

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Children and Young People Overview and**  
**Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday, 16 July 2013**

**6.35pm to 9.40pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee**

**Present:** Councillors: Baker, Craven, Gilry, Griffin, Hewett, Irvine, Kemp (Vice-Chairman), Price, Purdy, Royle (Chairman), Smith, Turpin and Watson

**Added members without voting rights:**

Adrian Cole (Governor representative) and Jane Heyes (Headteacher representative)

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Maisey (Substitute for Rodberg)  
Perdita Blinkhorn (Substitute for Sam Tutt - Medway Youth Parliament representative)

**In Attendance:** Mary Brennan, Medway NHS Foundation Trust  
Linda Denne, Area Public Health Commissioning Manager, Kent and Medway, NHS England  
Dr Peter Green, Chief Clinical Officer, NHS Medway Clinical Commissioning Group  
Michelle Lofting, Consultation and Intelligence Officer  
Councillor Vince Maple, Leader of the Labour Group  
Victoria Nystrom-Marshall, Head of Partnership Commissioning for Children  
Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults Services  
David Quirke-Thornton, Deputy Director, Children and Adults Services  
Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer  
Jenny Robinson, Legal Advisor  
Juliet Sevier, Assistant Director, Inclusion and Improvement  
Kate Taylor, Medway NHS Foundation Trust  
Sandy Weaver, Team Leader - Customer Relations  
Christopher White, Business Improvement Manager

**192 Record of meeting**

The record of the joint meeting of all committees held on 15 May 2013 and the record of the meeting of this committee held on 4 June 2013 were agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

**193 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Rodberg, Jim Grogan (Church representative), Alex Tear (Church representative) and Sam Tutt (Medway Youth Parliament representative).

**194 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances**

There were no urgent matters.

**195 Declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests**

Councillor Irvine declared, in respect of item 6 (Petition – sure start nursery and pre-school facilities at Magpie Hall Road and Luton High Street), that his wife was a registered childminder, as childminding came up during discussion in this item. This was not however a Disclosable pecuniary interest.

**196 Review of Overnight Short Breaks**

**Discussion**

Officers introduced the report, which detailed the outcome of the consultation process on the review of overnight short breaks, which was instigated in response to a decision by the provider organisation, Medway NHS Foundation Trust, to cease provision of respite care at Preston Skreens. Officers confirmed that they were recommending that option 1A (extend the range of day, evening and overnight short breaks for disabled children and young people and their parents carers living in Medway and Swale) with the extension of Aut Even seven days a week as detailed in option 1B, be implemented.

Two parents of children that use the Preston Skreens facility, Mr Hilderbrando and Mr Mencattelli, then addressed the committee. Both explained their personal circumstances and the current level of support they had in place for their families at Preston Skreens and raised their concerns, which included: -

- Retaining the provision at Preston Skreens had not been one of the options that was consulted on;
- That capacity was not available in alternative provision currently to accommodate all families using Preston Skreens and they had been advised of long waiting lists to access services, such as Aut Even;
- Confusion that the alternative provisions being suggested had similar structural issues to the ones which were demonstrated as the reason for Preston Skreen's closure, such as not having en suite bathrooms available;
- The negative impact and stress that losing the resource at Preston Skreens would have on their families.

The Committee then made comments, raised a number of questions and discussed a range of issues including:

**Retaining Preston Skreens indefinitely** – Members asked what lengths had been taken to find out if an alternative provider would carry on running Preston Skreens. In response officers explained that no provider had come forward to take on the running of Preston Skreens but other providers had engaged with the Council and the Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to provide alternative services for affected families. It was explained that the Preston Skreens building required a great deal of investment to meet legal requirements.

**Capacity at other provision** – Members raised concern about the capacity at alternative provision identified within the report, having heard that Aut Even may not have the capacity to provide services seven days a week until January 2014. The Deputy Director, Children and Adults explained that there was some vacancies at alternative provision to accommodate families and those providers were committed to developing services further to increase capacity. The intention was that capacity to accommodate affected families would be in place by the time of the closure of Preston Skreens. All affected families were being offered reassessments, some of which had already taken place and, of those, some families had accepted that Aut Even met their needs and others had agreed to receive direct payments.

**Retaining Preston Skreens until sufficient alternative provision is available** – Members raised concern that there appeared to be some uncertainty between officers and parents/carers about capacity levels and were keen to see that Preston Skreens remains open until sufficient capacity at alternative provision is made available. Officers confirmed they were working with Medway NHS Foundation Trust but the notice by the Trust to cease the provision at Preston Skreens was still in place.

**Consultation and communication** – concerns were raised about the length of time that had lapsed since Medway NHS Foundation Trust served notice and that there appear to be some mis-information about levels of capacity available. A suggestion was also made that a Cabinet Advisory Group be set up, with parents, scrutiny members and representatives from the commissioner and provider organisations to work together.

**Decision:**

The committee recommended the Cabinet to agree that Option 1A and 1B be implemented and that the Medway NHS Foundation Trust be requested to continue provision at Preston Skreens until adequate alternative provision is available for affected families.

**197 Petition - Sure Start Nursery and Pre-School Facilities at Magpie Hall Road and Luton High Street**

**Discussion:**

The lead petitioner, Mrs Taylor, provided her reasons for referral of her petition to Overview and Scrutiny and expressed disappointment that the All Saints

Nursery would no longer be providing day care services as there was not local alternative provision in the area that provided flexibility for working families and she did not want her child to become unsettled by a change in day care provision. She felt the current nursery provision was inclusive to all and was in support of providing more families with nursery provision, but not if it was to the detriment of families already using services.

