

CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY PANEL

Date of meeting 12th June 2019

Meeting commenced: 2.30pm

Meeting ended: 4.30pm

PRESENT: Councillor Adrian Brocklehurst in the Chair

Councillors: Jillian Collinson, Jim Cammell, Laura Edwards, Lewis Nelson, Mike Pevitt, Neil Reynolds, Madeline Wade, Joan Walsh and Ronnie Wilson

Co-Opted Members - Seamus Martin (Parent Governor rep), Keith Archer (Church of England rep), Judith Elderkin (Teachers rep) and Jacqui Morrissey (Foster Parent rep).

OFFICERS: Sharon Hubber – Assistant Director Specialist Services
Sayma Khan - Head of Service
Mike Relph - Senior Democratic Services Officer

1 INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Chair welcomed those elected members who had recently been appointed to the Panel

There were no apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: THAT the minutes of the meeting held on the 10th April 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

3. NO WRONG DOOR

Sharon Huber and Sayma Khan provided a presentation on “No Wrong Door”, a project which had been identified as part of a review aimed at developing new ways of working across children’s services in Greater Manchester, through the establishment of an enhanced infrastructure which would enable collaboration which was aligned to wider Greater Manchester policy ambitions on public service reform. The objective of the project was to enable each of the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities to successfully adopt one, or more, well evidenced. innovations in children’s social care which improved outcomes and reduced the risk for children and young people and the resulting demands on the local system.

Salford City Council was adopting and adapting the following projects:-

- No Wrong Door
- Achieving Change Together

While the existing Strengthening Families project was built upon and shared with partner local authorities.

The presentation provided a more detailed overview of “No Wrong Door” covering the following key themes:-

- What is it?
- 10 distinguishing features
- Reasons for adopting and adapting
- Progress so far
- Partners

Members raised issues and commented on, and noted them, as follows:-

(a) Was there sufficient resources to adequately staff the project?

The project had been pioneered in North Yorkshire, but Salford was a significantly smaller geographic area than Salford so the staffing demands were not as great. Similarly unlike North Yorkshire, the project would be working in tandem with single agencies, rather than multiple ones, which placed a lesser strain on resources. In the short term, “No Wrong Door” would run along the existing service, with an anticipated launch date of 1st December 2019.

(b) What was the existing number of young people in care and where were these placements?

24 young people were in care accommodation in Salford, with a further 46 outside of the City. There had been a move away from traditional large residential children’s homes and instead focus on a more individual foster carer approach.

(c) What support was provided to young people aged 17 and over? The City Council was required to meet statutory requirements in this regard.

(d) For the project to be successful, it was essential for the workforce to be strong and effective, how would this be achieved? Appropriate training would be provided to staff, with a corporate approach adopted. In addition there would be a recruitment policy which would ensure people with the necessary skills were brought in as necessary .

(e) How would you people be supported through the process one they had entered the “No wrong Door” project? There was a comprehensive evaluation process, which would ensure their needs were fully met and ensure any new home, or placement proposals were appropriate for them. It represented a more personalised approach to care and welfare. Adult Services would also be in the “hub” as the needs of parents and their welfare, had inevitable impact on those of their children and could not be considered in isolation.

(f) How would the project be funded? In the short term the funding had already been secured and was ring-fenced within the City Council's budget. In the longer term, as the City Council moved away from operating traditional larger scale children's care facilities, there would be an arising release of finance which would go towards ensuring the sustainability of the project.

(g) What engagement had been done with partners?

There had been extensive work in this regard, which had resulted in a positive response to the project and its aim, together with a commitment to make it a success.

(h) Was there a profile of those young people who were most at risk and needing to be placed in care?

There had been detailed work by public health and there was clear profile and recognised factors which made referral more likely, which in turn enabled action to be taken at the earliest opportunity. It was agreed that early intervention was vital.

(i) Only 6 of the Greater Manchester local authorities had chosen to adopt the "No Wrong Door" model, was there a reason why the remaining 4 had not?

Each local authority had different priorities, for some strengthening families was the focus.

(j) Was there the possibility that the project had the perception that it provided care and assistance to certain children and families to the disadvantage of others, in effect a "two tier system"?

It was perhaps inevitable that there would be such a misconception to a certain degree for any service of this nature. However at its heart, was ensuring those young people who did not have a traditional support network, had their needs addressed at an early stage which in the long term would lessen the financial pressures on the service. It was perhaps necessary to raise awareness of the real benefits the project provided, to minimise any negative misconceptions and highlight the greater positives.

(k) Was there work the education service could do in terms of supporting those young people who were more disposed to being referred to the service?

Head teachers and educational psychologists were all involved with the project, which reflected the emphasis on a more comprehensive multi agency approach that, would be built upon and enhanced as it developed. It was acknowledged that the young people concerned often had difficulties with adapting to a traditional educational environment and had a fractured education history as a consequence.

(l) Could assurances be given that staff within the project with specialist skills

would not be actively recruited by other local authorities?

It would be impossible to give such an assurance, but the fact the project was in tandem with neighbouring local authority partners in the Greater Manchester region, would go some way to minimising this.

(m) What were the timescales for the project particularly in terms of outcomes?

The outcome timelines had all been carefully developed and agreed with the Councillor John Merry, Deputy City Mayor in his capacity as the Lead Member for Children and Young People's Services. Similarly corresponding performance indicators had been drawn up and would be implemented as the project developed, these could be shared with the Panel.

(n) What was the exit strategy for young people leaving the system?

This was key to the process and had to ensure any proposals fully met the individual needs of the young person concerned. It would take the form of an ongoing, comprehensive and professional assessment process.

RESOLVED: (1) THAT that Sharon Huber and Sayma Khan be thanked for their detailed and informative presentation, the contents of which were noted.

(2) THAT the Panel be provided with a more detailed briefing note to supplement the information provided in the presentation, with details of outcome timelines contained in this.

4. WORK PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT

The Panel gave consideration to their Work Programme 2019/20 and identified the following potential issues/topics for inclusion:-

- Dental health
- To identify issues which are of concern to young people themselves, possibly those arising from UK Youth Parliament's recent "Make Your Mark" ballot. It was agreed Councillors Brocklehurst, Edwards and Lewis investigate this further and bring their findings back to the Panel.
- Salford City Council nurseries update.
- Mental health and young people, possibly including the role of Salford CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services). It was suggested this could be the remit of a sub group of the Panel, lead by Councillor Brocklehurst, supported by Councillors Collinson, Nelson and Pevitt.
- Extra-curricular activities, provided by both Salford City Council and other agencies and whether there was a need for these to be better promoted and to identify any areas of the City which were not adequately served in this regard.
- General update on youth participation in Salford in for all activities, to enable a current and fresh perception of where provision needs to be focused, or encouraged and promoted.

RESOLVED: THAT the above issues/topics be noted and further consideration be given to their viability and likely benefits/outcomes, and if agreed appropriate they be scheduled in the Panel's Work Programme 2019/20 accordingly.

5. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday, 10th July, 2019 at Salford Civic Centre, commencing at 2.00 pm, with a member only briefing prior to that at 1.30 pm.