

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 03 May 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr R Burton – Chair

Cllr L Lewis – Vice-Chair

Present: Cllr E Coope, Cllr J Kelly, Cllr S Moore, Cllr S Gabriel, Cllr M Haines
and Cllr M Davies

Co-Opted Members: Mr M Saxby, Mr S Welch, Mr P Martin, Mr D Rees-Coshan and Miss
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90. Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Geary, Lawton and Northover.

Councillors Hilliard and Rocca attending virtually, forgoing any voting rights.

91. Substitute Members

Councillor Hilliard was substituting for Councillor Geary and Councillor
Davies was substituting for Councillor Lawton.

92. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest received on this occasion.

93. Confirmation of Minutes

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Children's Services Overview and
Scrutiny Committee held on 22 March 2022, having previously been
circulated, be confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the
Chair.**

94. Action Sheet

There were no comments on the action sheet.

95. Public Issues

There were no public issues received on this occasion.

96. Children's Services Improvement Plan

The Corporate Director for Children's Services and the Head of Quality
Assurance, Governance and Improvement presented a report, a copy of

which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

BCP Children's Services was inspected in December 2022 and the outcome was an overall Inadequate judgement. As a result, a Children's Service Improvement Plan had been produced to ensure improvement in Children's Social Care functions, in accordance with the statutory direction notice.

The Committee was provided with a brief PowerPoint presentation focusing on the themes of the Improvement Plan and possible areas which it could scrutinise.

The Committee discussed the report and presentation, and comments were made, including:

- In response to a query regarding recruitment and retention, which was highlighted as a national issue, the Committee was advised of the challenges faced by the Service and the need for innovation and creativity to improve the situation and make BCP Council an employer of choice.
- The recruitment of several social workers from Rwanda was discussed and it was highlighted that candidates from there had a similar social work qualification to that in the UK. The Diocesan representative advised the Committee that the Winchester Diocese Education Board had links with the Rwanda Education Board, which could provide a beneficial link if they could offer any support
- There was some discussion regarding Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and it was confirmed that the concern from Ofsted related to both the condition of the buildings and the possible risks caused by the decision made to place young people in them.
- In response to a query about how the Service plans to ensure the voice of the child is more visible in the future, the Committee was advised that it should be encompassed through all the work on the Improvement plan using a variety of methods to seek the children and young people's views and should be clearly demonstrated throughout. It was noted that a participation worker had been recruited in relation to the written statement of action for education
- In response to a query about target caseloads for social workers, the Committee was advised that the national average would be a lot lower than the service currently had, but it was not able to reduce caseloads to that level, due to staffing levels, but needed to consider what was reasonable and manageable at this time. It was highlighted that progress in this area could be scrutinised on a regular basis to monitor improvement
- In response to a query about apprenticeships and whether there had been any improvements, the Committee was advised that this needed to be considered further by Officers
- In response to a query about the need to improve the rate of Special Guardianship Orders and the offer of Early Help, the Committee was

advised that work was being progressed and that scrutiny of the this could be considered by the Committee.

- The Committee considered the areas and scheduled some of them onto the Forward Plan as follows:
 - Quality Assurance Framework– June meeting
 - Workforce stability – July meeting
 - HMOs – keep an overview as was being progressed by the Service and the Chief Executive
 - Children's attainment and Pupil Education Plans (PEPs) – be advised after results were available in October. **ACTION – Update all to the Forward Plan**
- The Corporate Director advised that Ofsted would be undertaking a monitoring visit in June and a Member briefing could be given on the outcome, which should be available late summer
- The Corporate Director advised that benchmarking data being provided from Hampshire could be shared with the Committee to consider the Quality Assurance impact and progression later in the year.
- The discussion was concluded by the Corporate Director highlighting the Ofsted journey which the Service would be progressing on, with the next rating from 'Inadequate' being 'requires improvement'.

The Chair summarised the discussions as follows:

- Order of themes
- Strand of voice of child throughout
- Recruitment and workforce stability
- Apprenticeships
- SGOs
- Early help

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

97. Forward Plan

The contents of the Forward Plan were noted.

The Chair advised of the plan to provide the Committee with Permanence Planning training before the June Committee and that further details would be sent out in due course.

A Member enquired whether the green paper regarding SEND could be circulated to the Committee Members for consideration and comment.
ACTION

98. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates of the future meetings were noted.

The meeting ended at 6.35 pm

CHAIR