

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee - People Achieving their Potential Workstream
DATE:	Tuesday, 5 November 2019
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Reception Room - Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), Bowler, Carr, Felton, Fielding, Frost, Daniel Griffin, Higginbottom, W. Johnson, Lodge, Makinson, Newing, Phillips, Tattersall and Williams

16 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

The following Councillors declared non-pecuniary interests in Minute No. 18 as follows:

Councillor Lodge is a Virtual School Panel Member and Member of the Schools Forum;

Councillor Carr is a Corporate Parenting & Virtual School Panel Member;

Councillor Newing is an employee for South West Yorkshire NHS Partnership Foundation Trust (SWYPFT) Trust's Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS);

Councillor Tattersall is a Corporate Parenting Panel Member;

Councillor Felton is a Virtual School Panel Member;

Councillor Makinson is a Corporate Parenting Panel Member; and

Councillor Williams is also a Corporate Parenting Panel Member.

17 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 1st October, 2019 were noted.

18 Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) Provision in Barnsley

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

Rachel Dickinson, Executive Director – People Directorate, BMBC

Nina Sleight, Service Director, Education, Early Start & Prevention, People Directorate, BMBC

Richard Lynch, Head of Barnsley Schools' Alliance, People Directorate, BMBC

Judith Nash, SEND Strategy Development Manager, People Directorate, BMBC

Cllr Margaret Bruff, Cabinet Spokesperson – Children’s Services

Patrick Otway, Barnsley Clinical Commissioning Group (BCCG)

Nick Bowen, Executive Principal of Horizon Community College and Chair of Barnsley Schools’ Alliance

Nichola Smith, Head Teacher, Meadstead Primary Academy and Chair of Barnsley Schools’ Alliance Leadership Sub-Group

Melissa Mackell, Parent Participation Co-ordinator, KIDS

The Overview & Scrutiny Committee considered the report which detailed the current position of Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) provision in Barnsley. In the ensuing discussion and in response to detailed questioning and challenge the following matters were highlighted:

Barnsley was currently without a Designated Clinical Officer (DCO) for SEND, despite two recruitment exercises. An alternative way of delivering the DCO role through the BMBC Public Health 0-19 service was currently being investigated.

Whilst there has not been a designated parent/carer forum for some time, KIDS (a national parent led organisation) had been appointed to provide support to ensure engagement and co-production with parents and carers. A number of open invitation SEND Talkabouts had been held, hosted by the Executive Director for People and consultation had taken place this year as part of the KIDS contract. As a result of the consultation, a model for the future had been selected and would now be taken forward. 116 votes in total were received. It was emphasised that parents and carers are key stakeholders alongside the voice of children and young people. KIDS will work with members of the SEND Parent Alliance and their views will be fed in at a strategic level and operational level as appropriate. A SEND survey of parents and carer was sent out in the summer, which along with information from Facebook gave a useful baseline to work from and helped to inform the service model. Parents were also able to feed in their views through connected services and local providers.

Specific SEND services were advertised through the local offer, which was a repository of information as to how to access services and ensured that children with SEND were not disadvantaged when accessing services in the local area. Access to universal services was through communities, family centres etc.

SEND inspections are not inspections which give a formal ‘judgement’ but if SEND services were inspected at the current time, it would identify issues requiring action as a local system. An SEND Oversight Board was in place to address areas for improvement across the SEND system including education, health and care services. Improvement was needed in terms of outcomes for children and early identification of needs, alongside a number of other priorities. Members were

reassured that all agencies were committed to the delivery of the action plan but there was still some way to go.

There had been a significant increase in demand on services since SEND reforms were introduced in 2014, resulting in an increase in pressure on services already subject to austerity measures, particularly around early intervention which gave additional pressure to other services.

Resources were allocated direct to all schools as part of the baseline budgets and there was an assumption that schools meet the first £6,000 from their own budgets and manage them accordingly ensuring that they were still delivering the necessary requirements and support to meet children's needs. Schools in association with the Barnsley Schools' Alliance invest and take part in reviews of each other and with the new national funding formula, secondary schools were at a better attainment level compared to national.

The Alliance's previous focus was on outcomes from exams but now had a specific focus on other aspects such as SEND and inclusion.

