

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

Tuesday, 15 July 2014

6.35pm to 9.28pm

Record of the meeting

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

Present: Councillors: Baker, Cooper, Craven, Gilry, Pat Gulvin, Iles, Irvine, Purdy, Royle (Chairman), Smith, Turpin, Watson and Maple

Co-opted Members with voting rights on educational issues only:

Clive Mailing (Roman Catholic Church representative)

Added members without voting rights:

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

In Attendance: Eleanor Brazil, Independent Chair, Medway Safeguarding Children Board, Medway Safeguarding Children Board
Dick Frak, Mental Health Social Care Commissioning Manager
Helen Jones, Assistant Director, Partnership Commissioning
Barbara Peacock, Director of Children and Adults Services
Jo Scott, Programme Director, West Sussex NHS Partnership
Nicola Smith, Democratic Services Officer
Phil Watson, Assistant Director, Children's Social Care
Sandy Weaver, Team Leader - Customer Relations

133 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 3 June 2014 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

134 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kemp, Price, and Rodberg, Alex Tear, Alan Street, Beth Peal and Lauraine McManus.

135 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

136 Declarations of interests and whipping

Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

Other interests

There were none.

137 Chairman's announcements

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Pat Gulvin to her first meeting as a new member of the Committee and Councillor Iles who had rejoined the committee.

138 Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

Discussion:

Medway Council's Mental Health (MH) Social Care Commissioning Manager and West Sussex NHS Partnership's Programme Director - Kent and Medway attended for this item. The report provided an update on Medway's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and drew upon information from the current review.

In introducing the report, the Mental Health (MH) Social Care Manager advised the committee of the key areas which have been identified as requiring improvement to date, the action taken, and how CQUIN targets had assisted partnership working and addressed service improvement. He advised the Committee that the Tier 3 and Tier 4 CAMHS contract ends on 31 August 2015 and the review will inform current and future service configuration.

Members then asked questions and made comments including the following:

- **Service delivery improvements.** Members stated that improvements have taken too long to embed, are not easily apparent and that further improvement is urgently required. Officers assured members that the forums that have been established have focused on service improvement and addressing gaps in service delivery. Although there is still a considerable amount of work to be done, the focus on 2 year CQUIN targets, learning from the on-going review, and the move towards early intervention have assisted partnership commitment to address the challenges faced.
- **Potential for children and young people to fall between service delivery 'Tiers'** (as set out in appendix 1 of the report). Members expressed concern about dividing Mental Health services into 'Tiers', and questioned whether children and young people could fall between tiers and not receive vital support. Officers advised that the tiers were

helpful in terms of understanding the division of labour but that these should not adversely affect access to service.

- **Knowledge, training and support for school-based staff and prevention work with pupils.** Members stressed that need for school-based staff to have information, support and guidance to ensure they can best support children and young people in understanding their emotional and mental wellbeing needs, as well as ensuring adequate knowledge of the various pathway arrangements for children who need professional/specialist support. Officers advised that the Department for Education has recently provided guidance to schools (See: [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/326551/Mental Health and Behaviour - Information and Tools for Schools final website 2 25-06-14.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/326551/Mental_Health_and_Behaviour_-_Information_and_Tools_for_Schools_final_website_2_25-06-14.pdf)) and a local task group had focused on school intervention. It was envisaged that an alliance with schools, including galvanising young people in awareness raising campaigns, would assist with both school and wider public engagement in mental health issues.
- **Children and Adolescent Support Team (CAST).** In response to member questions, officers reported that schools that have accessed CAST services have provided positive feedback but further work is required to increase both the scale of the work and understanding of the services offered by the team.
- **The use of on-line support options to assist young people who are living in a highly technological society.** The Committee acknowledged that innovative on-line solutions could assist in early prevention but officers stated that there was still much to be done in collating and auditing information on needs in order to determine the best solutions.
- **Attention Deficiency Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)** Members emphasised the need to understand the reasons for the prevalence of ADHD in Medway and that they were keen for research in this area which would ascertain whether socio-economic and community issues were determining factors.
- **Early intervention.** Members stressed the need for investment in early prevention and intervention work in order to reduce the prevalence of poor mental health in later life.
- **Transition arrangements.** The Committee considered the issues relating to transition from children's to adults' services. Officers advised that differing sets of legislation and guidance in this area make it difficult to find appropriate solutions but that there is a focus on providing seamless, individually tailored services for 14-25 year olds.
- **School nursing.** The Director of Children and Adults' Services cited examples of other local authorities utilising the school nursing service to

undertake early intervention work. Members were interested in this approach, but would want to be satisfied that there is capacity in the current service in Medway to deliver such intervention.

