

Time commenced – 18.00pm

Time finished – 19:00pm

Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board 22 February 2021

- Present:** Councillor Lind (Chair)
Councillors Hezelgrave, Kus, McCristall, Pattison and Testro
Co-optees – Stephen Grundy and Chris Hulse
- In Attendance:** Pauline Anderson, Director of Learning, Inclusion and Skills
Simon Carnall, Head of Community, Derby County Community Trust
Graeme Ferguson, Headteacher of the Virtual School for Looked After Children
Connie Spencer, Youth Mayor
Priya Gill, Deputy Youth Mayor
Gurmail Nizzer, Director of Children's Integrated Commissioning
Suanne Lim, Service Director for Early Help and Children's Social Care

23/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Andy Smith, Strategic Director Peoples Services and Tracey Churchill, Catholic Diocesan Board

24/20 Late items introduced by the Chair

There were none.

25/20 Declarations of Interest

There were none.

26/20 Minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 December 2020 were agreed as a correct record.

27/20 Report on the work of the Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC)

The Board considered a report of the Director of Learning, Inclusion and Skills which was presented by the Virtual School Headteacher.

The officer informed the Board that the exams and assessments in 2019/20 were cancelled due to the pandemic, so the usual content of the Virtual School report could not be produced as there were no outcomes to report on. This

report gave an overview of the areas of work undertaken by the Virtual School to help support looked after children (LAC).

The officer informed the Board that there are 439 pupils in the Virtual School. Thirty-five percent of LAC are in Derby Schools and sixty-five percent are in schools outside of the City. There are pupils in schools as far away as Scotland and Wales also on the South Coast of England. However, most pupils, if not based in Derby, are in the surrounding Counties and Cities

There are three core functions to the role of the Virtual School which are;

- to monitor and track the educational progress and achievement of all looked after children in the care of Derby City Council
- to support and challenge schools, settings and other professionals where provision is not good enough
- to promote inclusion and equality of access including raising attendance and reducing exclusions.

The Virtual School works in partnership with a network of professionals both within and outside of the Virtual School team, and a range of commissioned staff with specific expertise. The team works alongside schools, social care professionals and carers to ensure vulnerable children can access education and support.

The officer detailed the structure of the team which comprised of the headteacher, five specialist education officers and two administrative staff, one of whom was an apprentice. The officer explained that a range of other staff are commissioned to offer support to LAC, including Educational Psychologists, Mentors, Teaching staff and Teaching Assistant Staff. Each Virtual School Specialist Education Officer has their own caseload of LAC which are aligned to the social care teams across the City.

Specific activities to support LAC were described by the officer. These include targeted one to one support for Year six pupils, bespoke provision for LAC in Children's Homes, Mentoring support for the most challenging of young people who are furthest from accessing mainstream education, Creative mentoring, Speech and Language Support for young people with poor literacy skills, Educational Psychology Support, Seguridad which was a bespoke and in-depth piece of work to support one young person in a Derby City Children's Home, Encouraging Reading, Educational Provision for pupils with no school place and a Cookery School.

The officer explained that the Virtual School was allocated £2345 pupil premium plus (PP+) funding per pupil to support improving educational outcomes. The Virtual School has a Pupil Premium Plus Policy which details activities supported with the additional money. Allocations are given to schools via the targets set in a child's Personal Education Plan (PEP); this provides a record of how professionals around LAC support that child's educational outcomes and achievements. In Derby there is an electronic version of the PEP which has been in place for four years. There is a section on the PEP for the young person to complete. During Lockdown 1 a shorter version of the PEP was provided. PEPs were completed virtually throughout the pandemic which saved

travel time for staff; ninety five percent were completed within a month of their due date.

The officer highlighted that during lockdown and the switch to remote learning, 1255 laptops from the DfE, which were allocated to children with a social worker were made available to all LAC in Derby City schools. If pupils were out of area, then pupil premium plus funding was used to provide them with laptops. In accordance with national guidance LAC were encouraged to be in school if this was the best place for them to continue learning, but this was decided on a case by case basis, considering issues such as placement stability.

