

ITEM 4

Time commenced – 6.00pm

Time finished – 8.05pm

Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board

Monday 10 September 2018

Present: Councillor Russell (Chair)
Councillors Ashburner, Hezelgrave, Hussain, Keith and Willoughby
Co-optees - Steve Grundy, Chris Hulse and Ruth Richardson

In Attendance: Frederico Almeida – Youth Mayor
Paul Brookhouse – Child Poverty Topic Review Witness
Gareth Dakin – Deputy Head of Service, Children in Care
Alex Hough – Democratic Services Manager
Suanne Lim – Director of Integrated Services
Sheila McFarlane – Integrated CYP Health Commissioner, Southern Derbyshire CCG
Gurmail Nizzer – Acting Director of Commissioning

09/18 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Harwood, Gillian Butler, Nicky Fenton and Sonja Sebastian.

10/18 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were none.

11/18 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

12/18 Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2018

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

13/18 Work Programme

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive proposing a revised work programme for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board, following consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair.

The Board resolved to agree the revised work programme for the 2018/19 municipal year.

14/18 Care Leavers Local Offer

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services providing an update on the development of Derby City Council's Local Offer for care leavers, as required under the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The draft Local Offer was attached at Appendix 2 of the report and the outcome of consultation with care leavers was also circulated for the attention of the Board. It was noted that the statutory deadline for publication of the final document was December 2018.

It was reported that the revised local offer increased the age for access to services for care leavers from 21 to 25 years old. Moreover, the Local Offer was intended to reflect all services available for care leavers in the city, rather than solely those provided by the local authority.

Included in the draft Local Offer was a Council Tax exemption and Communications Allowance for care leavers; support with access to housing, employment and apprenticeships; and, advice with regards to managing personal finances and avoiding rent arrears.

The Board expressed concern that the document in its current format was not accessible to young people. It was stated that once the Local Offer was finalised, it would be redesigned to ensure it was suitable for its intended audience.

Members questioned which support services went beyond statutory responsibilities and which were dependent on age or individual circumstances. It was stated that the document was intended to be reactive to the needs and expectations of young people, as well as demonstrating ambition to offer further additional support in future.

It was noted that consultation on the Local Offer was ongoing, with personal advisers encouraged to speak with care leavers. The Board questioned support that was in place for 'stay-put' care leavers who may choose to remain with a foster family; it was confirmed that the Local Offer applied regardless of post-18 circumstances.

The Board heard evidence of children in care placed outside of the city and noted that around a third of care leavers settle away from Derby; it was confirmed that support available as part of the Local Offer would be accessible to all Derby City Council care leavers, irrespective of their location. It was further noted that a significant proportion of care leavers settle within the East Midlands, therefore work was ongoing with the Local Enterprise Partnership (D2N2) to coordinate a wider regional offer.

Members noted that loneliness and isolation remained a source of concern for care leavers and questioned what measures had been implemented to address this. It was reported that networking and community support remained a priority and that the Communications Allowance had been introduced for this purpose. It was stated that 'Arts for All' events and drop-in sessions at city centre restaurants had proved popular, and that a dedicated Participation Officer had been recruited.

The Board welcomed the extent of the Local Offer but stressed that further work was required in order to make it accessible for young people. It was also suggested that the document contained fewer acronyms and that greater sensitivity was used in reference to unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

It was noted that the Multi-Faith Centre had been involved in the establishment of a cafe and youth club in Normanton Park, where young people had the opportunity to discuss and explore issues of identity; it was suggested that this may be suitable for inclusion in the Local Offer.

The Board resolved:

- **To welcome the extent of the Care Leavers Local Offer**
- **To recommend that the language and presentation of the document was amended to ensure it is accessible to young people**

15/18 NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups – Children's Mental Health

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of People Services in relation to the planned merger of four NHS Clinical Commissioning Organisations (CCGs) and its implications in relation to the commissioning of services in support of children's mental health.

The Board heard evidence of the financial pressures facing the four CCGs and it was suggested that the merger would help address the needs of a diverse population, improving health and wellbeing and tackling health inequalities across the county. Members of the Board questioned whether the re-organisation would result in improved outcomes for patients and drew comparisons with the former Southern Derbyshire Health Authority.

