

Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

17 July 2017

Present: Councillor P Oliver (in the Chair)
Councillors K Bolger, M Green, K Lee,
A Newman, A Waggott-Fairley and
F Weetman.

Mrs M Ord	Parent Governor Representative
Mr G O'Hanlon	Church Representative
Rev. M Vine	Church Representative

CES08/07/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Austin, P Brooks, J Cassidy, K Clark, M Reynolds and M Thirlaway.

CES09/07/17 Substitute Members

Pursuant to the Council's Constitution the appointment of the following substitute member was reported:

Councillor K Bolger for Councillor K Clark.

CES10/07/17 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

CES11/07/17 Minutes

Resolved that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 June 2017 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CES12/07/17 Child Sexual Exploitation Update

The Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Children's Services attended the meeting to provide the sub-committee with its regular update on the work being undertaken to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE) in North Tyneside. The report provided information in response to matters raised at the March 2017 meeting; information relating to individual cases; what work was being undertaken across the Authority; and what work had been undertaken with partners.

The sub-committee was informed that the areas regarded as 'hotspots' for adult sexual exploitation were St Mary's lighthouse, East Howden Park, Killingworth Shopping centre; coastal seafronts; Cullercoats; Whitley Bay; and the Meadowell in North Shields. The police and partner agencies were aware of these areas and targeted services there. There

were no identified hotspots for children however it was known that young people at risk of CSE gravitated to Newcastle city centre; again this was known information and there was clear communication through the Sanctuary team. North Tyneside Children's Services had committed to funding the social work secondment post to the Sanctuary team up to March 2018 when it would be reviewed again. Taxi drivers had to undergo training on CSE within three months of receiving their licence and steps were being taken to provide this through an online e-learning module instead of a face to face training session; where drivers did not have access to a tablet/device they could use a Council iPad in the Licensing office. If an applicant was not confident/competent in the use of IT they would be supported one to one. To date this had never been an issue. It was also confirmed that CSE training was delivered to the Authority's partners: Engie, Capita and Kier.

The Sexual Exploitation group was exploring CSE awareness raising with Tyne Met College and the Children with Disability team and SCARPA around raising awareness to young males, BME groups and young people with a disability. Contact had been made with South Tyneside to gain advice and support on some of the work they had undertaken with BME groups. This was an area of ongoing development.

The sub-committee was informed that there was currently 10 young people in the borough that had been identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation, this was reviewed on a weekly basis and had been at or around 11 for a period of time. There had been issues with a group of young people going missing on a regular basis; as this increased their risk of CSE or of being involved in anti-social behaviour this had prompted a multi agency approach to disruption and distraction. Children services had been working with Early Help locality teams, Housing, Youth Offending Service, Police and schools to address this as a targeted piece of work.

The recent Ofsted inspection of Children's Services' report identified that responses to children at risk of sexual exploitation and those that go missing were well developed and effective. Also, the CSE risk assessment tool was continuing to receive positive feedback.

The Project Sanctuary work of collating intelligence and sharing information with partners had continued alongside one to one work with young people in relation to CSE, risk taking and missing and training had been delivered for Moorbridge school, GPs and agency foster carers. The seconded social worker had also supported the police and Children's Services in relation to Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWN) being served on adults who were harbouring young people; liaised with third parties attached to Sanctuary to ensure that counselling services were in place for young people affected by CSE; liaised with schools in the borough to support pupils who were at risk of CSE or displaying risk taking behaviour; and had been involved in complex abuse meetings in relation to trafficking cases.

The Authority was also in the process of developing reporting data for children who were at risk of child exploitation and missing as this would enable the Authority and partner agencies to understand and analyse the risk and needs of this cohort of young people and develop resources and strategies to respond.

Questions were asked regarding the ages of the children identified as at risk of CSE; a recent trafficking case in Newcastle; how schools proved they were CSE aware; and the requirement for the training of existing licensed taxi drivers.