- **Learning from others.** Members considered the benefits of learning from other local authority areas.
- **Changes to delivery contracts.** Members requested that any changes made to service delivery mechanisms are managed effectively to ensure that children and young people are not adversely affected and requested a further report back to the Committee at the earliest opportunity, to keep them informed of developments in relation to mental health services and service improvements.

Decision:

The Committee:

- (a) Noted the report; and
- (b) Requested an update report to a future meeting of the Committee.

139 Complaints and Compliments Annual Report: April 2013 to March 2014

Discussion:

The Assistant Director – Children’s Care introduced the annual report. He informed the Committee that there had been an increase in the number of complaints by 34 from the previous year. This included an increase in the number of complaints from children who are looked after. He explained that some of the rise was due to efforts made by social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers in ensuring children, young people and their families are aware of complaints procedures, along with better communications materials targeted at children and young people. He advised the Committee that there needed to be an improvement in the turn-around of complaints and that delays had been due to work pressures and staff turn-over.

Members then made comments and asked questions which included:

- **Clarification of the national picture regarding complaints management.** Officers confirmed that it is common for local authorities to appoint social care complaints staff.
- **Requested a breakdown of complainants by categories.** Officers were able to provide a detailed breakdown of complainants and categorise these into groups such as the child/young person, parents/carers and professionals.

- **Number of complaints ‘partially upheld’.** In response to questions, the Assistant Director – Children’s Care advised that improvements in service delivery included better accessibility of staff and ensuring they had received appropriate training, support and telecommunications equipment to enable them to better respond to enquiries and complaints.

Decision:

The Committee:

- (a) Noted the report and recommended that it be forwarded to Corporate Parenting Board for consideration; and
- (b) Requested that future reports provide a breakdown of complainants into categories including parents/carers and professionals.

140 Medway Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2013-2014

Discussion:

The Independent Chair of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) introduced the report and gave a presentation on the work of the MSCB in 2013-2014 and its priorities for 2014-2017. In particular, she highlighted: the role of the MSCB and what they do to co-ordinate activity; how they know if they are effective and what more needs to improve; key issues and improvements made in 2013-2014; and priorities for 2014-2017.

The Independent Chair informed the Committee that the new strategic plan covered a three year period between 2014–2017 and focused on 6 priority areas: Impact of mental ill-health, substance misuse; Child sexual exploitation; Educating children and being educated by them; Domestic abuse; Vulnerable children aged 11 or over; and Communications.

The Committee then raised a number of points and questions, including: -

- **Listening and being educated by the voice of the child.** Members stressed the value of children and young people’s involvement and cited recent examples when their views have influenced council policy and service delivery such as contributing to the consultation arrangements regarding hot food takeaway outlets in Medway. The Independent Chair of the MSCB informed the Committee that children and young people had been instrumental in the design of the MSCB website and welcomed feedback on the website which can be accessed via the link: <http://www.mscb.org.uk/>
- **Learning from case reviews.** The Independent Chair reported that specific learning from serious case reviews had been disseminated to Medway schools and that high profile cases had assisted in collaborative

working and improvements in co-ordination of cross-agency, partnership working.

- **Domestic violence.** Members provided positive feedback regarding a school that had referred a family for support relating to domestic violence.
- **Early help work.** Officers reported that the focus on early help, including multi-agency teams, was assisting in ensuring that measures are in place for children and their families which should prevent them from entering children's social care services in the future and support their independent living as young adults.