The Board noted that the 'Future in Mind' programme had been running since 2015 and asked what progress was being made to improve children's mental health in Derbyshire. It was reported that lack of interventions was a long-term problem, with the latest evidence suggesting that 1 in 10 young people have an undiagnosed mental health condition. In Derbyshire, it was noted that access to treatment had been reduced from one in four to one in three, but acknowledged that further improvement were necessary.

It was reported that interventions were resulting in fewer and shorter in-patient admissions, with more support available in communities. However, members were deeply concerned at the level need and reported anecdotal evidence from schools and teachers, emphasising the need for the right type of support as early as possible.

It was noted that Council Cabinet were due to consider a report proposing the use of £600k of funding from the Opportunity Areas Board to promote emotional wellbeing in schools, including training for school leaders about signposting to support services.

Members questioned whether there had been a significant increase in children's mental health problems in recent years or whether understanding of mental health conditions had improved. It was suggested that both may be the case and that changes in lifestyle were placing additional pressures on young people.

The Board also queried how a balance could be struck between providing for

those with complex needs, whilst also addressing low-level anxiety and depression. The Chair emphasised the need to continue monitoring progress in supporting children's mental health, both as a local authority and as a Board.

The Board resolved:

- **To note the update on Children's Mental Health provision**
- **To request that benchmarking data comparing accessibility and levels of demand for mental health support services in Derby against national comparators was provided to the Board.**

16/18 Topic Review – Child Poverty in Derby

The Chair introduced Paul Brookhouse and Ruth Richardson to provide evidence to members, as part of the Board's topic review of Child Poverty in Derby.

Paul Brookhouse – Hope Centre/Derby Homes

It was noted that Mr Brookhouse was currently the Project Manager for Derby Homes' Rough Sleeping Task Force, but that he had spent sixteen years working with underprivileged young people in Derby, initially with the Enthusiasm Trust and subsequently the Hope Centre.

Drawing on experience of working with homeless people in Derby, the Board heard evidence of how childhood trauma and the breakdown of family relationships were contributory factors in many individual cases. It was suggested that charities such as the Hope Centre rarely had opportunity to examine the causes of child poverty, as they were often focused on dealing with the consequences.

The Board heard evidence that since 2012, the number of food parcels issued by the Hope Centre had increased from around 8-10 per week to 82 in 2017, resulting in approximately 4,000 three day food parcels being issued in the last twelve months. It was noted that 50 per cent of cases were seeking support as a result of benefit related issues, including delays in the processing of Universal Credit; cuts to overall benefits and sanctions.

It was reported that a significant number of families where at least one family member was in employment were seeking support from the food bank, particularly towards the end of the month. It was estimated that the Hope Centre fed around 7,000 individuals per year, a third of which were under the age of 16. Moreover, it was stated that 50 per cent of recipients lived in the Normanton, Arboretum and Stockbrook areas of the city, noting that dedicated community food banks existed in both Alvaston and Derwent.

Members considered evidence that the number of food parcels issued declined during school holidays, which it was suggested may be due to difficulty accessing food banks in these periods. Moreover, it was noted that many adults went without food during school holidays to feed their families, owing to the lack of availability of free school meals.

The impact of Universal Credit was discussed. It was noted that the first five to six

weeks often presented challenges, with many individuals unaware that advanced payments or short-term loans were available to help support their transition.

The Board heard evidence of the work of the Hope Store. It was reported that the charity provided a range of items to support underprivileged families, including clothes; household goods; school uniforms; prams; baby clothes; toiletries and milk.

It was reported that the quality of rented accommodation was often a major concern, with families placed in homes with no basic amenities. Anecdotal evidence of properties without beds or cooking equipment was detailed, with families offered little support to transfer from shared housing to independent living. It was suggested that there was a clear need for a basic level of housing provision which could be guaranteed as a city, with failure to do so presenting major safeguarding concerns.

The need for face to face advice that recognised people as individuals rather than for their problems was also considered necessary. It was noted that significant gaps in provision for tackling poverty existed and that the city lacked a forum where third sector organisations could bring issues to the table. The generosity and willingness of people to help was noted, but it was emphasised that funding, opportunity and structure were vitally important in order to capitalise on this goodwill.

The Board heard evidence in relation to safeguarding referrals. It was noted that many of those accessing food banks had already been referred by social workers, but that no mechanism for referral existed for other types of support.