The sub-committee was informed that no primary school children were deemed at risk of CSE, the Newcastle case had not involved anyone from North Tyneside and there had

been no risk to children; schools received a regular training programme from the Safeguarding Team and CSE was a regular item on the agenda of school meetings, it was also monitored by the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board and if a school was identified as failing on safeguarding during their Ofsted Inspection, they would be placed in special measures. Clarification would be sought on what training was required for existing taxi divers and provided to the sub-committee once available.

It was **agreed** to note the updated information on the work being undertaken to raise awareness of, and protect children from, sexual exploitation and the implementation of the recommendations from the sub-committee's Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Group.

CES13/07/17 Ofsted Inspection

Jacqui Old, the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding attended the meeting to present to the sub-committee an overview of the recent Ofsted Inspection.

The sub-committee was informed that between 27 February 2017 and 23 March 2017 North Tyneside Council's services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers were inspected by Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) as part of their national inspection programme. Concurrent to the inspection of services for children, Ofsted also undertook a review of the effectiveness of the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board (NTSCB).

A report detailing the background to the inspection; the outcome; the key findings from the Inspection of Children's Services and formal recommendations; the key findings from the Inspection of the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board and formal recommendations; and next steps had been included as part of the agenda for the meeting.

Ms Old made a presentation at the meeting and answered questions.

The sub-committee was informed that this had been the first inspection of North Tyneside's services since March 2012. The previous inspection of the Authority's services for safeguarding and looked after children was in March 2012 when the Authority's services were judged to be 'Good'.

The Inspection focused on the overall effectiveness of services based upon four judgments about:

1. the experiences and progress of children who need help and protection;
2. the experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence and adoption performance;
3. the experiences and progress of care leavers; and
4. leadership, management and governance.

The overall effectiveness of children's services in North Tyneside was judged to be 'Good' overall and across all four judgements. Ofsted defined this grading as being achieved when inspectors find work of good quality, with some outstanding elements and which was delivering measurably improved outcomes.

Of note, Ofsted judged the experiences and progress of care leavers in North Tyneside to be 'Outstanding'. Ofsted defined this grading as being achieved when inspectors find work of the highest quality which was delivering improved outcomes that exceed expectations.

A comparison with the graded judgments of the 130 other local authorities that have been inspected to date by Ofsted showed that North Tyneside Council was within the top ten performing Children's Services within the country. Within the North East Region, of the ten local authorities to be inspected to date, North Tyneside was the top performing. Ofsted made seven recommendations for areas of development. All areas were known to officers with improvement work on-going at the point of inspection.

The Authority was required to submit copies of the post inspection action plan to the Secretary of State and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector no later than 20 September 2017. Each of the seven recommendations had been allocated to a nominated Lead Officer who had been asked to respond with SMART plans by 21 July 2017. A Draft Action Plan would then be agreed to; a copy of the draft Action Plan would also be sent to the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Sub-committee for information once completed.

The North Tyneside Safeguarding Children's Board (NTSCB) was concurrently inspected. The Inspection focused on the effectiveness of the NTSCB in meeting its statutory functions. Ofsted reported that it judged the overall effectiveness of the NTSCB to be 'Good'. Ofsted define this grading as being achieved when the characteristics of a good Local Safeguarding Children's Board are widespread and common practice. A comparison with the graded judgments of the 130 other Safeguarding Children's Boards that had been inspected to date by Ofsted showed that the NTSCB is one of 43 graded 'Good' within the country. Within the North East Region, of the ten Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to be inspected to date, the NTSCB was one of only three graded 'Good'. Ofsted made three recommendations for areas of development.

The key messages from the report were:

- North Tyneside's support for care leavers has been judged as outstanding by Ofsted.
- Children's Services overall were rated good and deemed to have a direct impact on improving the lives of children in the borough.
- The Authority was praised for supporting care leavers with work experience and apprenticeship opportunities in its own organisation.
- Children and young people were listened to by the Authority and are directly involved in shaping and improving services.
- Social workers were commended for their dedication and knowledge, while the Authority's support for adopters was also highlighted.