The Board were informed that during Lockdown 1 forty percent of LAC pupils attended school, in Lockdown 2 ninety-three percent attended school and during Lockdown 3 sixty-five percent attended school. The Virtual School also provided carers with access to two online virtual education platforms (Maths Whizz and Readingwise) to promote Maths and English. Also, carers were encouraged to visit the Virtual School website which was updated with learning resources and ideas for home learning.

The officer explained that attendance and exclusion reporting and analysis had not been possible due to the impact of the pandemic.

A Councillor asked whether the Virtual Headteacher had largely been happy with the teacher assessments in place of exams. The officer confirmed that some LAC pupils had benefited from being teacher assessed whilst others had not. The Councillor was interested in the out of area placements of Derby LAC children. The officer explained that the majority of out of area placements were in the surrounding counties and cities but there were some specialist placements on the South Coast of England and in Scotland and Wales due to their specific needs.

The Chair thanked the Virtual School Headteacher and the team for all their hard work and dedication supporting LAC during the pandemic.

The Board resolved to recognise and understand the role and range of activities which are undertaken by the Virtual School in supporting improved outcomes.

28/20 Social Impact Board Programme Update (STARS)

The Board considered a report prepared and presented by the Director for Children's Integrated Commissioning.

The officer informed the Board that the Local Authority worked in partnership with Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Councils to deliver an evidence-based service to support children on the edge of care, and in care. The service was called Supporting Children and Young People to Achieve Resilience (STARS).

The officer highlighted that the STARS funding model was a Social Impact Bond (SIB), which are a form of social investment often used now to fund service improvements involving Local Authorities, investors and providers. Payments

are based on outcomes being met. A SIB was part of a strategy to fund placement interventions which improve outcomes for children and young people and are better value for money. Investors fund the costs to deliver an improvement to the service and the Local Authority makes a payment when a successful outcome is delivered, rather than paying for service delivery.

The interventions are holistic, wrap-around tailored packages of flexible support for foster carers and the young person. They can also be therapeutic, holistic interventions focusing on building stronger family relationships.

The interventions have four outcomes. They support young people:

- who live in residential care, helping them to step down to foster care
- to remain in stable foster care if they are risk of a placement breakdown or entering residential care.
- who are looked after children (LAC) whom the Local Authority would like to re-unify with their birth family or primary carers.
- who are at risk of being taken in to care, to remain safely with their families or primary carers

The officer explained the advantages of funding services through a joint SIB model. The outcome approach motivated investor and partners to provide better outcomes for young people. The services provided can be flexible and adaptable. The joint approach means that there can be access to interventions which Derby City Council could not usually afford if they were the only commissioner, and shares risk across the local authorities involved. The STARS Programme had made good progress towards year one targets since the contract began on 29 October 2020; detailed information can be found in the report.

The Board were informed that with the SIB model, social investors gave upfront investment to fund the service delivery, they then expect to make a return on this investment. Derby City Council's forecasted overspend was exceeding £8.5 million per year on placement costs. The SIB provided support and interventions to step down children from high cost placements when it was safe to do so. However, outcome payments made by the Local Authority would only be made where interventions are successful. A successful bid for £3 million to the "Life Chances Fund" would be split across the three local authorities to give a twenty-five percent contribution towards outcome payments.

A councillor was interested in the payment by results formula and asked if there would be a set of measurable outcomes and tracking of payments made. The officer explained that payments began once the intervention had been undertaken and had been stable for a set period of three months. When outcomes payments start, they are monitored to ensure placements remain stable and outcomes are achieved. The councillor asked if there was a long-term study so that it could be seen that investment had paid off. The officer explained that the Government Departments and the Life Chances Fund are monitoring SIBs across the country to see if the model worked.