Decision:

The committee:

- (a) Noted the report; and
- (b) Agreed to provide individual feedback on the MSCB website.
<http://www.mscb.org.uk/>

141 The Local Authority's Approach to Personal Budgets and Direct Payments

Discussion:

The Director of Children and Adults' Services introduced this item which had been requested by the Committee. She advised members that the report provided a position statement and offered a reflection on some of the experiences within adult services where implementation was further advanced than in children's social care. She outlined the difference between personal budgets and direct payments, and explained that personal budgets usually referred to a budget that was provided for a particular service, whilst direct payments were provided directly to children and their families to spend how and on whatever they choose. The Director drew on national experience in this area and suggested that many families are cautious with how they spent the funds, but cited some innovative examples where quality of life for the whole family had been achieved through creative use of available resources.

The Committee then asked questions and commented on the report as follows:

- **Capability and confidence of families in using the resources effectively.** Officers confirmed, in response to member concerns, that although families may be cautious, information, advice and guidance would be provided.
- **Contracting arrangements.** Members discussed partnership working, access to services, value for money and contingency plans. They outlined concerns regarding multi-agency arrangements, fragility in the

provider market place, and ensuring that both choice and the right services would be available to individuals at the right time. Officers confirmed that a framework agreement for commissioned services would assist in ensuring choice and availability of services.

- **Managing risks.** In response to questions relating to managing contractual risk and safeguarding arrangement, officers assured members that outcome-focused targets and mechanisms for review would be put in place for all personal budgets.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

142 2013-2014 Year End Performance Monitoring

Discussion:

The Director of Children and Adults' Services introduced the annual report, summarising Medway's performance for 2013-2014 against its priorities as set out in The Council Plan 2013-2015 and highlighted the achievements to date and current challenges. The Committee then raised questions and discussed a number of issues including:

- **Ofsted results.** The downward trend evidenced by the quarterly figures was discussed and it was acknowledged that with standards improving nationally the bar has risen, making it more difficult for schools to show improvement.
- **Educational attainment.** The Committee acknowledged that the validated exam results are not released until the end of the calendar year and that this will feature as an individual item to this Committee in December 2014.
- **Children not in education, employment and training.** The Director advised that the participation age has risen and that targeted and focused intervention was obtaining better individual results. The University Technical College (UTC) will offer local provision of technical and vocational education for young people aged 14 and above who wish to work in the construction sector in the future.
- **Children who are looked after.** Officers confirmed that efforts to secure permanent Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) had continued. It was also noted that the reasons why 4 children deemed 'not in suitable accommodation' were not able to be contacted were complex, and concern was expressed by members that every effort should be made to engage with these young people and stressed the risks relating to potentially vulnerable young adults.

- **Action for families.** The Committee commended the work of the Action for Families project which has had national profiling.

Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

143 Work Programme

Discussion:

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and advised the Committee of the changes that had been made to the work programme at the agenda planning meeting on 26 June 2014, including deferral of an item on children at risk of sexual exploitation at a future meeting to enable officers to undertake further work on this.

The Committee then commented on the report as follows:

- **Better Start Funding Bid.** In response to a member question, the Director of Children and Adults' Services confirmed that a briefing note would be issued as soon as possible.
- **Proposed topic of the scrutiny task group.** Members supported a recommendation from the Director of Children and Adults' Services that the next Children and Young Persons Overview and Scrutiny task group should focus on supporting Medway's care leavers to have a stable and productive adult life being positive active citizens. It was agreed that this would be more appropriate than the original proposal of preventing looked after children from becoming criminalised in view of developments since the topics for task groups had been selected.

Decision:

The Committee:

- (a) Agreed the work programme as set out at Appendix 1 of the report, with the addition of an item to update the Committee on Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS);
- (b) Agreed that the next topic of the scrutiny task group should focus on supporting Medway's care leavers to have a stable and productive adult life being positive active citizens, and that nominations for membership of the task group should be forwarded to the Democratic Services Officer as soon as possible on the basis of 5 members (3 Conservative, 1 Labour and 1 Liberal Democrat).
- (c) Noted that a further election process for nominations for Parent/Governor Representatives on the Children and Young

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Person Overview and Scrutiny Committee will commence in September 2014; and

- (d) Noted the action that is being taken to address the recommendations of the Safeguarding Peer Review as set out at paragraph 8.1 of the report.

Chairman

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