Members raised questions relating to social worker recruitment and retention and how newly qualified social workers were supported and developed; the issues identified with the IT programmes and equipment; what information was available regarding private adoptions and the process to develop the Action Plans.

The Chair, endorsed by the whole sub-committee, congratulated Ms Old and her entire team in Children's Services for an excellent result and thanked them for all their continued hard work in ensuring that the children of the borough and their families were so well served.

It was **agreed** to note the information presented on the *North Tyneside Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board* from Ofsted in June 2017.

CES14/07/17 Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning

Councillor I Grayson, as Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Skills had accepted an invitation from the Chair to address the sub-committee on the administration's plans for the year ahead.

Councillor Grayson began by referencing the achievements of 2016/17 which had included establishing 0-19 locality working; the development of edge of care offer; achieving permanence more quickly for more children, which was above the national average; care leaver support and accommodation options scoped out; an employment and skill restructure; timely assessments for children and young people; and the voice of the child being embedded in all services. Whilst he was delighted with the Ofsted inspection report and joined the sub-committee in its congratulations to the officers in the service, he and the officers were not complacent and the Action Plan would show how the service would become outstanding.

The Children, Young People and Learning teams covered a wide spectrum of responsibilities but all worked to the following three pledges:

Pledge 1: we intervene early with evidence based, family focussed services

Pledge 2: we work in partnership to keep children in school

Pledge 3: we keep children and young people safe at home and connected to their local communities

Looking ahead to the coming year, Councillor Grayson outlined the plans for each pledge. Under Pledge 1, the intention was to:

- Further develop Locality hubs which involved many partners in delivering early help.
- Continue the transition of pre-school provision to schools in a phased process over the year to ensure a smooth transition and that there was a robust children's centre offer.
- Integrate health visitors and schools nurses into the locality hubs.
- Establish the new Ready for School centre at the Riverside Centre supporting vulnerable 2, 3 and 4 year olds.
- Enable colleagues in social care to access more community based support for families and try new approaches to keeping children out of higher end services.
- Introduce 'Signs of Safety' practice model.

In response to a question about young carers, the Head of Service informed the sub-committee that there was a new statutory duty on young carers and all teams were embedding their awareness of the factors/behaviour which might indicate a young person had caring responsibilities and then how best to assess the needs of the young person.

Under Pledge 2, the intention was to ensure children and young people in the borough received a good education; that their education was stable for children by working in partnership with headteachers to keep children in school and reduce the movement of

children around the education system; continue to support the School Improvement Service which was a greatly valued service and last year generated an income of £125,000.

In relation to 'a stable education' it was explained that it was not the intention to say no child would be excluded from a school, there would always be that option available should the circumstances require it, only that there would be a more collective response from all the schools as a whole to provide the best solution for the particular child, taking into account the impact the child staying at the school would have on the school and its other pupils.

In relation to children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) a strategic SEND Board to oversee developments had been established and work undertaken to ensure that SEN support services (e.g. Sensory Support, Dyslexia Service) provided a coherent and co-ordinated response to need and that appropriate placement and provision and funding for children and young people with SEND was available in a range of settings, including schools and colleges. Work had also begun on establishing a 'whole life disability service' to give consistently person centred care across a person's life which maximised resources and independence.

The Employment and Skills strategy was being implemented which focused upon the priority groups of looked after children, workless households and SEND and sought to increase the number of apprenticeships in the borough, there would also be an inspection of the adult learning alliance; this was expected in the Autumn.

Under Pledge 3, the intention was to:

- Introduce a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to manage demand more effectively. This brought social workers, police officers, youth offending, early help together to quickly share information about families to inform decision making.
- Reduce the numbers of looked after children when it was safe to do so. To do this the teams were reviewing all the Looked After Children; using voluntary sector organisations such as 'Safe Families for Children' to train volunteers to 'host' young children in their own homes; and increase the number of foster carers. This would enable more expensive placements to be 'converted' to more cost effective ones which would keep children closer to their communities and in school.

