

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on 21 November 2023 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr B Dove – Chairman

Present: Cllr P Broadhead, Cllr O Brown, Cllr P Cooper, Cllr E Harman,
Cllr B Hitchcock, Cllr S Mackrow, Cllr D Martin and Cllr A-M Moriarty

Co-opted Members: S Welch, D Rees-Coshan and Z Susic

35. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Bull and Chick.

36. Substitute Members

Cllr Tarling substituted for Cllr Chick.

37. Declarations of Interests

Cllr Harman declared an interest as she had just started the process for obtaining an EHCP for her child, Cllr Moriarty declared an interest as she has worked with children with EHCPs and SEND and Cllr Dove declared an interest as a family member was in receipt of an EHCP.

38. Confirmation of Minutes

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 September 2023 were confirmed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair, subject to the amendment of the spelling of Cllr Harman's surname.

39. Action Sheet

The Committee noted the action sheet and had no amendments or comments.

40. Public Issues

A question had been received from Cllr Carr-Brown as follows:

“What provision is made for young people in receipt of an EHCP as they transition from CAMHS to adult mental health services? We know that up to 80% of autistic adults have a mental health condition and we also know that EHCPs extend to the age of 25 but CAMHS services end at 18. Transitions are difficult for autistic people, so what special provision or pathway is in place or could be considered to ensure that this very vulnerable group of

our residents doesn't lose access to the services they need just because they've turned 18?"

Cllr Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, provided an answer as follows:

This will be considered as part of the annual review of an EHCP which will ensure that EHCPs from YR 9 onwards refer to Preparing for Adulthood. When a CYP is in YR 10 the Adult Social Care, Preparing for Adulthood team, will attend the CYPs Annual Review and consider whether they may need care and support from adult's health or care services when they are 18 and over. This would include those young people who are open to CAMHS and who may need support from Adult Mental Health Services. If the CYP are going to move into adult services, both CAMHS and AMHS will work together to plan this transition with the CYP.

41. Members of Youth Parliament Update

The Committee were provided with a verbal update on the work of the Members of Youth Parliament and the recent update regarding their campaigns.

The Committee considered the update and made the following comments:

- The Committee thanked the Members of Youth Parliament for hosting the debate with 11-18 year olds and explained it was a pleasure to be part of.
- In response to a query regarding diversity within schools, the Committee was advised of the work of the MYPs including the promotion of cognitive behavioural therapy that a young person could perform on themselves. This was promoted as a part of their project to try and combat issues such as lack of service availability.

42. Young Peoples Mental Health Services – Your Mind, Your Say

The Head of CYP, LD &A and Mental Health and Head of Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Children services at Dorset HealthCare 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.

The purpose of the presentation was to provide an update on Young People's Mental Services Transformation Programme – 'Your Mind, Your Say'.

The Committee considered the presentation and made the following comments:

- In response to a query, the Committee was advised that the crisis centres would involve assessment and risk management and would be located in areas easily accessible to the targeted young people.
- In response to a query regarding the possible location of the crisis centres, the Committee was advised that they were focused on

locations that had dense populations and were currently considering Poole and Weymouth.

- In response to a query about the impact of COVID-19 on the mental health in young people, the Committee was advised that the impact would show in young people's mental health and services for some time as it had had a substantial impact on the development of young people.
- In response to a query, the Committee was advised that the crisis centres would be accessible to any young person who felt that they needed assistance with their mental health. It was confirmed a young person would not need a diagnosis or referral to access the crisis centres.
- A Committee member highlighted it would be beneficial to be kept informed regarding the updated business model and it was confirmed that an update would be circulated outside of the Committee. **ACTION**
- The Committee welcomed the work done on this project and thanked Dorset Healthcare.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the presentation and update and target any future scrutiny if identified.

