

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HEALTH, CARE AND HOUSING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNTY HALL, LLANDRINDOD WELLS, POWYS ON WEDNESDAY, 26 SEPTEMBER 2018

PRESENT: County Councillor G I S Williams (Chair)
County Councillors J Charlton, S C Davies, D E Davies, J Gibson-Watt, E Jones, P C Pritchard, K M Roberts-Jones, D Rowlands, E Vaughan, A Williams, J Williams, J M Williams, Mrs A Davies, Mrs M Evitts, Mrs S. Davies and R Powell

1.	APOLOGIES
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Apologies for absence were received from County Councillors H Hulme, A Jenner, M Mackenzie, C Mills, G Morgan and S Williams.

Parent Governor Representatives A Davies and S Davies and Church Representative M Evitts.

County Councillor R Powell (Portfolio Holder for Children's Services)

Officers B Kirwan (Children's Services Consultant), M Gedrim (Additional Learning Needs Manager), D Johnston (Interim Head of Children's Services), M Evans (Acting Director – Resources) and L Patterson (Scrutiny Officer)

2.	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
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No declarations of interest were received.

3.	DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIPS
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No declarations of Party Whips were received.

4.	MINUTES
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The Chair was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on the 1st August 2018 subject to the correction of the word 'sign' for 'sing' in section 4 of the document.

A local member stated that he considered a matter raised in the meeting held on the 14th September had been incorrectly reported in the press and that he would be raising the matter at Full Council.

5.	LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN FRAMEWORK
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Documents:

- Draft Powys County Council Children's Services Children Looked After Strategic Framework 2018-2013

Discussion:

- The framework pulls together all the work around Children Looked After for the period 2018-2013. Section 9 outlines that below the Framework are six themed strategies with detail to be specified regarding priorities and measures. It is suggested that this is referred to in the forward or introduction. The meeting expressed concern regarding the inclusion of

the following sentence in the introduction 'we are proud of our achievement over recent years however recognise there remain a number of key challenges and areas for improvement' and suggested that consideration should be given to re-wording this statement to more accurately capture the challenges that have occurred

- Children and young people were involved in developing the pledge to children looked after
- A definition of children looked after would be included
- The document is to be used by officers and members and a children and young people's version would be produced. The document would be checked to ensure it could be understood by its different target audiences
- Powys have a number of children placed in residential homes outside of Powys. There are a number of residential homes within Powys which do not have any children placed by Powys. Not all residential homes within Powys would be able to offer suitable placements for children with assessed needs but there is an opportunity to consider using these homes where a child's needs could be met. There has been no discussion to date regarding providing an in-house residential care service. It may be an option but is challenging and would not necessarily be able to meet the needs that are presented by children and young people. The needs of the children are first and foremost and it is important to ensure that commissioning is working so that the most appropriate and cost effective placements can be found
- The aim of keeping young people local to their community was explored. There are challenges with this in a large rural community and sometimes it is more appropriate for a child or young person to be placed across the border or into another county which would be closer to their home community than within county but at greater distance from home. Alternatively, it may be appropriate for a child or young person to be placed away from their local community and the decisions made will always be based on the assessment of care needed. The difficulty of placing children locally is demonstrated by the area maps which show for example 61 children looked after from North Central Powys with 20 placed in the area. The demographic information contained within the report is welcomed
- Concern was raised that staff turnover amongst social workers was leading to a lack of continuity and colleagues from education were finding this led to difficulties in attendance at meetings
- The cost of in-house foster care is approximately £400 per week, the cost of independent foster care is approximately £800 per week. Residential placements can cost between £3,900 to £5,000 depending on therapy and education requirements. The placement budget at present is a predicted £9.5million/year.
- There is no one reason why foster carers would choose to work for a local authority or a company but it is a combination of the support and training available together with rates of pay. Whilst the cost to Powys for independent foster care is twice that paid to in-house foster care the carers would not receive double rates and the figure paid for Independent Foster Carers to their company includes the cost of the support and training element.
- The Signs of Safety principles are written in language that is hard to understand. It was explained that signs of safety focuses on what the family can do and what safety nets are in place to manage risk. It was

confirmed that Signs of Safety would be implemented across the whole of Children's Services and all partners would know what model the authority was working to

