

Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee

16 October 2017

Present: Councillor M Thirlaway (Chair)
Councillors P Brooks, J Cassidy, P Earley, M Green,
A Newman, P Oliver and A Waggott-Fairley.

Rev. M Vine Church Representative

CES23/10/17 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Austin, K Clark, K Lee, M Reynolds, F Weetman and Mrs M Ord, parent governor representative.

CES24/10/17 Substitute Members

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

Councillor P Earley for Councillor K Clark.

CES25/10/17 Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest or dispensations were reported.

CES26/10/17 Minutes

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

CES27/10/17 North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17

The sub-committee received the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board's (NTSCB) Annual Report 2016/17 from the Independent Chair, Richard Burrows.

The NTSCB was required to publish an annual report to show how the partnership meets its responsibilities and statutory functions. The report provided an account of what the Board and its members had achieved during the year, including an assessment of the impact of these efforts and the overall position of joint working arrangements to safeguard children and young people in North Tyneside and how effective the joint working relationships were.

For the review of 2016/17 the Annual report included sections on child sexual exploitation; performance management; policies, procedures and protocols; section 11 and 157 self assessment; training; case review and the use of learning to improve practice; Child Death

Overview Panel; safer recruitment and allegations management; and private fostering. The final section was the summary and sufficiency question which looked at the report as a whole and commented on the joint working arrangements to protect children and the effectiveness of the Board.

Mr Burrows stated that there continued to be grounds for assurance and a collective recognition by Board members of the challenges and risk faced by the NTSCB; the partnerships worked well together to protect children but it was a fragile arrangement due to the different forms of abuse children face, the continuing pressure being felt across all organisations regarding efficiencies and the particular challenges of retaining and attracting staff.

Attendance at Board meetings was good and methods were in place to encourage attendance if this slipped; the local authority and the police specifically had been challenged to ensure officers attending for them were of appropriate seniority to be able to agree and implement any actions agreed at the meeting.

The performance data showed that the partnership was working together well and the Board had been commended for being lean and effective. An atmosphere had been created which allowed people to challenge each other and seek explanations for things in and outside of formal meetings and meaningful relationships had been developed. A significant step was improving the way partners explained their reaction to missing children; being able to present the story appropriately meant the board was fully informed and had a clear view about the things that mattered. Three case reviews had been required during the year and the process of responding to concerns was much improved.

There had been activity and change in the year but any change had been undertaken for positive reasons and any risks associated with a change were always a focus whilst the change was implemented. For the year ahead the NTSCB was committed to the Signs of Safety model, learning from peer reviews, maintaining their scrutiny of child sexual exploitation and the response from partners to children with a disability.

A member enquired how the voluntary sector, which after schools had most contact with children without parental supervision, dovetailed with the Board and whether there was any connection with the Diocese. Mr Burrows acknowledged that more could be done with wider organisations, the voluntary sector representative on the Board was the NSPCC, and that there was a plan to have the Section 11 Audit undertaken by voluntary organisations. To this end an organisation had been commissioned to advise the Board on how best to roll out the Section 11 Audits to these organisations (Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 placed a duty on a range of organisations to ensure their functions were discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, the Section 11 Audit was the check that this was taking place). Mr Burrows assured the sub-committee that he had contacts within both Diocese in the borough.

A member sought clarification on Mr Burrow's use of the word 'fragile' to describe the joint working arrangements of the NTSCB. Mr Burrow's explained that the fragility referred to the physical form as a particular organisation had a high vacancy rate and predominantly newly qualified staff members which meant that this part of the Board had greater risk, was more fragile and was something that the Board needed to be aware of; not just to discover how the organisation was responding to the challenge but what the whole Board could do to assist.

The Chair thanked Mr Burrows for his attendance and for the work undertaken by the

NTSCB on behalf of the children in the borough.

It was **agreed** to note the North Tyneside Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2016/17.

CES28/10/17 Corporate Parenting Update

The sub-committee received a report which updated it on the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2019 which established the vision and plan of the Authority and its partners to provide the best possible care for children and young people who were looked after and leaving care and on the delivery of the Authority's responsibilities under Regulation 44 of the Children's Home (England) Regulations 2015, the provision of independent monitoring visits to its Children's Homes.