43. SEND Improvement Updates - SEND Diagnostic

The Director for Quality, Performance Improvement and Governance and the Education Improvement Consultant presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Overview and Scrutiny required regular updates on themes regarding improvements in Education and Skills Services to scrutinise the Improvement progress and plans since the Written Statement of Action was issued following a SEND Inspection in July 2021. Some progress had been made but further was required and at pace. An Education Improvement Consultant had been engaged by Children's Services to support the Service Director for Education and Skills accelerate improvement and ensure stability in the Education and Skills Service. The assignment was:

- To finalise the Education Improvement Plan and associated strategies.
- To lead the co-ordination of the Education Improvement Board and programme of work.
- To support the Director of Education and Skills in creating a culture of accountability and performance across all LA Education and Skills functions.
- To support the work with School Leaders and Education Providers in the Improvement Plan; building back trust and delivering against statutory duties; inspection readiness.

- To provide advice and support in strategic and operational matters with specific focus on SEND and Vulnerable Learner systems.

To understand the current state of play a diagnostic had been carried out of the service to inform a view to drive improvements. The findings of which were being presented at Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny.

The Committee considered the report and made the following comments:

- In response to a query, the Committee was advised that the programme of work had started and progress was being made. It was highlighted that the recruitment of educational psychologists was essential in reducing the backlog of EHCPs and the difficulties in recruitment were detailed.
- In response to a query regarding the BCP system and the push for EHCPs, the Committee was advised that more work needed to be done, some schools worked well in the early help space and with inclusion while others need more support.
- In response to a query, the Committee was advised that one of the biggest concerns was the length of the waiting time children within BCP were having to deal with.
- In response to a query, the Committee was advised that improvements to the processes and data needed to be made, so they could see what schools were not completing their data and how this could be improved by increasing engagement with schools across BCP.

RESOLVED that the update be noted.

44. Items for information

There was no discussion on the information only items previously circulated.

45. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People provided a verbal update which included:

- Preparing for the fifth visit from OFSTED. He advised the Committee that he was due to be interviewed by the inspector in the upcoming week as a part of that visit.
- Reminded the Committee of the upcoming Councillor training session that was due to be held on the 29th November.
- Attended 'Keeping Young People Safe Conference' on the 14th November, where he met the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner and thanked him on behalf of the Committee for his work in the Child Exploitation working group.

46. Forward Plan

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee was asked to consider and identify work priorities for publication in a Forward Plan.

The Chair advised the Committee of the work she had been doing with Officers on the forward plan. The Committee was advised of the plan to have themed Committee meetings and that some items were due to be circulated by email as information items with no planned discussion at Committee.

47. Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee noted the future meeting dates.

48. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.

49. Building Stronger Foundations Business Case - Children's Services Transformation

The Corporate Director for Children's Services presented the exempt report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

The report provided an update on the progress of the Children's Building Stronger Foundations (BSF) Programme. The programme coordinated the action needed to sustain and accelerate the required improvements in children's services, namely the achievement of recurrent savings and to safely and appropriately manage and reduce the demand for statutory services. The report noted good progress made and proposed a detailed business case for a new service delivery model for children's services.

The Committee considered the exempt report and discussed the contents.

RESOLVED that the Committee:

- (a) **Note the progress made with the Children's Services Transformation Programme and delivery of savings.**
- (b) **Approves a business case for the full implementation of a new children's service delivery model by 1 October 2024 to meet the strategic and operational requirements of the service and the Council, and to achieve financial efficiencies and savings enabled by investment approved in July 2023.**

50. CSC Improvement Update DfE Review Feedback

The Director for Quality, Performance Improvement and Governance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member.

BCP Childrens Services was inspected, under the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACs) framework in December 2021. The outcome was an overall inadequate judgement.

As a result, the Secretary of State of Education issued a Statutory Direction and appointed a DfE Improvement Adviser to support the Council in their improvement of Childrens Social Care Services.

The Childrens Services Improvement Plan was in place to ensure progress was made at pace in Childrens Social Care in line with the recommendations of the December Inspection and in accordance with the statutory direction notice received by the Council in March 2022.

Overview and Scrutiny required regular updates on themes regarding improvement. In October 2023 Childrens Services had a Department for Education Review to assess the progress being made by BCP Childrens Services. This review was conducted by the DfE Improvement Lead. They held focus groups with partners, and employees of Children's Services to understand what was working well and what needed to happen to further support the improvement journey. There would be a presentation at Overview and Scrutiny delivering the findings of the review.

The Committee discussed the exempt report and presentation.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the Report.

The meeting ended at 8.25 pm

CHAIRMAN