

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee

held on Monday, 26th November, 2018 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3,
Westfields, Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)
Councillor A Moran (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors M Beanland, L Durham, L Jeuda, G Merry and M Warren

In attendance

Councillor J Saunders – Portfolio Holder for Children and Families
M Campbell - LADO
J Forster - Director of Education and 14-19 Skills
S Leece - Safeguarding Manager (Child Protection, Child in Need & LADO)
N Moorhouse - Director of Children's Social Care and Deputy DCS
M Palethorpe - Acting Executive Director of People
J Tausif – NHS South Cheshire CCG & NHS Vale Royal CCG
A Stathers – Tracey - Director of Transformation programme

27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Deakin, M Grant, O Hunter and J Weatherill.

28 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2018.

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

29 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30 WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no whipping declarations.

31 PUBLIC SPEAKING/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public wishing to speak.

32 OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT TO CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Consideration was given to a presentation on Ofsted's focused visit to Children's Social Care, which focused on the experiences of cared for children, especially those living at home on care orders and in residential provision. The presentation detailed the strengths and weaknesses of Ofsted's findings which included:

Strengths

- Managers had strong oversight of both permanence decisions and the progression of care plans
- Children on Care Orders who were placed at home with parents was being reduced effectively.
- For the majority of Children, their IROs footprint was clear.
- Positive feedback on '@ct', specialist team to support fragile placements.
- Virtual school ensured that children had continuity of provision.
- Effective quality assurance and up to date SEF
- Social Workers know their children well
- Strengthened focus on permanence planning at both joint strategic and operational levels.
- Joint Targeted recruitment of foster carers reflected need.
- Quality of reports and timeliness of care proceedings
- Effective peer and management support
- Well detailed and analysed case summaries.

Areas for improvement

- Update assessments and plans that respond to changes in childrens circumstances
- Care plans that were fully accessible to children and parents
- Return home interviews for children who go missing and dissemination of learning from these to inform care and placements plans.
- Clear and consistent recording of supervision and management oversight on childrens case records.

In regard to children missing from home, Members requested further information on the detail of cases and it was suggested that this should be added to the work programme.

It was noted that the focused visit did not provide a judgement but rather an overview of findings and what needed to be improved. The visit was considered to be a positive experience and officers should be thanked and congratulated on the results.

RESOLVED

1. That an item on children missing from home be added to the work programme.

2. That officers be thanked and congratulated on the results of the focused visit.

33 LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

Consideration was given to the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) Annual Report 2017-2018. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 (WTSC) required local authorities to have a particular officer or team of officers to be involved in the management and oversight of allegations against people who work with children. The LADO provided advice and guidance to employers and voluntary organisations and would liaise with police and other agencies as required. The LADO had responsibility to monitor the progress of individual cases to ensure they were dealt with quickly, fairly and consistently, as well as to identify significant patterns and trends across the workforce.

It was noted that the number of referrals from the voluntary sector, particularly smaller organisations, was still low and that officers would be emailing organisations providing information, advice and support about the LADO's role and managing allegations. J Tausif requested that she be copied into the email to enable her to forward it on to any voluntary organisations that she worked with.

In relation to employer action following investigation, it was noted that referrals to the DBS service was a slow process and difficult to monitor. Members were concerned that during the interview process, employers were not permitted to ask candidates if they had any outstanding criminal convictions. J Forster agreed to speak to Human Resources to clarify the situation and report back to the Committee.

RESOLVED

1. That the report be received.
2. That J Tausif forward the information on the LADOs role to the voluntary organisations she worked with.
3. That J Forster report back to the committee on how to deal with outstanding criminal convictions during the interview process.

34 LSCB ANNUAL REPORT 2017-18

Nigel Moorhouse presented the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Annual Report 2016-17. It was reported that the LSCB would cease to exist from June 2019 and new arrangements would be in place from September 2019, involving a smaller, more focused board to increase effectiveness. It was agreed that a paper outlining the proposed new arrangements would be considered by the Committee prior to Cabinet.

RESOLVED

1. That the annual report and business priorities for 2017/18 be received.
2. That a report outlining the proposals to replace the LSCB be considered by the Committee prior to Cabinet.

35 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES PERFORMANCE SCORECARD – QUARTER 1, 2018-19

Consideration was given to the performance scorecard for quarter 1 2018-19. The measures rated red, indicating areas for improvement, related to:

- The % of initial child protection conference (ICPC) within 15 days of section 47 enquiry. Members noted that while it was important to be timely, it was just as important to have the relevant information.
- Number of cared for children and rate per 10,000 cared for children
- % cared for children in long term stability placement.
- % of initial health assessments completed by paediatricians within 20 days.
- % of children ceased to be looked after due to adoption.
- Number of children missing from education - active cases 12 weeks or more. This area needed to be investigated; elective home education was high in Cheshire East.
- current number of pupils being educated at home.
- % of new education, health and care plans completed within 2 weeks.

RESOLVED

1. That the areas highlighted in red continue to be monitored.
2. That the number of children missing from education be investigated further.

36 FORWARD PLAN

Consideration was given to the areas of the forward plan which fell within the remit of the Committee.

RESOLVED

That the forward plan be received.

37 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be received.

The meeting commenced at 1.30 pm and concluded at 3.45 pm

Councillor Rhoda Bailey (Chairman)