

Time commenced – 18.00pm

Time finished – 18:45pm

Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board 12 December 2022

Present: Councillor Lind (Chair) Councillor Whitby (Vice Chair)
Councillors Kus, Pandey, Pearce
Omar Aslam, Youth Mayor
Co-opted members Tracey Churchill, Catholic Diocesan Board
Nicky Fenton, Church of England
In Attendance: Andy Smith, Strategic Director of Peoples Services

28/22 Apologies for Absence

There were apologies from Councillor Bonser and Pauline Melvin-Anderson, Director Learning, Inclusion and Skills.

29/22 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were none.

30/22 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Lind confirmed that as a parent of SEND children she did not have any pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests to declare.

Cllr Whitby confirmed that he was a Foster Carer for Derby City.

31/22 Minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th October 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

32/22 Minute Extract Audit & Governance Committee 5th October 2022

The Board received a copy of the minute Extract from Audit & Governance Committee 05.10.22 regarding the findings of the Internal Audit Report – SEND.

The Board noted that the audit had provided an overall assurance rating of “Limited”. The key findings were:

- Low risk weaknesses in governance arrangements around SEND decision-making processes (framework in place)
- No overall alignment of EHCP and school transport arrangements
- Weaknesses in monitoring and management of SEND contract arrangements – Commissioning and SEND team liaison.

The Board considered the minute extract and noted that a further Audit was planned for Autumn 2023. They asked that an update on the key issues identified, and the mitigation measures undertaken be brought back to the Board in six months' time.

The Board resolved that an update on the key issues identified, and the mitigation measures put in place be brought back to the Board in six months' time.

33/22 Household Support Fund

The Household Support Fund report and presentation was deferred to a future meeting of the Board.

34/22 Care Review

The Board considered a report and presentation from the Strategic Director of Peoples Services.

The officer explained that the Government had commissioned the Independent Review of Children's Social Care to look at how it could make a real difference to the needs, experiences, and outcomes of children and young people supported by children's social care.

The Review was launched in March 2022 and was led by Josh MacAlister, a former teacher, and CEO of Frontline. A consultation took place with thousands of people with personal and professional experience of children's social care. Senior leaders from Derby were involved in the consultation.

The Review published its final report in May 2022. The recommendations called for a reset of the children's social care system, so that it could act decisively in response to abuse and provide more help to families in crisis, ensuring those in care have lifelong relationships and homes.

The officer highlighted the Executive Summary of the report which set out clearly the tone and purpose of children's social care such as giving the right help at the right time with a focus on early help. The summary talked about family help, acting when children are at risk, how multi-agency partnerships work together, and that care should be seen as a last resort. Relationships for children and families are at the core, a loving relationship being the key for children. The need for investment was clear. The report acknowledged issues such as poverty and inequality, domestic abuse, mental health, substance misuse, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, and the impact on children of the pandemic and lockdowns. The report had 80 recommendations across 6 themes which were:

- **A revolution in Family Help:** build a new, high quality Family Help system that is multi-disciplinary, located close to communities, and able to comprehensively respond to family help difficulties before they escalate.

- **A just and decisive child protection system:** increase the level of expertise in cases where there are concerns about significant harm, with clearer expectations on multi-agency capabilities expected for child protection and five-year challenge to address persistent issues with information sharing.
- **Unlocking the potential of family networks:** Introduce new Family Network Plans which provide more support to families and allow more children to remain safely within their family networks. Better support Special Guardians and other kinships carers with kinship leave, legal aid, and financial support on a par with foster care allowances.
- **Homes for children in care:** create 9,000 new foster homes in the next three years and create Regional Care Cooperatives to plan, build, recruit and run both foster and children's homes for children in care. Introduce a new 'opt-out' advocacy service for looked after children.
- **Realising the potential of the workforce:** develop a new route for frontline expertise through an Early Career Framework, reduce bureaucracy and free up social worker time whilst taking action on agency social workers.
- **A system that is relentlessly focused on children and families:** greater national direction through a National Framework and indicators, accompanied by robust accountability and better use of data and technology.

The officer highlighted the Children's Social Care Market Study. On 12 March 2021 the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) had launched a market study into Children's Social Care in England, Scotland, and Wales. The study looked at the challenges of availability of placements and the rising costs in children's social care provision including children's homes and fostering. In Derby the issue is one of the cost and availability of external placements. The Board noted that larger providers are often making big profits. The report identified a lack of placements of the right kind in the right places for children. An initial response was provided on 23rd May, and a full response will be made with the full response to the Care Review.

The next steps were outlined, the Government had planned to publish a response and implementation strategy before the end of 2022. This has now moved to 'early 2023' but was on track and the President of the ADCS has seen a draft implementation plan. A National Implementation Board of people with experience of leading transformational change and people with their own experience of the care system to advise on the implementation of recommendations has been established. The DfE intend through engagement, cross-government working and policy development, to unpick the benefits and challenges of the recommendations. Engagement with the ADCS has taken place and they have shaped the detail of the implementation plan.

The Chair thanked the officer for all his work and asked if the Government had committed any funding yet. The officer explained that conversations with the Treasury were ongoing. They understood the need for investment and there will be funding, but how it translates to the area remains to be seen as the financial environment was challenging.

A councillor asked how much detail there was about the creation of 9,000 foster carer placements. He also was interested in the idea of a Windfall Tax as a levy ensuring extra funding can be reclaimed via a pay cap on placements. The officer explained there had been discussion about a National Recruitment Group. In Derby work was ongoing with recruitment of foster carers across Derby and Derbyshire as well as D2N2. The Implementation Plan would have themes around the chapters of the report, for example the Regulation of Social Worker Agencies. Currently Social Workers can leave a local authority role and join an Agency the next day. Regarding Windfall Tax this needs to be managed and regulated in a way that stops large companies exploiting local authorities and taking money from the public purse. It was an opportunity to put in place national standards around fees. Regional Care Co-operatives have been suggested, essentially these would be organisations that are responsible for running Foster and Residential Care but using such a co-operative could mean Derby children in care could be placed away from Derby. There was basically a need for more foster carers in Derby and the surrounding area.

The Chair asked if the Board should send a letter to the Secretary of State detailing the challenges in Derby and the need for funding. The officer suggested waiting until the Implementation Plan had been published and highlighted the need to see what was in the Plan first as this would set out some of the areas of investment. It would provide an understanding of what was being covered and where there might be gaps.

The Board resolved that an update report should be brought to the Board once the Implementation Plan had been published

35/22 Work Programme

The Board considered a report which allowed the Board to study its Terms of Reference and Remit for the forthcoming Municipal Year. The report set out key work areas, issues, and potential topic review subjects within the service areas, for discussion or inclusion in the work programme.

The Board requested that the deferred Housing Support Fund item be brought to the February meeting.

The Board agreed the work programme set out in appendix 1 to the report

The Board resolved to note the information provided within the report.

36/22 Topic Review “Off Rolling “– Scoping Document

The Board considered a report from the Chair of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Board which set out the aims and objectives in a draft scoping document for the “Off Rolling Topic Review”.

The Board resolved to agree the Scoping Document for the Topic Review “Off Rolling”.

MINUTES END.