

ITEM 04

Time commenced – 18.00pm
Time finished - 19.04pm

Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board 07 September 2020

- Present: Councillor Lind (Chair)
Councillors Kus, Hezelgrave, Testro, McCristal and Pattison
Co-optees – Stephen Grundy, Chris Hulse
- In Attendance: Andy Smith, Strategic Director Peoples Services
Suanne Lim, Service Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care
Pauline Anderson, Service Director Learning and Skills
Pervez Akhtar, Deputy Head, Independent Reviewing Service
Connie Spencer, Youth Mayor
Tracey Churchill, nominated Catholic Diocese representative,
attending as an observer

Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Priya Gill, Deputy Youth Mayor

02/20 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were none.

03/20 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

04/20 Minutes of the meeting held on 24 February 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

05/20 Derby Safeguarding Children's Board: Annual Report 2018-2019 – Breakdown on Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Quality Audit (QA) Notifications "Statutory Requirements not met"

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director of Peoples Services which provided additional commentary and assurance following Councillors receipt of the Derby Safeguarding Children's Board Report in 2019 concerning IRO QA Notifications and Statutory Requirements not being met. The report was presented by the Deputy Head, Independent Reviewing Service.

The officer confirmed that in relation to children in care (CiC), all Care Plans had been achieved in time and that all CiC were safe.

The Board were informed that the greatest number of Quality Audit (QA) notifications were raised for statutory requirements not met (59). The Board noted that well over 1200 reviews had been undertaken and there were 544 CiC. Statutory requirement not met notifications could happen due to a variety of circumstances. The officer confirmed that he had investigated each of the 59 cases and had categorised them, the Officer explained that there were:

- 17 incidents when the young person had not been visited within timescales, these were analysed in more detail; there was one instance where the Social Worker was off sick and the child could not be visited, and other instances when a visit was undertaken but it was late. Every young person coming into care has a requirement to be visited within statutory timescales, however the timing of visits can vary on the circumstances for each child when they come into care, how long they've been in care what kind of placement they are in. Many visits were undertaken just slightly later, in some instances just 1 or 2 days late, but these would still be classed as a late visit and the IRO would have undertaken a QA notification in relation to these cases.
- 30 QA notifications were because review paperwork was not completed within timescales by the social worker. IRO Service require Social Workers to complete their paperwork; which consist of the Reviewing Arrangements and a Care Plan, 3 days before the review. The officer confirmed that on all 30 occasions the review went ahead and were completed on time and to a good standard.
- 6 QA notifications were for social workers not attending the statutory review, this was usually due to staff sickness and the fact that cover could not be organised due to the short notice. However, all the reviews went ahead as the IRO had sufficient knowledge of the children and their care plans.
- 6 instances were when the IRO was not informed in the appropriate timescale; statutory guidance states that the IRO service should be notified within 48 hours of child coming into care. The Head of Service has the responsibility to allocate an IRO within 5 working days. Reviews should be undertaken within 20 days

The Board were informed that 1200 reviews were undertaken in 2018/19 and over 96% of those reviews were completed within timescales and 97% had young people participating in their review

The service want to ensure that all statutory requirements are completed within timescale, but sometimes there are reasons why statutory requirements can't be met in the set timescales for example staff sickness, which is why the QA notification system is in place. The IRO service continue to maintain scrutiny, the officer informed the Board that he was confident that the analysis demonstrated that no young person had been left at risk on the basis of the formal QA notifications. If this had been the case, the issue would have been escalated immediately to the Deputy Head of the Independent Reviewing Service.

The Board thanked the officer for the report and reassurance given. They felt It put into context the fact that so many reviews had been undertaken and there were only 59 QA notifications raised for statutory requirements not met, also that at no point was there a fall in the quality of the review. The team of Social Workers should also be thanked for their work.

The Board resolved to note the contents of the report and be assured that all Looked After Children in Derby remain safe.

06/20 Monitoring Safeguarding Practice

The Board considered a report and presentation of the Strategic Director of Peoples Services which provided an overview of Derby's safeguarding services' response to COVID 19 and outlines the performance, quality and predicted future demand. The report was presented by the Director of Early Help & Children's Social Care.