The Senior Manager for Looked After Children Resources and the Senior Manager for Quality Assurance attended the meeting to make the presentation and answer questions.

The report provided information on the statutory framework; the local policy context including the Our North Tyneside Plan and the Children and Young People's Plan; Corporate Parenting and its governance arrangements; statistical information relating to looked after children and care leavers; the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2019, which was commended by Ofsted following their inspection of Children's Services as 'highly ambitious'; and its associated Action Plan.

The five outcomes in the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan were:

1. Our children and Young people achieve their educational employment and life skills potential.
2. Our children have a stable home and are safe.
3. Our children are healthy and well.
4. Our children build positive relationships.
5. Our children are listened to and respected.

The report detailed how the Authority, as corporate parent, would know that these outcomes had been achieved; for example, this included making sure the children and young people had access to an advocate or independent visitor and were involved in developing plans about their care, education, health and future. These outcomes were reported to the Corporate Parenting Committee.

The sub-committee was informed that there were 279 looked after children and young people in the borough, the majority of which were placed with local authority foster carers. This was the second lowest in the region as a percentage of population. The Authority operated five children's homes, the regulations required that an independent person undertook a 'monitoring visit', which could be unannounced, to a home at least once per month; these were known as 'Regulation 44' visits. These visits were undertaken by officers in the Commissioning and Investment team, who did not work for children's services, and a report was produced which set out whether they considered that the children were effectively safeguarded and if the conduct of the home promoted children's well-being.

A member expressed the view that they did not receive enough information regarding the success or not of the Council as a corporate parent, or members' role regarding this

responsibility, and how many male social workers were employed as more boys were in care than girls.

In response it was explained that Ofsted had rated the Leaving Care Service as Outstanding so there had been an external opinion on the service and the officers were confident that the right systems were in place for the young people. They had a set of 'outcome measures' for each child which was used to monitor how effective the service had been as a corporate parent to the young person; this level of information could be shared if required. It was acknowledged that there was no way of knowing how that young person fared when they were 30 or 40 years old, which would be the most complete measure of how successful the Authority had been as a corporate parent.

There were male officers in key positions in the organisation and before a social worker was assigned to a child there was consideration of how best to engage with the young person and responded to accordingly. It was acknowledged that the turnover of staff, particularly social workers, was higher than the team would like. A placement was always allocated on what was best for a child, it was not placement led and this sometimes required the use of agency foster carers or placing the child outside of the borough. The team worked hard to try and keep a child at home as taking a child into care could create as many problems as it solved so the Edge of Care team aimed to build resilience in the wider network to support the family and also did have difficult conversations with the family.

The Chair thanked the officers for their presentation and their attendance at the meeting.

Agreed (1) to note the information provided to the sub-committee on the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2019 and Regulation 44 visits;
(2) acknowledge the work of the Corporate Parenting Committee and Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership and support them to continue their work; and
(3) request the Service Manager for Looked After Children Resources submit further progress reports to the Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee on the delivery of the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2016-2019 and its impact on outcomes for children and young people.

CES29/10/17 Education Attainment and Progress

The Overview, Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee had requested at its 30 March 2015 meeting that the sub-committee monitor the effectiveness of the support and challenge programme undertaken by the School Improvement Service (SIS) to ensure pupils classified as disadvantaged made comparable progress to those not classified as disadvantaged (minute OV43/03/15).

The sub-committee received a report from the Assistant Director of Education, Learning and Skills on the educational attainment of pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding, in North Tyneside.

The sub-committee was informed that North Tyneside schools had once again produced a strong set of results in 2017 with all key measures anticipated to be in line or above the national average. Whilst the data was provisional as test remarking and checking exercise outcomes had not been completed, it clearly showed the challenge of reducing the disadvantage gap remained.

Disadvantaged pupils were defined as those who had been eligible for Free School Meals

(FSM) in the last six years, or had been adopted or were looked after; they also formed the majority of those eligible for Pupil Premium funding. Schools had autonomy on how they spent their Pupil Premium money to improve the performance of eligible pupils and each year schools must publish how they had spent the money to improve the attainment and progress of disadvantaged pupils.