- The intention to re-create a single Leaving Care team is welcomed and the necessity of working closely with colleagues within the organisation such as housing was acknowledged. Children looked after are encouraged to stay in foster care until they are ready to move on under the 'When I Am Ready' scheme but more work needs to be undertaken in respect of young people leaving residential placements
- Provision of respite care is important both for children looked after and children in need. This can help prevent placement breakdown and will be considered under the Sufficient supply of high quality care placements strategy. Some children who will actively try and break placements
- The age profile of children looked after generally shows the highest group are teenagers who come into care at the age of 12-13 and stay in long term foster care. There has been an increase in young children coming into care and this age group are mostly placed for adoption. At present there are 24 children on adoption placement orders
- Further work is required regarding children's participation and understanding the voice of the child but it was stressed that honesty was needed for children to understand what could and could not be achieved.

Outcomes:

- That scrutiny monitors the implementation of the framework by including the separate themes namely
 - Permanence
 - Closer to Home
 - Leaving Care
 - Early Help/Edge of Care
 - Sufficient supply of high quality care placements
 - Participation and voice
 within the work programme
- That the following amendments to the draft framework are considered:

Page	Change
General	Fill in gaps in document (eg. p15)
	Include a definition of children looked after
3 or 4	That below the framework a series of strategies with work plans, timeframes and monitoring arrangements will sit (cross ref p17)
4	Consider rewording: 'we are proud of our achievement over recent years however recognise there remain a number of key challenges and areas for improvement'
7	Remove jargon, reference who Eileen Munro is, ensure all wording fits on page (the bottom line is largely missing on the printed version)
9	Fig 1.1 is all Wales figures which masks the projected decline in population of this age group in Powys – can this be acknowledged? Fig 1.2 is confusing (eg the total for 2016 looks like 650,000) and a date needs to be assigned to the data in the bottom right section
13	The maximum distance a child is placed needs checking – it is

	understood a child is placed in London which is more than 117 miles. The figures for children placed more than 30 miles from home need checking as they do not match (71 and 85)
24	Check number of residential homes in Powys. Members on audit committee advised there were 34 residential homes in north Powys
24	Are there areas of non-compliance at Golwg Bannau/Camlas, The Malt House, The Potteries, Ty Bronllys or Ty Rhos Bach. If none record as such
27	The spider web doesn't show anything and the space could be used to show a governance structure

6. EDUCATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Documents

- Presentation on Education of Children looked after (CLA)(copy filed with signed minutes)

Discussion

- Categories of children looked after:
 - Powys CLA educated in county
 - Powys CLA educated out of county
 - Powys CLA with a statement placed out of county
 - COLA (Children of Other Local Authorities) educated in Powys Schools
- Number of CLA and COLA educated in Powys schools is approximately 125 but unequally distributed amongst clusters:
 - Llandrindod cluster 31 (with a CLA in every school in the cluster and the most CLA in the Llandrindod site of Ysgol Calon Cymru)
 - Special schools 16
 - Llanfyllin cluster 15
 - Welshpool cluster 11
 - All other cluster have less than 10
- A school has to be given 15 days' notice before a CLA is placed in that school
- Foster carers do not have parental rights. Parental rights are retained by the local authority
- Cross border moves are an issue as England and Wales work to different codes of practice. If a child is mid assessment when they move the assessment will have to be started again under the new code of where they are now living
- Delays in finding appropriate schools occur when Education, Health and Care plans are not up to date
- Different curriculums are followed in England and Wales and schools would find it hard to receive children from another country at GCSE level as not all subjects are offered and additionally different exam boards will offer a different curriculum
- Schools would know how to contact the named co-ordinator (at present Michael Gedrim). Recruitment for a new co-ordinator has commenced
- In England a system of Virtual Schools for CLA is in place. This co-ordinates the education of in county CLA and COLA. This model does not