The Board were informed of the 4 key areas that were covered in the report:

- The initial response to COVID 19
- Overall Performance and Quality
- Future Demand
- Delivery Model and Recovery Plans

The officer explained that the initial response was balanced with statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 relating to local authority duties to safeguard and protect the welfare of children; those provisions remained unchanged throughout the pandemic. Approximately 700 social worker staff were moved from office-based locations to working from home to protect them from the virus. The staff were prioritised for IT equipment which the Council IT service worked tirelessly to provide. However, there was also the need for Child Protection Teams to be physically based in 3 fixed locality areas. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Team (MASH) and the Safeguarding Hub remained in the Council House and was staffed on a rota basis. A safety risk assessment was undertaken of all 3,500 open cases, decisions were made to either contact clients virtually or to retain physical contact. All the council's Children's Homes stayed open and 2 Children's Centres also remained open to support the Community Hub and assist with the distribution and delivery of food parcels.

The importance of remaining in contact with Care Leavers was also highlighted by the officer and contact was monitored as some care leavers can find social isolation or distancing challenging. Case examples can be found at 4.28 in the report.

The officer explained the regulatory flexibilities announced by the Department for Education (DfE) which temporarily amended 10 sets of regulations in relation to Children's Social Care between 24th April and 25th September 2020 (The Adoption & Children (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020). The amendments made were to assist the Children's social care sector to respond during the pandemic and provided extra flexibility in some circumstances The Adoption Children and Corona Virus Regulations 2020. Approval was granted by Cabinet on 08.06.20 for the Strategic Director to make flexibilities deliverable if

needed. Derby has not used these flexibilities; a review was due in September and it was likely the flexibilities that went to Cabinet will fall away except for the three relating to:

- Visits (virtual/physical) which would continue.
- Fostering & Adoption Medical Assessments would continue
- Recognise that external Inspection by Ofsted cannot continue, and to put in place assurance visits that would continue until 31.03.21

The officer drew attention to the Audit Surveys undertaken of Child Protection and Looked After Children services, details of which can be found at paragraphs 4.20 and 4.21 of the report.

The council also undertook a staff survey, the results of the survey relating to Early Help and Children's Social Care are detailed at paragraph 4.18

With regard to governance arrangements during COVID the Board were informed that the management overview arrangements were really robust there was a golden thread linking the Chief Executive down to front line social workers, see paragraphs 4.3, 4.4 and 4.5 for more detail. Strategic Co-ordinating Groups/Risk Logs and daily meetings were put in place. There was a lot of communication and oversight which was very dynamic and effective. During April and May the service made 2,455 contacts, 1,611 actual physical contact and 1,065 virtual contact over the phone or by virtual links. Only 40 homes did not allow contact and these cases were escalated quickly. Business as usual continued during the pandemic, there were excellent relationships developed with partner organisations and schools, communication links were established. Overarching work was done with the joint Derby & Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Board who also helped pull together communication.

Performance and quality arrangements were explained by the officer. Monitoring systems were established early and weekly dashboards were put in place. The dashboards showed the reduction in referral rates from both schools and health. Overall, there was a 20% reduction in referrals compared to the same period in 2019. However, by the end of June 2020 referrals were back up to pre COVID levels. Referrals were mainly related to Domestic Violence issues.

Future demand was highlighted by the officer as an urgent risk. Potential demand arising from COVID 19 has been modelled by the Children's Safeguarding partnership (see graph at paragraph 4.23), which indicates that a spike in contacts and referrals was likely to occur in mid to late September. The Board were informed that it was likely that COVID will generate new groups of people referred, eg, people without work, more homeless people. The officer described the preparatory work currently being undertaken in readiness for the peak in September, details of which can be found at paragraph 4.25. It was planned to put a universal offer in place across the City to prevent escalation of need.

The future operating model and recovery were described by the officer. It was planned to bring back teams of social workers for at least one day a week into the officer; a hybrid approach would be applied as social work is a team based

job; joint visiting, shared problem solving and mutual support helps professional development and mental wellbeing.

A councillor queried whether fostering enquiries are beginning to pick up. The officer confirmed that fostering enquiries had increased and at the last virtual fostering event approximately 40 to 50 people had attended. The pandemic had actually provided an opportunity for some people to consider an alternative career.

The Board thanked both the Strategic Director of Peoples Services and the Director for Early Help & Children's Social Care for all the considerable work they had done to retain and keep Children's Services running effectively during the Pandemic.