Members questioned the causes of family breakdown. It was noted that the trend reflected a long-term societal changes, where wider family and community support networks had collapsed.

The Board heard that an estimated 20,000 children were currently living in poverty in Derby.

Members expressed grave concern that use of food banks had become normalised. It was stressed that food-banks were not a long-term solution to addressing poverty and that alternative support that afforded families dignity and choice were required. The example of a supermarket that could be accessed by those in need was considered.

Ruth Richardson – Derby Multi Faith Centre

It was noted that Ms Richardson was the Director of the Derby Multi Faith Centre, which was now fifteen years old, having been the first centre of its kind in Europe and only the second in the world. It was reported that 40 per cent of residents in Derby identified as having no faith and that the centre's aim was to create a safe space for dialogue and learning for people of all backgrounds.

It was noted that the Multi Faith Centre was based at the University of Derby, but undertook outreach work in community settings. In particular, the organisation specialised in working with new communities, having recently supported the

establishment of the UK's first Roma led advocacy organisation, 'Roma Community Care'. As part of this work, it was reported that the organisation had liaised closely with the Derby Safeguarding Children Board as part of a recent Serious Case Review.

The Board heard evidence of the importance of having individuals in positions of authority who understood the background and complexities of the Roma community. It was noted that Roma people were traditionally reluctant to work with authorities due to a history of marginalisation and persecution across Europe, including as victims of the Holocaust; being subject to forced sterilisation and exclusion from mainstream education, leading to high levels of illiteracy.

However, it was stressed that Roma people were not a homogenous group, but that they were statistically disadvantaged. For example, the Board heard that Roma young people constituted the poorest performing ethnic group at GCSE and represented 4 per cent of the overall school population but 12 per cent of exclusions in Derby.

It was stated that understanding the complexity of the Roma community was essential to tackling disadvantage and social exclusion. It was estimated that there were 4,000 Roma people in the city, but that accurate figures were difficult to ascertain.

Discrimination in the workplace was cited as a common experience for Roma people. It was estimated that around 40 clients per day were now accessing Roma Community Care for support, but it was stressed that positive role models were essential to ensure marginalisation was addressed; noting that over the ten years the community had been established in Derby progress had been slow.

It was reported that meaningful partnership work was an important factor in supporting the Roma community. The Board heard that Roma Community Care was working with other local charities, as well as the New Communities Achievement Team in schools. The organisation sought to help Roma people deal with crisis, but also to provide advocacy on their behalf to challenge systemic problems and prejudice.

The Board heard that the level of poverty in the Roma community could not be underestimated, with many families struggling to meet basic needs. Moreover, it was stated that many Roma young people lacked confidence and ambition, often working in zero hours, short-term employment. To address this, it was noted that Roma Community Care were supporting young people to develop 'social capital'. For example, they had recently taken groups to the Darley Park Concert and the Derby Theatre.

The impact of Brexit was also cited as a major obstacle for the Roma community. It was reported that foreign nationals would likely be given a six month window to apply for settled status, with applications costing £300; requiring internet access and applicants encouraged to seek advice from a solicitor. These constituted major barriers for many Roma people in Derby.

The Board sought further evidence on the experience of Roma people in Derby schools. It was noted that systemic exclusion was resulting in disadvantage, with

some young people with special educational needs not being identified as requiring support due to the existence of a language barrier. Behavioural issues were cited as a consequence of racially-aggravated bullying, which were not typically being addressed. It was further noted that the schools with the highest proportion of Roma pupils were also the most likely to have been placed in special measures.

Members requested that a breakdown of GCSE attainment by ethnicity was provided to a future meeting of the Board. It was confirmed that this data would be available as part of the Annual Report of Educational Outcomes, to be considered in February 2019. The Board heard that collating data about the Roma community was challenging and needed to be addressed nationally, with categorisation together with gypsy and travelling communities particularly misleading.

It was emphasised that although Roma families in Derby faced many challenges, the community should be considered with pride and that the city was a national leader in engaging new communities.

The Board resolved:

- **To thank Paul Brookhouse and Ruth Richardson for their contribution**
- **To note the evidence provided in order to inform the development of recommendations at the conclusion of the Topic Review.**

MINUTES END