation has a new welfare focus with typically a three month minimum and a maximum of nine months for placements. This repurposing should allow better use of beds. Swanwick Lodge was noted as having a recent 'Good' level OFSTED and does not run at an expense.

RESOLVED: That the Children & Families Advisory Panel note the contents of the Sufficiency Duty Strategy and requests the Director of Children's Services bring the contents to the attention of the Executive Member for Children's Services.

81. **TACKLING MISSING, EXPLOITED AND TRAFFICKED CHILDREN**

The Panel received a presentation of the Director of Children's Services (Item 6 in the Minute Book) in regards to Tackling Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children.

The panel heard that there were confusing definitions in relation to missing children as 'Missing Child' or 'Missing from Care' meant that the child's whereabouts are unknown and it has been reported to the Police. However 'Away From Placement Without Authorisation' is in relation to a looked after child whose whereabouts are known but they are not where they were expected to be and their carer has concerns.

There is currently a National Inquiry for runaway and missing children which intends to examine how the above definitions inform Police actions and safeguarding procedures. It was noted that Hampshire has very robust processes and a good relationship with the Police.

The Panel received an overview of the different teams working in this area; including the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board which works in prevention, intervention, scrutiny and offers training.

Within Hampshire's Children's Services is the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which operates as the first point of contact for all cases, the Children's Reception Team (CRT) which screen all referrals aged 10+ for CSE and the Youth Offending Team (YOT) has an embedded use of SERAF forms. This is the Sexual Exploitation and Risk Assessment Form now used within Hampshire, the Isle of Wight and Southampton.

The Panel also heard about the Willow Team, a multi agency team made up of Children's Services, Police, Barnardos and Health professionals funding by the Innovation grant. This team offers direct work to at risk children as well as training and raising awareness for adults. This team has been considered successful and funding has been extended until March.

In response to questions members heard that:

- There has been support in this area from the previous, and current, Police and Crime Commissioners.
- Over 1200 SERAF assessments were completed last year and divided into 'not at risk', 'at risk' and 'being exploited'. There are currently thought to be between 20 to 30 children are at risk of experiencing some form of exploitation within Hampshire.
- There are specific staff who work with BME and faith groups to reach these communities. This has been achieved by speaking to community leaders to target messages, but is now aimed at everyone.
- There have been some challenges communicating with Education services to fit this topic into the PSHE provision, despite the offer of free training and a safeguarding event. There has however been strong progress with Health professionals.
- Any SERAF form which uncovered Child Abuse would trigger a Section 47 Child Protection investigation.
- There is no specific strategy for home learning children but they would come under the public and community awareness schemes.
- Volunteers have been established under the Innovation Grant who complete Return Interviews, notifying the Willow Team and the allocated Social Worker for action.

RESOLVED: That the Children & Families Advisory Panel note the work being undertaken by Children's Services to tackling Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children in Hampshire.

82. NATIONAL SECURE WELFARE COORDINATION UNIT

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) with regards to the creation of the Secure Welfare Coordination Unit.

This Unit has been grant funded for a 12 month period by the Department for Education and will receive and co-ordinate all referrals for secure welfare placements across England. A period of testing commenced on 3 May 2016 with a formal launch of the service on 16 May 2016.

The panel heard that the number of referrals the Unit will receive is unknown as it is hard to get an oversight of the need and there were other challenges as the scheme relies on other Local Authorities volunteering to opt in. There is a small team of one Manager and two Placement Officers acting as one contact for placements and so far it has been judged to be very successful. Members were told that 33 referrals had been received over the first two weeks and 20 of these had been closed. These referrals have shown trends already and there have only been one or two vacant beds. Most are filled by young people, frequently females at risk of being exploited or trafficked. The service is reporting to the Department for Education regularly to give updates on their progress.

In response to questions members heard that:

- It was too early to say if there was a case for separate male and female accommodation.
- There is different training for assessing accommodation on the basis of Welfare or Justice which takes into account the young persons risk to self, psychological needs and criminal behaviour.
- The homes are designed in a way to meet different needs in one place, which will be expanded as data is gathered.

RESOLVED: That the Children & Families Advisory Panel note the creation of the Secure Welfare Coordination Unit.