The Board resolved to note the actions being taken during COVID 19 to manage services and challenge progress.

07/20 Parent Carers Needs Assessments

The Board considered a report which was presented by the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care. The report was requested by the Chair of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Board in order to review Derby's current practice in light of the statutory requirements of Parent Carer Needs Assessments.

The Board were informed that a local authority must, where certain conditions are satisfied, assess whether a parent carer of a disabled child, living in their area, has need for support, and the extent of those needs. There are two conditions to meet for undertaking a parent carer needs assessment, which are set out in paragraph 1.2 of the report. The Board noted that the local authority can legally combine the parent carer's need assessments with other assessments and the Council does so within its single assessment to meet its legal duties. When a stand-alone assessment has been requested, these are commissioned from Adult Social Care.

The Board were also informed that parent carers need transparency in accessing and understanding in what circumstances and in what format a parent carers need assessment could be undertaken. It was noted that the pathway on the council website is not explicit; also where individuals have had single assessments, the option for a parent carer assessment to be undertaken should be clearly indicated.

The Board highlighted that it was important that the pathway for parents accessing information on how and when Derby City Council undertakes parent carer need assessments is explicit and clear within the Local Offer, on the Council website and within the policy, and also that it was accessible for all parents regardless of any disabilities or if they speak English as a second language

The Board resolved:

- 1. to ensure the pathway for parents accessing information on how and when Derby City Council undertakes parent carer needs assessments is explicit and clear within the Local Offer, on the Council website and within the policy, and that it is accessible for parents who have English as an additional language, including Deaf parents and visually impaired parents.**
- 2. To ensure any parent carer needs assessments which are either stand-alone assessments or combined with another assessment, are headed in a way to show that needs in section 17ZD are specifically addressed. Parent carer needs assessments may form part of a single assessment but will be clearly identified as a “parent carers needs assessment”.**
- 3. In order to take forward recommendations 2.1 and 2.2, a project group of parents and relevant stakeholders will co-produce and publish the process by January 2021.**
- 4. To recommend that Council Cabinet agree and support the above proposals.**

08/20 Appointment of Co-opted Members

The Board considered a report of the Service Director of Legal, Procurement and Democratic Services which detailed the provision for the appointment of up to eight co-opted members. The report was presented by the Democratic Services Officer.

The Board noted that up to eight co-opted members can be appointed to the Board to take part in discussion on education matters. Three of the co-opted members are nominated faith representatives from the Church of England, Catholic and “Other Faith”. It was also noted that between two to five Parent Governors can also be appointed to the Board.

The Board were informed that on 30 August 2019 the co-opted member for Nottingham Catholic Diocese Faith resigned. A further resignation was received on 21 January 2020 from the co-opted member for “Other Faiths”. The Nottingham Catholic Diocese and The Multi Faith Centre have both nominated replacement co-opted members for approval by the Board.

The Board were asked to note and approve the two nominations for co-opted members.

The Board resolved:

- 1. To note and endorse the nomination of Tracey Churchill to the Board and to request that Council approve her appointment as the Catholic Diocesan Representative**

2. **To note and endorse the nomination of Graham Sweeney to the Board and to request that Council approve his appointment as the Other Faiths Representative.**
3. **To thank Chris Reynolds and Ruth Richardson for the contribution they have made to the Board.**

09/20 Work Programme and Topic Review 2019/20

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 agreed the work programme set out in appendix 1 to the report, with the addition of the following items:

- Education Inclusion Report – to give greater depth about attainment and achievement in SEND to come to the October meeting
- Partnership approach to tackling childhood obesity – to come to the December meeting of the Board.

The Board noted that an update report “Off Rolling” was still due at a future meeting.

The Topic Review was discussed. The Board agreed to undertake a review of Early Intervention Youth Outreach Support in order to review and map what youth support provision is currently available within communities in Derby City.

The Board also discussed undertaking a further review on Young Carers Strategy. They agreed that, in the first instance a report on the work that Derby undertakes with Young Carers should be brought to a future meeting. The report would talk about the experiences of young carers. Once the report has been received any further issues could then be expanded and discussed by the Board and possibly incorporated into the Early Intervention Youth Outreach Support Topic Review.

The Board resolved to note the terms of reference and the Overview and Scrutiny Rules as set out in the Council's Constitution

MINUTES END