More residential units were being built to keep young people close to Home and also providing more support to care leavers. £800,000 from central government had been secured which meant that when the young people left care, the service would stay close by providing housing and support.

In addition to the above, Members sought the Cabinet Member's views on exclusions, home education, the Schools Forum and school funding. In relation to exclusions, reference was made to 11 recommendations which headteachers had made after an audit of current provision which would be implemented from September and an explanation provided of when schools could refuse to admit an excluded child. School budgets were monitored and most of those with a deficit had made improvements, the funding formula was still under consultation. The Schools Forum would become defunct in April 2019.

The Chair of the meeting thanked Councillor Grayson for his attendance at the meeting and his presentation.

CES15/07/17 Signs of Safety

The sub-committee received a report which introduced Signs of Safety, a practice model for children in need of a statutory assessment, being adopted within North Tyneside Local Authority and partner agencies. The report provided a basic overview of what Signs of Safety was, how it would be implemented and the current position in respect of training.

The sub-committee was informed that Signs of Safety was created in Western Australia during the 1990s and was based on the use of Strength Based interview techniques, and drew upon Solution Focused Brief therapy (SFBT). It aimed to work collaboratively and in partnership with families and children to conduct risk assessments and produce action plans for increasing safety, and reducing risk and danger by focusing on strengths, resources and networks that the family had. In practice the model can be used from the first stages of gathering information about an allegation through to case closure and had broad applicability to child protection work. There was no set period of intervention and it could range from a number of brief sessions to long term work with service users.

The model had also been used widely in early intervention work and its application in practice extended beyond child protection. As well as incorporating techniques from Solution Focused Brief Therapy the model has a number of key core principles and practice elements and had a clear set of assessment tools for measuring risk and for working with children. The three principles emphasised the need to move towards a constructive culture around child protection rather than a paternalistic model where the professionals adopted the position that they knew what was wrong and they knew the specific solutions.

The Authority was at the beginning of a long journey and had been working in partnership with the Regional Director for Signs of Safety who had supported developing the workforce and identifying those who would be Signs of Safety Practice Leads and responsible for providing future training and briefing sessions to staff within the Authority. Seven, two day basic training courses attended by a variety of professionals including police, health, education and CYPL staff had been organised with a further two, two day sessions over the course of the next three months.

Members of the Senior Management Team, including the Head of Health, Education, Care and Safeguarding, as the Authority's Director of Adult Services and Director of Children Services, had attended the advanced five day training to ensure that the Authority had commitment from all levels to the model and to implementation. There would be three advanced training events taking place in the next six months; this would allow those identified as Practice Leaders to develop their skills in utilising the model and to training others so they were fully updated in the model.

It was anticipated that full implementation would take five years, however it was expected that within two years of strong and focussed activity the Authority would have a positive level of confidence in our practice as an organisation and to see its worth.

In response to questions, examples from other countries (Ireland, the United States of America and Denmark) were provided and how it co-ordinated with the Troubled Families Programme was explained to the sub-committee. Officers had embraced the principals and had found the use of a common model made recording the work easier, reflected what was required and also allowed for the child's view. It was known that not all current activities improved outcomes for children as they were process and court driven whereas this model was about changing the context of the family by the family. It was changing the conversation with families for the better and creating good social work.

Reference was made to a 20 minutes video which helped explain the principles and practicalities of the model and it was suggested that Members view it to help aid their understanding and assist in their work as the implementation of the model progressed.

It was **agreed** (1) to note the information presented to the sub-committee on the Signs of Safety Practice Model; and
(2) that a link to view the video introducing the Signs of Safety practice model be provided to Members of the sub-committee to allow them the opportunity to increase their understanding prior to the next time the matter would be discussed at the 20 November 2017 meeting.

(During the discussion on this matter, Councillor K Lee and Mrs M Ord left the meeting.)