

At a meeting of the CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ADVISORY PANEL of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on Tuesday 18 October 2016

Chairman:
p Councillor David Keast

p Ann Briggs	a Marge Harvey
p Rita Burgess	a Jackie Porter
a Roz Chadd	p Malcolm Wade
a Jacqui England	a Christopher Wood

83. 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.

84. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Cllr Chadd, Cllr England, Cllr Harvey, Cllr Porter and Cllr Wood.
Cllr Lovegrove attended as the Liberal Democrat Deputy.

85. 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.

86. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of 7 June 2016 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

87. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman asked if any members had visited a Children's Centre since the last meeting. Cllr Burgess shared details of a recent visit to Cyprus Lodge and praised the work that was taking place there.

The Chairman updated the Panel on a recent meeting with Wiltshire Councils Children and Young People Task Group he attended along side Officers from Hampshire County Council and Cllr Mans, Executive Member for Children and Families. Wiltshire's Task Group wished to meet with Councils who had achieved a higher OFSTED rating with a view to improving. The Chairman said that the meeting left him with a sense of pride in Hampshire and the work undertaken by officers of the Council, and while Wiltshire took into account our practises, there was learning both ways.

88. ADOPTION (ALB) BENCHMARKING 2015-16

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 5 in the Minute Book) regarding the Adoption Benchmarking report for 2015-6 which analysed Hampshire's data and performance against other authorities in the South East Region and against national data where it has been published.

The Panel heard that 84 children were adopted in Hampshire during this period and the average length of time from entering care to moving to their adoptive family was 565 days. This was an increase of 14 days on 2014/15 and higher than the government threshold of 426 days.

Officers explained that children under 5 were closer to this target as their adoption was within 433 days on average, and placement plans can be held up due to family members coming forward at the last minute. It was also explained that many of the children waiting for adoption have complex needs and officers strive to balance the timescales against securing the best outcome for the child.

The Panel also heard that Hampshire's adopter approval rates continue to be strong with 76 approved in the last year, significantly above other authorities in the region.

In response to questions members heard that:

- There was no age limit for an adopter in relation to the adoptee, however age is considered with respect to when the child is fully grown. In general, older children tend to secure permanency through long term fostering or through a Special Guardianship Order.
- In comparison to the most similar authorities, Kent and Buckinghamshire, Hampshire's figures are positive.
- No Local Authorities in the South East Region are currently meeting the Government's adoption timescale of 426 days.
- That data collection is not undertaken by front line managers and so does not have an impact on manager's capacity. .

RESOLVED: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the contents of the report and the conclusions reached.

RESOLVED: That a follow up report be presented to the Children and Families Advisory Panel in twelve months time.

89. YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM SERVICE UPDATE AND YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN FOR 2016/17

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 6 in the Minute Book) in regards to the Youth Offending Team's (YOT) Service Update and Youth Justice Plan.

The Panel heard that the aim of YOTs is to work within the Youth Justice System to prevent the offending and reoffending of children and young people. YOTs receive funding from the Youth Justice Grant in order to do this whilst working alongside the Local Authority, Police, Health Services and the National Probation Service.

YOT works with children and young people aged 10-17 years with some transitional work for 18 year olds. Whilst not a statutory function, YOT also undertakes prevention work and can assist the Police with decisions in relation to children.

The Panel heard that the service was in a challenging environment in relation to finance with a budget reduction of 20% having taken place since 2012/13, leading to several service reviews. Officers explained that due to a focus on prevention, there have been less arrests of children in recent time, however those left in the system are the most complex individuals and are often Looked After Children, have Mental Health diagnosis or a history of risk taking behaviour.

In response to questions members heard that:

- In order to improve reoffending rates YOTs are looking into the timeliness of their reviews and an improvement plan is in place. The service is looking at their data and reviewing their interventions.
- Currently, budget reduction has been facilitated due to the lower number of children and young people offending however if these reductions continue then the service will not be able to continue in the same way. This would be the same nationally, however it was noted that there was a very good partnership with agencies in Hampshire.
- That restorative justice work with the offender and a victim can be undertaken with both parties' consent and that this has been shown to have the most impact with more serious offences.
- That the timeframe for reoffending statistics is twelve months, however those at high risk of reoffending are tracked via the Priority Young People Panel meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the work of the Youth Offending Team and the Youth Justice Plan for Hampshire.

RESOLVED: That Officers keep the plan under review following any publication of the Taylor Review and return to the Children and Families Advisory Panel for consideration if necessary.

90. **HAMPSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 7 in the Minute Book) with regards to the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board.

The Panel heard that the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) was a statutory body that oversaw multi-agency safeguarding arrangements across Hampshire. The board is underpinned by two principles; safeguarding is everybody's responsibility and having a child centred approach. The HSCB has been rated as 'Good' by OFSTED.

Within Hampshire, during 2015/16, the Children's Reception Team had received 35,939 contacts and as of March 2016 1,435 children were subject to a Child Protection Plan and 1,309 were in the care of the Local Authority. The Panel heard that the Local Safeguarding Children Board would undertake a Serious Case Review where the criteria is met, however HSCB is also committed to undertaking smaller multi-agency case reviews. This would be in instances when the SCR criteria are not met but it is considered that lessons can be learnt from multi-agency working. In 2015/16 there was one SCR and six Multi-Agency Reviews in Hampshire

In response to questions members heard that:

- That the number of children considered to be at risk does continue to increase, however this is a national trend thought to be due to professionals becoming better at identifying abuse.
- CAMHS continue to operate with a long waiting list however there has been some recent investment and growth in the service to make low level counselling easier to access.
- Those families considered hard to reach due to improvements in Early Help and the Family Support Service. There is also assistance from the voluntary sector with Faith and community groups.

RESOLVED: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the work of the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board.

91. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM SEEKING CHILDREN AND REFUGEES (UASC)

The Panel received a report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 8 in the Minute Book) with regards to the Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Refugees.

The Panel heard that there had been a significant increase in the number of individuals claiming asylum in both the UK and Western Europe as a whole with 3,043 UASC arrivals in the UK in 2015, a 56% increase since 2014. Previously, UASC became the responsibility of the Local Authority into which they arrived; however this has proven to be a problem for Kent and other passenger ports. The Government has therefore introduced the National Transfer Scheme, under which Local Authorities will accept UASC to 0.07% of their child population. Past this point it is expected that the children will be transferred to neighbouring authorities.

The Panel were informed that Hampshire had 34 UASC currently, but the 0.07% cap would be 197 children and this would represent a 12% increase in Children in Care. It was noted that each of these children would need an assessment for themselves and any family thought to be within the UK.

In response to questions members heard that:

- Most UASC would enter Foster Care but some would need to go to private providers, at a higher cost and potentially outside of Hampshire.
- The Home Office will offer funding for each child; however the maximum rate is less than the yearly average cost for a Child in Care.
- Age assessments are undertaken by two trained Social Workers and one independent person with a translator if necessary. There is no intrusive element such as dental checks. The assessment is undertaken on one day, but there is ongoing assessment from that point.
- There are some Foster Carers able to meet the needs of children from the countries and cultures involved. Many UASC will be placed in London Boroughs as there are established communities there.
- Some of the UASC will have family members already in the UK that they can stay with.

RESOLVED: That the Children and Families Advisory Panel note the contents of the report and the conclusions reached.

Signed: _____

**Cllr Keast
Chairman**