

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on 10 March 2020 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr R Burton – Chairman

Cllr L Lewis – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cllr M F Brooke, Cllr E Coope, Cllr N C Geary, Cllr L Northover,  
Cllr M White, Cllr L-J Evans, Cllr D Mellor and Cllr L Williams

Co-opted: Mr M Saxby, Diocesan Representative  
Mr P Martin, Parent Governor Representative  
Mrs S Welch, Hall Academy Parent Governor Representative  
Representatives

Also in attendance: Cllr S Moore, Portfolio Holder, Children's Services  
Cllr S Moore, Portfolio Holder, Children's Services  
Mr G Baraldi, Miss L Bradley, Miss A Meers and Mr J Spence

58. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hall, Kelly and Phillips.

59. Substitute Members

Councillor Mellor and Councillor Williams were substitutes.

60. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of Interests.

61. Confirmation of Minutes

**RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 28 January 2020, having been previously circulated, be signed by the Chairman and confirmed as a correct record.**

62. Action Sheet

The action sheet was noted.

63. Public Issues

No public items had been received.

64. BCP Front Door

The Chairman advised that he had changed the order of the Agenda. The BCP Front Door would now be at Agenda Item 6 and the Update on the Youth Parliament elections would follow as Agenda Item 7.

The Service Manager, MASH, Assessment and Action, Out of Hours Service, provided a verbal update to the Committee, which included:

- Following a period of reviewing effectiveness of discharging its duties, a Children's Services Learning and Improvement Plan (LIP) had been developed which focused on three areas:
  - Child Protection
  - Children in Care and permanence; and
  - Leadership, Management and Governance
- The Committee was advised Children's Services had worked closely with North Tyneside Council focusing on identified key areas for improvement and the LIP was being supported by a set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which would drive improvement and practice in these areas
- Key actions for the next three months were highlighted including joint working with other agencies to assist reviewing high risk young people
- A Quality, Performance and Impact Board had been created which implemented and monitored progress against the LIP.

The Committee considered the presentation and comments were made, including:

- There was discussion regarding the LIP and it was requested that this more detailed document be brought to a future Committee
- The 15 key areas identified were discussed and a request that the Red, Amber, Green (RAG) ratings for them be brought to Committee
- In response to a query regarding Mosaic, the Service Director, Quality and Commissioning, detailed the reasons why this was chosen as the preferred integrated case management system for BCP Council
- The cost implications of moving to Mosaic were discussed and it was noted that the planned migration to move all cases over to Mosaic and training of staff was going to commence in April.

**RESOLVED that the Committee noted the verbal update and requested a Report on the Learning and Improvement Plan at a future Committee.**

65. Update on the Youth Parliament elections

The Youth Participation Worker provided a verbal update on the Youth Parliament elections which included the following information:

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- Historically the UK Youth Parliament process was supported differently across the 3 previous authorities
- In November 2019 the budget was confirmed for one year to pilot the UK Youth Parliament process across the whole of the BCP area.
- Due to the size of BCP Council, the representatives were increased to two Youth Parliament Members and two Deputies
- The approach used was detailed, which included a compulsory 2-hour introduction workshops; Campaigns preparation session; Hustings event; Online election in schools and Results event
- The process had 45 candidates and some of the main campaigns were detailed
- The voting details were provided to the Committee, including a breakdown of school turnout
- The verbal update was concluded by introducing and welcoming the two newly elected Youth Parliament Members and Deputies.

The Chairman congratulated the newly elected Youth Parliament Members and in response to a query regarding their campaigns, the Committee was advised that the campaigns included: the environment, knife crime and child poverty.

The Committee discussed ways in which the Youth Parliament Members could contribute to the Forward Plan and the Youth Participation Worker advised they had attended the work programming session which they found very productive and informative. The Committee was advised the Youth Parliament Members would be meeting soon to focus on their campaigns and it was requested that a Report regarding this be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

The Chairman summarised the discussions and welcomed the valuable input the Youth Parliament Members would bring to the Forward Plan.

**RESOLVED that the verbal update be noted and a Report on the Youth Parliament Members planned work come to a future Committee.**

66. BCP Children's Outcomes Self - Assessment January 2020

The Service Director, Quality and Commissioning, provided an update on BCP Children's Services Self -Assessment 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 quarterly update enabled the Service to take stock three months after the social care restructure and also identified areas for leadership attention and focus in 2020.

The Committee discussed the Report and comments were made, including:

- When looking at Children in Care (CIC), the Committee was assured that the 14% of CIC who were placed over 20 miles from home were

done so because it being necessary or desirable for an outside of area placement. It was advised that 14% was a good outcome which outperformed the national and regional averages