The Board resolved:

- 1. to note the performance of the STARS Social Impact Bond programme to date**
- 2. to note the forecasted savings in the MTFP**

29/20 COVID Remote Learning – Delivery of IT Support for Children and Young People

The Board considered a report and presentation of the Strategic Director of Peoples Services. The presentation was given by the Director of Learning, Inclusion and Skills and the Head of Community, Derby County Community Trust. The presentation gave an update on the delivery of IT Support for Children and Young during the pandemic.

The officer informed the Board that Derby City had received 2642 laptops or tablets from the DfE for disadvantaged children. Academy Trusts in Derby also received devices, but the number of devices was not available to the local authority. Devices continue to be delivered directly to schools and trusts so the position on numbers changes daily, the number of devices delivered was thought to be in the region of at least double the number of laptops Derby had received from the DfE.

The Department for Education (DfE) had circulated guidance to schools in January 2021 regarding reviewing their remote learning provision. Six areas were given for review, leadership, remote education context and pupil engagement, capacity and capability, communication, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The Board were informed that Derby City Council had committed £250 thousand to provide devices for disadvantaged children. Fifty thousand of this funding was being proposed to support children with special needs who required modified equipment or software. Currently DfE laptops have not been provided for children aged five to seven years. It was proposed that Derby City Council fill this gap.

The officer explained that E4E are working with employers to collect and distribute second-hand equipment to schools. Rolls Royce are promoting a drive with Marketing Derby to get more devices for schools. Schools continue to loan their own equipment to families, and NCAT have accessed tablet and online tuition for some families from the Roma Community via a national charity

The Head of Community Derby County Community Trust explained that the Trust was commissioned by Opportunity Areas in February 2021 for two main projects:

- how to engage with young people, both face to face and virtually, and enabling young people with SEND to engage
- to establish community hubs to support remote learning and tackle the digital divide. It was reported that a lack of devices was a significant issue, but it was not the sole problem; young people and families still needed training on how to use equipment and packages. Community

hubs will be able to provide this support. Outreach work will be undertaken with families to help to improve their technical skills.

The officer then explained the next steps for delivery of devices. Information was still being collected from schools on the numbers of families without equipment and connectivity. The number of disadvantaged children in the infant age group was being calculated. Derby City Council was working with all providers to ensure that the work was joined up through a steering group.

The Chair thanked both officers and stated that it was great to see the work that was being done to ensure that young people can learn in spite of the pandemic. The Chair asked if a survey had been undertaken to establish how many laptops were needed, and if broadband connections were required. The officer confirmed that this had been done in respect of maintained schools and they were now looking at Academies. The officer explained that schools had different technical requirements; some needed printers, headsets, and software, others needed laptops and tablets.

The Chair explained issues had been highlighted to her from some schools in the City:

- For children in year three and under, devices had not been coming in for allocation. The officer assured the Board that the council would be stepping in to ensure the roll out of equipment. The officer highlighted that individual schools had different ways of working with children, the schools would be asked to cost the equipment they need and the Local Authority would provide funding direct to them to enable them to buy equipment that suits the way they work.
- There was the question of connectivity to home broadband and how many children needed access to devices in each household. The officer confirmed that schools had identified families that they were aware of who did not have access to either connectivity or devices. Funding would be put in place for schools once their statement of equipment needs was received. The priority for equipment would be Council maintained schools first, with SEND and KS1 pupils as a priority then whatever equipment remained would be allocated to other identified priorities.

The Board was keen to see how the roll out of equipment had progressed and asked that this item be brought back to the first meeting of the next Municipal year.

The Board resolved:

- 1. to note the report and presentation**
- 2. requested an update be brought back to the first meeting of the next Municipal year on the progress of the roll out of equipment to schools**

30/20 Work Programme and Topic Review 2020/21

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.

The Chair updated the Board on the progress of the Topic Review. The Board were informed that the Working Group meeting in January had been cancelled but another meeting was being arranged, a date would be confirmed as soon as possible. The Working Group meeting on 11 February 2021 had taken place and Board members were thanked for attending. It was confirmed that all Board members, including co-opted members, had been invited to attend the Working Group Meetings.

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