It was reported that there had been a large reduction in the number of school exclusions in 2019,. Concern was raised that in order to drive up educational achievement standards it would be easy for schools to exclude SEND children. .

The Workforce Development Strategy had been developed to ensure the workforce can better meet the needs of SEND pupils and which should have a positive impact on improving attendance and reducing exclusions. The use of fixed term exclusions had been high in the past but was now reducing and the Alliance and any exclusion should be out in the open. Currently, Fair Access Protocols enabled places to be found for excluded pupils,. It was predicted that the 2019/20 fixed term exclusions figures would be significantly reduced showing that the sector was working together in recognising and supporting vulnerable pupils.

Members were informed the Code of Practice set out that in order for pupils to have a clear transition into adulthood it should be planned for from the Year 9 review, this would then be followed by transition from Year 11 into further education or employment/training. Some children would require support in transition into Adult Social Care and also from Paediatric Services to Adult Services. The area that parents and carers were the most unhappy with was if a placement was not right or the transition was not smooth and anxiety free. A large amount of work had been undertaken to improve this area and the feedback from young people indicated that they needed more support to access opportunities such as apprenticeships / internships and college. The key to this coming together and being a success would be a joint strategy that made sense to a young person and their families.

A Transition Toolkit had recently been developed in the Yorkshire and Humber Region to look at how to make transition easier as it was recognised that there was no nationally defined transition pathway.

It was identified that early intervention was critical and steps needed to be taken to continue to improve this. It was noted that there was no average age when SEND was identified, although it seemed to peak in KS1 and KS2. Since September 2018 early stages of SEND started to be addressed within the classroom with an improved

offer of support to schools. A standard SEN support plan had been introduced that all schools could recognise. Such a plan would be transferable to any school ensuring no gaps in provision. Nationally about 23% of new EHCPs were issued in early years and it was noted that now Public Health Nursing has been encompassed with the Local Authority they were able to look into and improve those areas.

A member expressed concern as to the work being carried out with private nurseries as children would not be picked up until school age. It was recognised that 98% of early years provision was good or outstanding with significant investment in workforce development. Where a child did not attend early years provision and additional needs were identified by Health Professionals, Health Visitors had a system in place whereby they would attend a private setting and offer additional support.

Concern was expressed as to the waiting times for CAMHS and it was acknowledged that these were unacceptable. In July 2018 the service was reviewed and additional funds were invested creating a new model based on a Social Model as opposed to a traditional model. Members were informed that as of July 2019, 425 children were waiting to access services. The new service would commence on 1st April 2020 and it was hoped that there would be a significant reduction with waiting times, no longer than 18 weeks. Alongside the work BCCG were carrying out to reduce waiting times, a small but successful pilot had been run that gave extra early help and support to families with a combination of parenting support, family based support, home coaching and group peer support. This ensured that families were supported throughout and to the end of the process, irrespective of the outcome of the assessment.

The report outlined the importance of systems responding to the needs of children with SEND. A Oversight Board had been established to drive improvement and all concerned had a common aim to improve outcomes for children. It was noted that whilst the group did not always agree, the Partnership between Barnsley MBC, BCCG and the Barnsley Alliance was strong and was now delivering results.

A member expressed concern as to the lack of provision in Barnsley for children with complex needs. It was acknowledged that there was a lack of appropriate school places and around 100 Barnsley children were placed in neighbouring authorities. Out of Borough placements were with providers classed as good or outstanding. Barnsley has 2 special schools, Springwell and Greenacre, with a number of specialised provisions around the Borough. Members were informed that satellite provision had also been commissioned in collaboration with Abbey School in Rotherham creating 20 extra spaces in Horizon. 50 extra spaces had been created across the Borough, although demand has continued to increase. The report highlighted a number of ways it had created additional spaces including 25 satellite places from Greenacre at Outwood Carlton and the desire to make more provision and negotiations were currently in progress with other schools around the Borough including Penistone Grammar. Members were reassured that the Local Authority was doing everything it could to make more provision locally and to support families to come back to the Borough with better placement planning for future years and a more sophisticated model to show where problems may arise.

RESOLVED that:

- i. Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution;
- ii. The report be noted

Chair