

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	Tuesday, 8 January 2019
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, G. Carr, Charlesworth, Clements, Franklin, Gollick, Daniel Griffin, Hampson, Hand-Davis, Hayward, W. Johnson, Makinson, Mitchell, Pourali, Sheard, Tattersall, Williams, Wilson and Wright together with co-opted member Ms P. Gould.

39 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

Apologies for absence were received from Kate Morrith in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001.

40 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

41 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 2018 were approved as a true and accurate record subject to a minor amendment to reflect that a task and finish group is to be arranged to look at redevelopment plans in more detail, not a briefing meeting. The meeting noted advice from the Executive Director (Core Services) that the constitutional arrangements did not allow a further task and finish group to be arranged.

42 Neglect Strategy

The following representatives were welcomed to the meeting:

Mel John-Ross, Service Director – Children’s Social Care & Safeguarding, BMBC
 Deborah Mercer, Head of Children & Family Social Care, BMBC
 Nina Sleight, Head of Early Start, Prevention & Sufficiency, BMBC
 Laura Hammerton, Family Centre Development Manager, BMBC
 Alicia Marcroft, Head of Public Health, BMBC
 Julie Keen, Social Worker, BMBC
 Alison Wilkinson, Social Worker, BMBC
 Angela Fawcett, Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Looked After Children, NHS Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
 Cllr Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson for People, BMBC

Deborah Mercer introduced this item, explaining that the Neglect Strategy ‘Neglect Matters’ has been developed by safeguarding professionals in partnership with the

NSPCC and provided an update on the progress made since the implementation of the strategy as well as the future plans in relation to this area of work.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge, the following matters were highlighted:

Effective consultation took place with the NSPCC, the Equality Forum and Children, Young People and Families prior to the launch of the strategy as neglect is everybody's business. The voice of the child is always captured so that their experience of living with difficult circumstances and possible neglect is at the forefront of the assessment and any intervention. Each child is spoken to individually.

Barnsley has adopted the use of the Graded Care Profile version 2 (GCP2), which was developed by a GP, to support the assessment of neglect experienced by a child or within a family. The tool uses a 'traffic light' system looking at a wide range of topics such as quality and quantity of food, cleanliness of the home and general appearance. If an assessment comes back as 'red' this is passed on to social care for action. 'Amber' and 'green' cases are passed on to Early Help or universal services. The tool also identifies qualitative outcomes (which are continually measured) such as duration of help, length of time children are in receipt of services and how entrenched long term neglect cases are handled to prevent re-referral. The multi-agency Neglect Sub-group is continually checking and further developing outcomes.

In terms of communities, work is ongoing with families through the Early Help offer delivered in Family Centres to address neglect using a strength based approach, not punitive measures. Barnsley is fortunate to have strong communities where this approach works well. In addition, BMBC has worked with Rowlands Pharmacy who have promoted the neglect strategy in local chemist shops. Councillors and Area Councils can help to spread the message through using their knowledge of their local communities to share understanding of the impact of neglect and use of the strength based approach. Neglect is a complex multi-generational problem, encompassing poor education, family/parenting, isolation, domestic violence, substance misuse and mental health. Poor mental health can have a significant impact on parenting.

There is a need to develop open and honest relationships with families so that they are able to disclose what is happening within the family and to enable correct support to be put in place to help them. Lots of promotional activity takes place in family centres, such as tooth brushing clubs etc. so that people are able to recognise when they need help.

There is a rolling programme of training to ensure the message is spread far and wide. Training is always well attended. To date 400 professionals have been trained to use the GCP2 tool and to understand the impact of neglect. Schools are involved in continuous promotion and there are champions in all agencies. The GCP2 enables parents and carers to see what is working well and what needs to change in a non-punitive way.

It was highlighted that there is a correlation between poverty, deprivation and likelihood of neglect. Work takes place with the family to look holistically at circumstances and possible root causes of neglect, which are often complex and can

include income, benefits, housing situation, work readiness, parenting skills and budget management. Plans developed alongside the family to address such issues can lead to a real positive impact on the daily experience of children within their families and long term positive outcomes.

The report highlighted that there has been an increase of 33% in the numbers of children subject to a Care Protection Plan (CPP) due to neglect. The numbers of care proceedings where the primary issue is neglect have also increased. It was pointed out that this is not necessarily a bad thing, as the Neglect Strategy has a role to promote identification of the need for Early Help so it was expected that numbers would increase initially but that once early help is put in place the number of children taken into care will reduce because cases are picked up earlier and dealt with at an early stage.

Each organisation is responsible for carrying out its own assessments (although joint assessments also take place) and identifying champions and trainers. In family centres, support workers have regular supervision and their work is overseen by a Manager as part of the team around the family. South Yorkshire Police treat cases of neglect as seriously as those relating to physical or sexual harm to children and joint investigations are carried out. If there is evidence of extreme neglect, criminal charges may be brought.