Councillor Maple then spoke in support of the petition as Ward Member and confirmed that the lead petitioner was speaking on behalf of a number of parents. He stated that children's centres could offer full day care but that it was a matter for the local authority to decide on what was appropriate for the community. He urged the committee to refer the issue to the Cabinet for consideration.

A referral to Cabinet to reconsider the issue was moved and seconded but lost when put to the vote. It was then suggested that a report on the future provision of sure start children centres be added to the work programme.

### **Decision**

The committee agreed to take no further action in relation to the petition.

## **198 Update on Health Visiting Service**

### **Discussion:**

The Area Public Health Commissioning Manager for Kent and Medway from NHS England introduced the report which updated Members on the Health Visiting Implementation Plan which was driven by a Government pledge to increase the number of Health Visitors nationally. Medway had the biggest estimated trajectory to meet with it currently having 45.85 whole time equivalent (wte) and a target of increasing this to 78.8 wte by 2015. In 2015 the service would then be commissioned by the local authority.

The Committee then made comments, raised a number of questions and discussed a range of issues including:

**Support relating to domestic violence** – it was confirmed that Health Visitors assess the family's needs and that the Healthy Child Programme was a tiered approach and levels of support were determined according to levels of need. Domestic violence, mental health and wellbeing were all elements considered by Health Visitors.

**Breastfeeding** – concern was raised that some mothers feel pressured into breastfeeding their babies rather than bottle feeding them. The Area Public Health Commissioning Manager confirmed that wherever possible breastfeeding was promoted due to the health benefits it brings. However, she confirmed that people should not feel pressured and Health Visitors needed to be open to discuss each person's individual needs and feelings.

**Relationship with Children Centres** – It was acknowledged that in Medway the relationship between Health Visitors and Children's Centres was very strong.

**Training** – It was confirmed that the required study time was three years to carry out nursing training and then a further year at masters level to become a Health Visitor. There were two university campuses in Chatham that provided the courses.

**Antenatal support** – It was confirmed that antenatal support from Health Visitors had reduced in previous years due to lack of capacity within the Health Visiting service. However, work was being undertaken through an agreed trajectory in relation to the Healthy Child Programme to increase the contact with expectant mothers from a targeted (according to referrals from midwives) to a universal antenatal contact.

**Complaints to the service** – It was stated that the service generally received relatively low levels of complaints but the Area Public Health Commissioning Manager undertook to request the data for Medway from the providers, Medway Community Healthcare.

**Decision:**

The committee noted the report.

**199 Children's Social Care Complaints and Compliments**

**Discussion:**

The Team Leader for Customer Relations introduced the report, explaining that the annual report of children's social care complaints and compliments was a statutory requirement. The number of complaints received had increased from the previous year, including the number received from children, which she felt was a positive outcome as it demonstrated that people were finding it easier to complain. The number of complaints received was still lower than comparable areas.

**Decision:**

The committee noted the report.

**200 End of Year Performance 2012/2013**

**Discussion:**

The Director for Children and Adults introduced the end of year performance report, which highlighted achievements and areas that needed to be improved.

The Committee then made comments, raised questions and discussed a range of issues including:

**Children not in education, employment or training (NEETs)** – The Director explained that the raising of the participation age would help this issue and the authority also benefited from having the college within the area. Furthermore, the Council had ensured under its category management re-commissioning that any contract awarded that was more than £1million had to include an apprenticeship and that priority was given to care leavers.

**Schools in special measures** – Concern was raised to the number of schools still placed in special measures. The Director explained that Ofsted were continuously raising the bar and added that it takes a long time for a school to be turned around but confirmed that at least one school in the report was no longer in special measures.

**Children Social Care assessment targets** – the Director explained that from April 2013 the initial and core assessments, which had to be done within seven and 35 days respectively, had been replaced with a single assessment which was easier for families to understand and had to be completed with 45 days.

**Medway University Technology College** – in response to a query about the location of the UTC the Director explained that this had not yet been determined.

**Educational attainment** – It was explained that achievement of five A\* - C grades at GCSE or equivalent (including English and Maths) was particularly difficult for some looked after children (LAC) who have often had disruptive lives. A graduate had therefore recently been appointed to support the Virtual Headteacher to improve outcomes for LAC. It was also confirmed that the committee would be reported test and examination results at its December meeting, once results had been validated. In addition, the Headteacher representative referred to some positive changes that had been made in terms of the local authority's focus and support for schools. Following a review, five working groups had been composed which gave Headteachers a lead and included governors and Medway officers to review the school improvement strategy. She explained that she had been involved in one of the five groups and felt that the model was excellent.

**Decision:**

The committee noted the report.

**201 Work programme**

**Discussion:**

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which set out the work programme of the committee. She recommended dates for some items on the work programme that were listed as 'date to be determined'.

**Decision:**

## **Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 16 July 2013**

The committee agreed to: -

- schedule consideration of the SEND pathfinder for 26 September 2013;
- schedule consideration of the Youth Offending Team Business Plan for 10 December 2013;
- schedule consideration of the Youth Service provision/clubs across the authority for 14 January 2014;
- add a report on the future of Sure Start Children Centres to the work programme.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

**Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer**

Telephone: 01634 332104

Email: [democratic.services@medway.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@medway.gov.uk)

This page is intentionally left blank