- exist in Wales but Powys is looking to use a remodelled PRU service to have some input into the education of CLA.
- It will not be possible for the local authority, with only one officer, to be represented at all meetings relating to education of CLA and COLA
 - At present Social Services staff write the Personal Education Plan with input from education professionals. This is recorded on the Social Services database WCCIS which education staff cannot access
 - The Pupil Development Grant for CLA has been devolved to the regional improvement partnership for education ERW for 2018-19. At present ERW are waiting for Welsh Government for confirmation how this money can be spent. This money is assigned for schools to support school improvement and is different from the similar scheme in England where the Pupil Premium is used to support individual pupils. English Schools ask for the PDG LAC to be released for individual pupils and it is understood that ERW is considering holding some of the aggregate PDG LAC grant back for this purpose. This is considered unnecessary as English Schools would be in receipt of Pupil Premium for these pupils. COLA children would be eligible for PDG LAC and the school would not be asking for a Pupil Premium to be paid for these pupils. Consideration needs to be given regarding a fair distribution of PDG LAC to Powys schools given the unequal distribution of CLA across Powys schools and particular concentration found in Ysgol Calon Cymru
- Cllr P Pritchard left 12.25
- CLA education at Key Stage 5 (A level) is not reported on as there is no requirement for children to be in school at this stage

Outcomes

- **That the Chair of Learning, Skills and Economy Scrutiny Committee be asked to press for early release of the PDG LAC to the Local Authority and for prompt and fair distribution to schools with children looked after**
- **That the Chair of Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee take a request to Joint Chairs for detailed consideration of the availability of support services to children looked after and children in need of care and support across the authority including but not limited to psychologists, education psychologists and speech therapists.**

7.	UPDATE ON PROGRESS POST INSPECTION AT BANNAU CAMLAS
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This item was deferred due to staff illness and would be rescheduled.

8.	CHAIR'S BRIEFING
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The Chair advised that Chairs and Vice-Chairs of scrutiny had met with Officers and Members from Anglesey who had undertaken their own improvement journey in part in relation to Children's Services. This had proved a valuable meeting and had given much to reflect on.

A meeting had been held hosted by Rebecca David-Knight and Ian Bottrill for Cabinet Members, Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs, the Management Team and Heads of Service to discuss scrutiny arrangements. The report was awaited.

The Scrutiny Officer undertook to email out details of Children's Services Teams which Members could visit as a follow up to visits undertaken earlier in the year by Members of the Children's Services Scrutiny Group.

The Head of Children's Service provided the following update on issues relating to Newtown Locality Team:

"The position in the Newtown team is improved with a more settled team, we have recently appointed 2 permanent NQSW staff into posts, albeit we have temporary / agency staff. However we are confident that children are better assessed and supported and are developing relationships with the children. The team has undertaken visits and assessments successfully, for August Children Looked After statutory visits were at 66% (39/59 completed on time) CP statutory visits were 75% (72/96 completed on time). Care and Wellbeing assessments were at 100% with S47 assessments completed on time at 66.67%. Staff receive regular supervision each month and according to their need. The current performance is in August 78% (7/9 supervisions completed)

Working arrangements with partner agencies are positive and we are continuing to build on this.

At the end of August we had 232 children looked after and we regularly audit and review each child in care needs to be there. We would like to have a greater choice of placements for these looked after children.

Regarding apprenticeships, we have held our qualifications panel and we have 3 places for social work training. The universities have set down some basic educational and training requirements which we can't avoid and few workers met this in this round of applications. We are supporting staff to gain these foundation requirements so as a greater number of staff are in a position to apply for these roles. We will also look to expand the number of places available."

Concern was raised that staff were expected to do extended periods of overtime. It was confirmed that this issue would be addressed through the workforce strategy and that at present the service were over establishment to ensure that overtime would not be required.

9.	WORK PROGRAMME
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Forthcoming dates for Health, Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee are:

- 3rd October 2018 – Homelessness Strategy and Housing Strategy
- 17th October 2018 – BUPA Care Homes and Social Care Performance Reports (September)
- 8th November – WHQS and WAO Housing Inspection
- 22nd November 2018 – Review of Daytime Activities
- 10th December 2018 – Crime and Disorder and Social Care Performance Reports (November)

County Councillor GIS Williams