In terms of 'hidden' neglect – for example, within middle class families where there are no obvious signs of potential neglect, the holistic assessment using the GCP2 will also look at things like controlling behaviour, emotional neglect, attachment, 'cold' parenting and chastisement. The child who is subject to assessment is always seen alone and will also be observed in various settings (including education) so that a full picture of the child's life can be captured and a plan put in place to address identified issues

No additional resources are needed to tackle neglect as work is underway with families anyway. If parents don't engage and don't consent to social care involvement where this is deemed necessary, child protection proceedings may commence. However, this is rare as parents often understand what is happening and social workers are persistent and work through other family members and other professionals such as Health Visitors. Berneslai Homes in particular are a strong advocate for the neglect strategy and use the GCP2. Parents are often receptive to Early Help services as they recognise they need help. Cases are closed when progress has been made and all actions within the plan completed.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Members note the report,
- (ii) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution, and
- (iii) An All Member Information brief to be arranged regarding the Graded Care Profile and associated thresholds.

43 Exclusion of the Public and Press

RESOLVED that the public and press be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item because of the likely disclosure of exempt information as described by the specific paragraphs of Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) as follows:

<u>Item Number</u>	<u>Type of information likely to be disclosed</u>
23	Paragraph 1

44 Barnsley SEND and Out of Borough Placements

The Following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Margaret Libreri, Service Director – Education, Early Start & Prevention, BMBC
Councillor Sarah Tattersall, Cabinet Support Member for People (Achieving Potential)

Richard Lynch, Head of Barnsley Schools Alliance, BMBC

The Service Director introduced the report and provided an overview of the current population of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) in Barnsley against the national and local context.

It was reported that there is an upwards trajectory of requests for assessments, in line with national trends. This is due to many contributing factors.

In Barnsley the absence rate for children with an EHCP is lower than national, but for children at SEN support stage it is almost 1% higher than the national average, which is a cause for concern as those in need of support are more likely to be absent or disengage from school. School attendance for children and young people with SEND is a challenge. Under the new system the age range for children and young people with SEND has been extended from 0 – 25, which is well beyond school age. More children with SEND are now being identified in primary school and often before children enter formal education. Developmental delays can be identified at the mandatory 2 ½ year old check. The role of family centres has changed along with a change in funding and a change in the process for assessment.

A discussion took place regarding school exclusions and the level of monitoring of day to day practice. Members were reassured that when a concern is raised this is always followed up and this is something which Ofsted is increasingly focussing on. In terms of Elective Home Education (EHE) many schools are now trying to actively discourage this and to give parents a 'cooling off' period.

With regard to specialist out of authority placements for Barnsley children and young people with SEND, Members felt that opportunities to provide such placements in Barnsley should be explored. However, because of the low numbers of children and young people placed out of authority, this would not be financially viable. Similarly, the number of children with SEND from other authorities who are placed in Barnsley is very small.

The process for providing information and supporting parental preference in choice of schools was explained for the benefit of Members, together with information about the Placement Sufficiency Strategy. The EHCP team helps to guide parents through the process. There is a SEND Improvement Programme and update report which identifies priorities on the basis of performance data and feedback from partners and service users. This will be shared with Members.

RESOLVED that

- (i) The report be noted;
- (ii) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution;
- (iii) Councillor Daniel Griffin to provide evidence to the service regarding his concerns on practices in schools;
- (iv) Service to provide the Committee with a copy of their Service Improvement Plan;
- (v) Service to provide the Key Stage 4 Progress 8 scores to the committee;
- (vi) Service to report back to the committee on how they challenge exclusions in the Borough and how this is then deal with, and
- (vii) Service to report back to the committee as to what data is available regarding off-rolling in Barnsley schools.

45 Children's Social Care Performance

The Following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Mel John-Ross, Service Director, Children's Social Care & Safeguarding, BMBC
Cllr Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson – People (safeguarding)

The Service Director introduced this item and gave an overview of performance indicators for children's safeguarding and social care up to the end of November 2018. It was reported that although there are no significant changes and performance remains good across children's social care, there are some seasonal and monthly fluctuations. Barnsley's rating for adoption is 'outstanding' but there is always more to do.

A Member was concerned that there has been a rise in the number of children who are subject to a child protection plan. Members were reassured that this is still within acceptable levels and may be due to the Neglect Strategy raising awareness of what constitutes neglect. Levels will continue to be closely monitored.

The recent Ofsted inspection was incredibly positive across all areas and highlighted the significant progress that had been made in Barnsley. Thanks were expressed to Elected Members for their support and respectful challenge. The Inspectors made recommendations around contextual safeguarding, employment and education for care leavers, timeliness of child protection conferences and work with neighbouring

authorities on children missing from care. An all member seminar on contextual safeguarding is planned to take place after the local elections in May.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Members note the report, and
- (ii) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution.