

Time commenced – 18.00pm  
Time finished – 20:15pm

## **Children and Young People Scrutiny Review Board 14 February 2022**

Present: Councillor Lind (Chair) Councillor Kus (Vice Chair)  
Councillors Bonser, Roulstone, Hezelgrave, T Pearce and Pandey

In Attendance: Fiona Colton - Head of Service Early Help & Children's Safeguarding  
Graeme Ferguson - Virtual School Head  
Paula Nightingale - Head of Inclusion Services  
Andy Ellery - Head of Service Early Help and Children's Safeguarding

### **36/21 Apologies for Absence**

Apologies were received for Andy Smith, Suanne Lim, Gurmail Nizzer, Nicky Fenton and Tracey Churchill.

### **37/21 Late items introduced by the Chair**

There were none.

### **38/21 Declarations of Interest**

There were none.

### **39/21 Minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2021**

The minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

### **40/21 Matters Referred – Recommendation from the Executive Scrutiny Board 7 December 2021 Minute Extract 53/21 Performance Plan**

The Board considered a report on Matters Referred – Recommendation from the Executive Scrutiny Board 7 December 2021 Minute Extract 53/21 Performance Plan. It was noted that the Executive Scrutiny Board had referred climate change to all scrutiny review boards.

**The Board resolved to note the report.**

## 41/21 Outcome of the SEND Inspection

The Board considered a presentation from the Head of Inclusion Services. This presentation provided an update on the Outcome of the SEND Inspection.

It was reported that the Council's SEND Local Area Inspection in June 2019 had found many strengths but that the net result was the requirement for a Written Statement of Action, approved by DfE December 2019.

It was reported that the five main areas for improvement were:

- Joint commissioning (joint health DCC)
- Overarching SEND strategy and stronger graduated response (DCC)
- Improved EHCP timeliness and processes (DCC)
- Reduce waiting times for assessment and diagnosis/ neuro-developmental pathway (Health)
- Improve relationship with parents and overall communication (DCC)

The Board noted that over the past two years the Local Area has worked together to move forward from the Local Area inspection of June 2019 through the Written Statement of Action. It was noted that the Council had looked at the data and information available and were working hard to improve SEND processes, experiences and outcomes for young people and their families. It was noted that the SEND strategy will be supported by both the Written Statement of Action and a 3-year Local Area SEND action plan 2020-2023 with clearly identified impact measures.

It was reported that an Impact and Analysis Group had been established to look at data and information in the Derby Local Area, including high level outcomes in health, education and social care. It was noted that the five Local Area SEND Priorities had been developed with all partners through a series of workshops, meetings and discussions over the past year. Some were about improving strategies for working together and others were focusing on improving the lives and outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

It was noted that the five Local Area SEND Priorities were:

- How we work together as a Local Area
- Inclusive schools and settings
- Wider support for families
- Personalised pathways for a good life
- Successful lives- preparing for adulthood

It was reported that a re-inspection had been completed in October 2021. It was reported that all five areas of weakness were judged to have made sufficient progress to be able to remove the written statement of action. It was noted that The Council still had work to do and that improvements to governance and workstreams along with all priorities were continuing in full force.

It was reported that at the initial inspection, inspectors found the following: Local area leaders had failed to take the joint commissioning actions required to

implement the disability and special educational needs reforms across education, health and social care. It was noted that there had been a significant change in culture since the initial area SEND inspection in June 2019. Area leaders in education, health and social care had strengthened their working relationships. Commissioners from Derby City Council (DCC) and Derby and Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group (DDCCG) had improved their joint working arrangements. It was noted that they were committed, ambitious and willing to improve commissioning arrangements across the local area.

It was noted that at the time of the initial inspection, the leaders' plans to identify and meet the needs of children and young people with SEND were disjointed and poorly shared. It was reported that there had since been some changes to senior leadership in the area. New recruitment to key roles had helped to strengthen governance of the SEND strategy, establish better joint working between professionals and drive improvements. It was noted that there was now a clear strategy for improving provision and outcomes for children and young people with SEND. Leaders had worked effectively with members of Parent Carers Together to co-produce the strategy. It was based on a joint strategic needs assessment of the area.

The Board noted that the process, timeliness and quality of EHC plans had improved, but there was still much work to do. Leaders' priorities for continued improvements were appropriately planned. The need to work closely with parents, carers and professionals for education, health and social care was now well understood. It was reported that leaders had introduced a new procedure to make sure that EHC plans were of good quality. This procedure was in the early stages. The launch of a service-wide digital tool to improve the quality and the process of writing and sharing EHC plans was delayed by the pandemic. It was noted that work was under way to introduce this tool soon.

It was noted that children, young people and their families could now access a range of services to assess and support their needs in a timely manner. The waiting times for all health services had reduced since 2019, with many services provided within the 18-week target. It was noted that the biggest concern at the time of the initial inspection was the unacceptable time children and young people with SEND had to wait for neurodevelopmental assessment by the area's psychology service. Leaders in DCC, DDCCG and the University Hospitals of Derby and Burton NHS Foundation Trust worked with the Derbyshire Community Health Service NHS Foundation Trust and Parent Carers Together to transform the neurodevelopmental pathway. Waiting times had now reduced from 52 weeks to 31 weeks.

It was reported that parents and carers were now more involved in Derby City's plans for SEND provision. They were represented and contributed to the vision and strategy to improve outcomes for children and young people with SEND. It was noted that relationships between Parent Carers Together, other parent representatives and all partners across the area had significantly improved since the initial inspection. Parents and carers whom inspectors spoke with reported that they felt listened to and that their voice was valued in the development of services. For example, Parent Carers Together challenged the proposed service design of Short Breaks. A councillor commented that a reduction in surveys for parents was a positive step.

A councillor commented that it was this was a very important topic and suggested that an update was brought to the Board in six months' time. Board members discussed what this update should cover. It was agreed that this update would cover the following areas: the Single Inclusion Action Plan and its impact, Educational Healthcare Plan timescales, parents' engagement and attitudes, how schools were embracing the change in culture, and Social Care Assessments including whether they were being offered.

A councillor stated that the presentation shows that relationships with PCT and other parent representatives has significantly improved please can officers tell me why there are no statements or feedback from other parent groups involved in the Ofsted and CQC re-visit on the presentation such as "Living with Special Needs Today" which is an independent group who are not funded by the Council, on balance I would like to have heard feedback from them to.

The Board agreed to thank the Inclusion Team for their work on this. The Board also agreed to thank all parent groups and external partners for their massive input into this.

**The Board resolved:**

- 1. to note the report and presentation**
- 2. to ensure that a survey of parent carers is undertaken including all parent groups across the city to capture their level of satisfaction and bring a report back to the Board in 6 months' time, as the Ofsted report identified significant parental dissatisfaction across the city so there is a need to identify why and bring this back to the Board.**
- 3. to request that an update is brought to the Board in six months' time covering the following areas: the Single Inclusion Action Plan and its impact, Educational Healthcare Plan timescales, parents' engagement and attitudes, how schools are embracing the change in culture, and Social Care Assessments including whether they are being offered.**
- 4. to thank the Inclusion Team for their work on this and to thank all parent groups and external partners for their massive input into this.**

## 42/21 Monitoring Safeguarding Practice

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director People Services on Monitoring Safeguarding Practice. This report was presented by the Head of Service Early Help and Children's Safeguarding.

The Board noted that initial contacts had been persistently above 2000 each month since March 2021 and much higher compared with the same months the year before. It was reported that all initial contacts were received by the Reception Service of Early Help and Children's Social Care and that each individual contact was considered by a social worker and manager and a decision was made regarding outcome.

The Board noted that this could range from signposting to Early Help or direct assessment and intervention. Systems were in place to ensure all contacts were considered individually. A high proportion of contacts were able to be resolved at this initial stage safely resulting in approximately 15% progressing for further intervention. The Board noted that the total number of open cases across all services are between 3600 – 3800 at any one time with current open cases at of 31 December 2021 being 3750.

It was noted that performance and pressures were monitored on a monthly basis and senior level scrutiny took place at the Strategic Assured Safeguarding Board. It was reported that there were 3750 cases open to Children's Social Care on 31/12/2021 which was an increase of 86 compared with 31/12/2020. Whilst performance remained strong, work continued across the partnership to manage demand. It was noted that additional management oversight and governance was in place to ensure that progress was maintained, and throughput of work was maintained. It was reported that regular audit and dip sample activity took place to provide day to day assurances.

It was noted that there has been significant media attention regarding Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson. As a result of this, the service had taken a closer look at the current systems to provide assurances that the Council's systems, processes and practice continued to mitigate opportunity for serious incidents. As a result of these tragedies, the anticipated rise in referrals did not occur.

It was reported that on the 22 November 2021 a multi-agency partnership visit was led by the Director of Children's Services (Strategic Director of People) to seek assurances about the quality and compliance of work within the Initial Response Team and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub. Senior Officers from Children's Social Care, Derbyshire Constabulary, Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group, Education and Quality Assurance participated. It was noted that Evidence found provided assurance of effective safeguarding practices within Derby. It was reported that recommendations had been placed into an action plan and approved at the Early Help and Children's Social Care Practice and Development Board.

The Board noted that additional governance and scrutiny had been strengthened through establishment of a dedicated multi agency Strategic MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) Board chaired by the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care. The purpose and function of this board was to ensure continual multi agency improvement is sustained within this area of business.

The Board noted that the service was continuing to respond proactively to the challenges presented by the COVID-19 situation. There was a recovery plan in place which had included visits to children being seen face to face. It was reported that only in exceptional circumstances would this be virtually and only where safe to do so following of risk assessment. It was noted that most of the supervised family time had reverted to face to face unless there are COVID related risks that have determined virtual family time is the safest. It was noted that all buildings continued to have a risk assessment in place that was signed off by the council's corporate health and safety team.

It was noted that social work offices remained open in a COVID secure manner, enabling practitioners to be in the office if needed. Those practitioners who were on duty were based within an office with other duty workers and a manager. Child Protection Conferences and legal meetings continued to be held in a hybrid way and face to face meetings would be held where this was in line with the needs of the child and family. It was reported that multi-agency professional meetings continued to be held virtually. Personal Protective Equipment was readily available for practitioners and utilising this on visits with families was a requirement, to maintain the health and wellbeing of the workforce and wider community. The Board noted that these arrangements were working well and were subject of continuous review by Heads of Service.

A councillor commented that Board members needed further detail on caseloads for workers. It was noted that the Council had recently introduced a method for weighted caseloads. It was reported that this helped to recognise the complexity of each case that practitioners dealt with.

A councillor commented that the increased workload was of concern. The councillor questioned whether managers had a remit to look out of burnout within the workforce. It was noted that social workers had been asked during a recent mock inspection whether they felt well supported. It was reported that although they did not want their workloads to increase any further, they felt that the support of their managers allowed them to conduct risk assessments properly.

A councillor questioned what training was provided to inexperienced colleagues within the service. It was noted that new staff completed an assessment supported year in employment which involved creating a portfolio, additional supervision and various training programmes.

A councillor questioned why the Single Assessments (first) in timescale was lower than other percentages at 78.8%. It was reported that there was a 45-day timescale to start and finish an assessment. It was noted that there had not been a delay in children being seen or other components of the assessment. Members of the Board noted that this area would continue to be monitored by management.

Board members agreed to thank the team for their work during the pandemic.

**The Board resolved:**

- 1. to note the content of the report, current pressures and plans in place to address future challenges.**
- 2. to thank the team for their work during the pandemic.**

## 43/21 Work of the Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) 2020/21

The Board considered a presentation from the Virtual School Head on Work of the Virtual School for Looked After Children (LAC) 2020/21.

It was noted that during summer term 2019-20 (lockdown 1) the attendance was 49%; and during lockdown 3 in Spring 2020-21 the attendance was 74% as more “vulnerable children” took the opportunity to attend school.

It was noted that the lack of national validated data meant that GCSE outcomes need to be treated with caution. Key factors which needed to be considered were the cohort size, the SEND profile of the cohort and the prior attainment from KS2 SATs which helped to measure the progress that has been made.

It was reported that there was a 27.5% increase in the cohort size from 2019 to 2021 (29 to 40 pupils). It was reported that in 2021 70% of the cohort had a SEND diagnosis (28 out of the 40 pupils) and that 50% of the cohort had an EHCP (20 out of 40 pupils). It was noted that in 2019, 52% of the cohort had a SEND diagnosis (15 out of 29 pupils) and that 34% of the cohort had an EHCP (10 out of 29 pupils).

The Board noted that the Virtual School was allocated £2345 Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding per pupil to support with improving educational outcomes. The targets set in the Personal Education Plan informed the financial allocations to schools. It was noted that in the academic year 2020-21 £475,927 was allocated to schools.

It was reported that the Personal Education Plan or PEP was a record of how professionals around the looked after child would support their educational outcomes and achievement. It was noted that every PEP was quality assured by the Virtual School and feedback given. The number of PEPs completed in 2020-21 was 1100; 132 in the Early Years Foundation Stage and 968 at statutory school age.

It was reported that the Cromarty Model was a which had been developed to measure the progress of young people across a range of indicators. This had been rolled out in the Enhanced Care Planning Meetings and looked at measuring progress across education, social, emotional and health indicators.

It was reported that BKSB was an online diagnostic tool for maths and English. Pupils did an initial assessment and follow up work was provided at the appropriate level. The Board noted that this was particularly important when an older pupil came into care and the Virtual School needed to determine what level the pupil was working at.

It was reported that the Virtual School’s duties would be extended and that the Virtual School Head would:

- make visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and

local authorities to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children.

- promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm.
- level up children's outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child can reach their potential. This will include helping to make sure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover from the impact of COVID-19.

The Board noted that the Virtual School's developments moving forward included:

- Launch the project activity with partners looking at trialing work in a specific Locality first
- Rolling out the eLearning, self-evaluation tool and governor report to get feedback
- Completing SWOT analysis to identify any system wide improvements
- RAG rating all children with a social worker to identify need – against agreed criteria
- Looking at creating baselines for attendance, exclusions and academic outcomes to measure impact of the project

A councillor questioned whether a system was now in place to ensure that data was regularly being collected and analysed. It was noted that the Virtual School were working with colleagues to analyse data on attendance and attainment for young people in schools. It was noted that by summer 2022 this data would have been analysed. It was noted that exclusion data was not available for young people on CHIN and CP.

The Board agreed to recommend that Cabinet ensures that appropriate systems are in place to track and monitor children and young people within the Virtual Schools remit, to help identify arising issues and inform future planning.

**The Board resolved:**

- 1. to note the report and presentation**
- 2. to recommend that Cabinet ensures that appropriate systems are in place to track and monitor children and young people within the Virtual Schools remit, to help identify arising issues and inform future planning.**

## 44/21 Early Help Annual Report 2020/21

The Board received a presentation on Early Help Annual Report 2020/21. This was presented by of the Head of Service Early Help & Children's Safeguarding.

It was noted that the Council was responsible for delivering Targeted Early Help service which included:

- Casework



- Children's Centres
- Evidence Based Programmes
- Missing, Missing Education, Education Welfare, NEET Young Carers
- Safe Families for Children, Supporting Vulnerable Families

It was noted that key findings of the Early Help Annual Report 2020/21 included:

- Number of cases – 610 a reduction on the previous year (those where Eh is the Lead Professional)
- Number of Early Help Assessments - 930
- Number of cases stepped up – 159, a reduction on the previous year of 114
- Number of cases returning within 3 months was 21 similar to previous year
- Number of cases screened for CRE/CSE– 330, an increase on last year

The Board noted that the number of Progression Tools completed was 562, 560 with an improved Direction of travel 98% and that the number of HWIFY completed was 524. It was reported that satisfaction remained high with 96.37% saying they were helped. It was noted that there had been over 60,000 direct contacts with children and young people during lockdown periods. It was reported that a new Staying Together team had been created along with a new dynamic Virtual offer.

It was reported that the Council's ambitions for 2022/23 included:

- Remodelling of existing Early Help Service
- Continue to deliver STT ethos within other teams
- Development of Family Hubs
- Continue to deliver first class service
- Move towards consolidating our strengths based model

It was noted that the service did not have a backlog as a result of COVID-19. The Board thanked the Early help Team for their hard work and dedication.

A councillor commented that they were concerned about NEET children figures. The Board noted that the January 2022 figures had seen an improvement and were up 4.4%. It was noted that the team were having to make savings as part of the MTFP.

A councillor questioned whether these savings could potentially have a long-term impact on the team. The Head of Service Early Help & Children's Safeguarding commented that they were worried about the impact of these savings and that the team were determined to make the most of the resources available to them.

The Board agreed to urge Cabinet to be vigilant that the reduction in scope and capacity of the Early Help Team does not lead to consequent budgetary pressures in the future. The Board urge Cabinet to ensure the funding and sustainability of the Early Help Team.

**The Board resolved:**

- 1. to note the report and presentation.**
- 2. to thank the Early help Team for their hard work and dedication.**
- 3. to urge Cabinet to be vigilant that the reduction in scope and capacity of the Early Help Team does not lead to consequent budgetary pressures in the future. The Board urge Cabinet to ensure the funding and sustainability of the Early Help Team.**

## **45/21 Appointment of Co-opted Members Update**

The Board received a report of the Head of Democracy and Statutory Scrutiny Officer on the Appointment of Co-opted Members Update.

It was noted that there was provision for up to eight co-opted members to be appointed to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Board to take part in discussion on education matters. It was reported that three were directly nominated faith representatives (categorised as Church of England, Catholic and Other Faiths), while between two to five parent governors could also be appointed.

### **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 for a further four-year period from 31st January 2022 to 31st January 2026.**
- 2. to note and endorse the nomination of Nicky Fenton to the Board and to request that Council approve her appointment as the Church of England Representative for a further four-year period from 31st January 2022 to 31st January 2026**
- 3. to note the process for nomination/re-nomination of the remaining co-opted other- faith representative is ongoing.**
- 4. to note that no nominations for two to five co-opted parent governors were received from local authority-maintained schools. The nomination request process will be repeated in six months.**
- 5. to request that Council approve the nomination of the two co-opted faith representatives (Catholic Diocesan and Church of England).**

## **46/21 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. It was noted that Board members would be invited to attend a meeting of the Adults and Health Scrutiny Review Board to receive an item on Early Years Dental Care.

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

MINUTES END.