The measurement that was used to evaluate the performance of disadvantaged pupils was school disadvantaged pupils compared to non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. The in-school gap was no longer used as a measure. The local authority performance of non-disadvantaged students across all phases was better than national. However, the gaps remained wider than national for disadvantaged pupils in most measures against national other (non-disadvantaged) pupils.

In Early Years, 59% of FSM pupils and 72% of non-FSM pupils reached a good level of development, this was a significant gap of 13% so early on in a child's formal education. At Key Stage One, 54% of disadvantaged pupils and 74% of non-disadvantaged pupils reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics combined. This gap of -20% was smaller than the gap in 2016 as a result of the larger improvement for disadvantaged pupils. The gap between disadvantaged pupils in North Tyneside and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally was -13%.

At Key Stage Two, 47% of disadvantaged pupils and 74% of non-disadvantaged pupils reached the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics. This represented a greater percentage point increase for non-disadvantaged pupils. This gap of -27% was wider than the gap nationally and wider than in 2016. The gap between disadvantaged pupils in North Tyneside and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally was -19% compared to -20% nationally.

As in 2016 progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2 was calculated as a value added score for each school and could also be calculated for the local authority. In all three subjects North Tyneside had a value added score above the national average (zero), being significantly above national average in reading and writing. Value added for disadvantaged pupils (excluding special schools) was below 0 in reading and maths and above in writing.

At Key Stage 4 (G.C.S.E) attainment in 2017 was broadly in line with 2016. 65% of students achieved the Basics measure (grade 4+ in English and mathematics). This level of attainment should place North Tyneside first in the NE region. 75% of non-disadvantaged pupils achieved this measure compared with 37% of disadvantaged pupils; this was a 34% gap. This was greater than the national gap in 2016.

At Key Stage 5, North Tyneside had achieved its best ever results. The average point score per academic entry was 33.1 which was significantly above the national value for state funded schools and in line with national for all schools and colleges, including independent. When expressed as a grade this was C+ and was higher than in 2016 when it was a C. The average point score per vocational entry was 42.6 (Distinction*-). This was above 2016 (Distinction+) and well-above the provisional national average of 34.7 points. Vocational attainment was significantly above the national average.

Closing the gap between school disadvantaged pupils compared to non-disadvantaged pupils remained a key area for improvement and the priorities for the next year were as follows:

- Through training, bespoke support and the sharing of best practice, assist schools to

increase the number of pupils achieving grade 4 and above in the new GCSE grading system for English and mathematics.

- Support schools with the introduction of the new GCSE grading system for most other subjects in 2018.
- Share successful strategies across the authority for addressing the progress of disadvantaged pupils whilst supporting all schools to minimise difference.
- Enable schools to closely scrutinise the effectiveness of their pupil premium strategy through commissioning a pupil premium review, which will be quality assured by an established group of North Tyneside pupil premium reviewers.
- Establishing a pupil premium strategy group of primary and secondary specialists from within EYSIS.
- Creating networking opportunities through termly pupil premium best practice networking sessions.
- Providing tailored support to schools around closing gaps.
- Promote effective transition between phases of education.

Information was also provided about the support to be provided to the schools that had not performed as well as expected. Based on provisional data, there were two schools in North Tyneside identified as being below the floor standard and it was anticipated that one school already deemed to be coasting would remain coasting in 2017. This had implications for potential action by the Regional Schools Commissioner who could move towards converting these schools into an academy.

Members requested the attainment data for Service Premium pupils and the Director of Education, Learning and Skills undertook to provide the information to the sub-committee as it was not information she had to hand.

Members also made comments about the governance and leadership arrangements of the North Tyneside Learning Trust (NLT) and the appointment of their governors when/if schools were required to replace a governing body and the expected benefits to a failing school when it converted to an academy.