- It was advised that the number of CIC at the end of December 2019 increased and was at the upper level. These cases had been quality assured and the Committee was advised that whilst this increase was not ideal, the right decisions had been made to place these children in care
- The Service Director, Children's Social Care, advised CIC were always kept as close as possible to their families and that children who were on the edge of care were worked closely with to try and avoid care where possible
- In response to a concern regarding the low Key Stage 1 results for the Children in Care, the Committee was advised that this was a small cohort of children and referred to approximately 8 or 9 children, who were mostly boys
- In response to a concern that 19 CIC were not currently on roll, the Committee was advised that the Virtual School peer review had identified this concern and there was a plan to develop bespoke packages for them to address this
- In response to a concern regarding the two CIC who had been permanently excluded, the Committee was advised that it was Children's Services ambition that no CIC was ever permanently excluded and that work was being undertaken with schools to achieve this
- A Committee Member requested that future data provided included Key Stage 5 attainment levels
- There was some discussion over the indicators provided in the Self-Assessment which could make some of the data difficult to interpret. The Service Director, Quality and Commissioning, provided an explanation around this, but advised he would consider how best to present the data in a clearer way moving forward
- In response to a query regarding the Committee scrutinising any Child Protection (CP) plans, the Committee was advised that an audit had been undertaken on repeat CP plans to ensure they were not being removed too early. The outcome of this audit was that there was no learning required, the length between some CP plans could be up to 3 years and the Committee was advised of some of the possible reasons for the repeat plans
- There was discussion over the categories of neglect and physical abuse within CP plans, the Committee was advised that categories can different elements, for example BCP includes emotional abuse under the neglect category. When looking at physical abuse the Committee was advised this related to risk as opposed to actual abuse
- In response to a query regarding the drift in CP plans, the Committee was advised this meant a child had been on a plan for too long without change being achieved within the family.

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- The Committee was advised that the Independent Learning Audits had provided a route to support practices, and from that the Service was now on a rolling quality assurance programme.
- A Member requested that in future a comparative authorities statistical data be provided rather than national and regional comparators, as it was felt this would be more beneficial when benchmarking
- A request was again made that an acronym sheet be included in any future reports.

The Chairman summarised the debate and felt that the Committee was particularly keen to be kept informed regarding BCP's Children in Care.

**RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Self-Assessment and requested to receive it when updated quarterly via email and a Committee Report every six months.**

67. BCP's Response to Child Exploitation (an update)

The Service Director, Children's Social Care, advised the 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, provided an update on arrangements to support children and young people at risk of exploitation.

The Committee discussed the Report and comments were made, including:

- There was clarification provided over who undertook return home interviews after a young person had been missing and depending on the young person's vulnerability, this would either be a Social Worker or a Youth Worker
- In response to a query from a Youth Parliament Member regarding how long parents waited until making contact with Police or Social Services when their child went missing, the Service Director advised he would need to investigate this and would respond directly to the Member
- In response to a concern regarding unknown missing young people, the Committee was advised that all the relevant agencies shared information regarding young people and that it was hoped that this collective approach would ensure full profiles of the children and young people across BCP
- In response to a query from a Youth Parliament Member regarding the Adolescent Hub, the Committee was advised that the Hub would focus on a small number of vulnerable young people, approximately eight to twelve, with the aim to prevent them from becoming cared for by the authority
- A Youth Parliament Member advised she felt the way to reduce child exploitation was through increased education within schools, the Service Director responded advising that there was an action plan

which included a series of actions linked to supporting children in schools

- In response to a query regarding the early health provision detailed under the 'Protect' element of the delivery plan, the Committee was advised that the support provided would be bespoke to a young persons needs. The assessment to determine these needs considered a series of areas such as self esteem, confidence, community experiences and a response provided accordingly
- There was further discussion around the Adolescent Hub and how it was proposed to engage with the vulnerable young people. The Committee was advised that the Hub was not yet created, and whilst not the only solution, it was hoped it would provide engagement at the appropriate time to ensure children and young people do not end up in high cost, out of area placements. The Committee was assured that the workers in the Hub were trained in difficult relationships, with good interventions skills and would provide a stable contact in the young persons life.

The Chairman summarised the discussion and agreed that engagement was key within schools and other areas. He concluded that the Committee would like to receive an update at a future date.

**RESOLVED that the Report be noted and that an update be provided at a future Committee.**

68. Schools Data Progress Update Headlines 2018/19

The Service Manager for School and Provider Standards and Support advised the Report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book, provided the headline progress outcomes of key stage assessments and examinations for the BCP 2018/19 cohort.

The Committee discussed the Report and comments were made, including:

- In response to a query regarding what other groups aside from gender there were when considering the KS1 results, the Committee was advised it was broken down into sub groups, boys, girls, then disadvantaged, SEND and the boys results, as a whole, were below national averages
- A Member advised although a positive report, he felt there was still room for improvement and felt that more work was required relating to the SEND children.
- In response to a query regarding the KS1 gender gap, the Committee was advised that it was not currently possible to view trends over a three year period. The importance of demographics was discussed including how it could have an impact on the results. It was hoped that a data sharing system would be introduced which would be shared at each change of school, information such as postcodes, outcomes of early years, would help build a better picture of each individual child.

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- The KS4 statistical neighbours data document was considered and discussion surrounding the positive outcomes for Southend on Sea.
- KS5 children who did not gain a qualification were discussed, including children who English was a foreign language.
- There was discussion over the Local Authorities engagement with Academies and how it could be improved to have a positive impact on the improvement of education for children within BCP.

The Chairman summarised the discussion and the Committee's support regarding further work at KS1 on gender differences and the work being undertaken with Academies.

**RESOLVED that the Committee note the Report.**

69. Forward Plan

The Chairman advised that the Work Programming session had been well received and the input provided would be used to draft the Forward Plan for the next Municipal year.

70. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates and venues of future meetings were noted. There was some discussion regarding alternating the venue and the Chairman requested Committee Members email him with any views.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

CHAIRMAN