The Director of Education, Learning and Skills explained the partnership arrangements with the NLT and that her team at the School Improvement Service (SIS) worked closely with them as the local authority retained the statutory responsibilities for attainment. The NLT had a strong focus on STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) subjects and did provide funding for a primary school advisor and a secondary school science post within the SIS and had been successful in securing funding for additional support, for example the Maths Hub. Once a school became an academy it was no longer a local authority school and the local authority only retained its statutory responsibilities for standards. The member requested a short written summary of the purpose of Acadamisation be provided for the sub-committee's information.

It was **agreed** (1) to note the information provided on the attainment and progress of all pupils;

(2) that the Director of Education, Learning and Skills provide the attainment data for Service Premium pupils for circulation to the sub-committee;

(3) that the Chair and Deputy Chair discuss with appropriate officers how information on the governance and leadership arrangements of the North Tyneside Learning Trust could best be communicated to the sub-committee; and

(4) a short written summary of the purpose of Acadamisation be provided for the sub-committee's information.

CES30/10/17 Early Help and Integrated Locality Teams

The sub-committee received a report from the Assistant Director, Prevention and Early Help on the development of the integrated locality team, the troubled families work and the Early Help 'offer'.

The report included an overview of the locality model; an analysis of the activity of locality meetings and the early help pathway; the results of the survey undertaken after the first six months of the new model; a copy of the Locality Newsletter; and information relating to the latest Troubled Families claim.

The sub-committee was reminded that Early Help was led by the local authority but it was not a duty of the local authority, its partners in health, education and police also shared the responsibility. Since the last report in March 2017, 27 Locality meetings had been held with a total of 185 families who between them had 350 children. The 'Professional Conversations Framework' was used to guide the discussions which meant that 10 days before the meeting partners were sent details of families to be discussed at the meeting. Each partner organisation then conducted research to see what they knew about the family so a full discussion could be had and the best Lead Worker appointed to work with them at the meeting, adhering to the principle of one worker, one family, one plan. 17 different agencies had been invited to the meetings and 15 of those agencies have attended. They included:

Child Adolescent Mental Health Service
 Harbour
 Housing/Safer Estates
 Health Visitors / Public Health School Nurses New Beginnings
 Northumbria Police NSPCC
 Safeguarding
 Statutory Assessment Review Service (SARS)
 Social Work Assessment Team
 Schools Support Service
 Safe Families for Children Family Gateway
 Young Carers
 Youth Offending Team

57 schools have been invited to the meetings, with 36 schools attending.

To evidence whether or not this way of working was effective the service was looking for evidence of impact on children and families by identifying the outcomes sought with the North Tyneside Outcomes Plan (NTOP) which provided a framework for identifying families who needed support and what outcomes to look for when working with children, young people and their families. To allow members to get a better understanding of what that meant in practice two case studies were included as appendices to the report to illustrate the difference being made to children's lives.

Locality / Early Help work was a partnership activity and the Authority's role was to provide leadership of the work on behalf of all partners. The service attempted to keep everyone involved and up-to-date in several ways, one was the Locality Newsletter and 'Who's Who'. Also a survey had been carried out at the end of the first six months of the Locality Teams about how they were working. The survey information went to 145 people across all agencies and responses were received from 19 (21%). The report detailed the results and in response, after some analysis, a follow up event was arranged where the results were

discussed and some changes to the way the Locality meetings operated were made; this included a pilot of not holding Locality Meetings during the six week summer holiday, having an Early Help manager at the Front Door to support an earlier identification of families which could benefit from early help; and updating and refreshing the NTOP.

In relation to the Troubled Families work, the most recent claim (50) brought the total claim in the second phase (2015-2020) to 190, 13% of the Authority's total, behind the target for this stage of 30% of the total. It was anticipated that the changes to the NTOP and involving more workers in the process of evidencing outcomes would improve this. The new IT system, another tool to support the claims process, had still not been procured due to commercial issues but it was anticipated that for the next report a system would be in place which would allow the collection of data from a wide range of resources to both identify families and evidence outcomes.

In response to a query the usefulness of thresholds was discussed and examples given of how families can appear to not require any support but actually do.

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director for her attendance at the meeting.

It was **agreed** to note the information provided on the development of the integrated locality team, the troubled families work and the Early Help offer.