

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

15 JANUARY 2019

PRESENT

Councillor D. Western (in the Chair).

Councillors Miss L. Blackburn (Vice-Chair), T. Carey, J. Coupe, J. Dillon, J. Holden, D. Jerrome, A. New, J.R. Reilly, G. Whitham, A.M. Whyte and D. Acton (ex-Officio)

In attendance

Cathy Rooney	Acting Corporate Director for Children's Services
Rebecca Demaine	Associate Director of Commissioning
Glynis Williams	Acting Director of Safeguarding
Karen Samples	Director Education Standards, Quality and Performance
Sarah Butters	Early Years Manager & Service Directory Lead
Alexander Murray	Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Chilton.

Apologies were also received from Co-opted Members Goodstadt and Khan.

1. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions were received.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held 9 October 2018 be agreed as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

4. CLOSING THE GAP: REDUCING EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITIES WITHIN THE BOROUGH OF TRAFFORD

The Director Education Standards, Quality and Performance went through the report that had been distributed with the agenda. This was a follow on from a piece of work that had been done by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee a few years prior and the Interim Director detailed the areas that had changed since that work had been done. The first section of the report covered the areas where children were struggling. The Committee were told about the graduated approach that the Council was taking within Children's services and that a key part of this approach was reducing the gap in attainment.

The Committee were told that while the term disadvantaged had a broad definition generally within Children's services it related to children who received Pupil Premium funding and free school meals. The pupil premium was given to schools and the Council had no say in how the schools spent this funding. A Committee Member asked whether there was any way that the Council held schools to

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account for how they spent these funds. The Interim Director stated that the Council did do some work with the schools they supported around pupil premiums. The Council discussed Pupil Premiums in the conversations that they had with academies but there was very little that they could do influence them or hold them to account.

The Director then went through the four Trafford early years priorities. Within the four priorities there were many pieces of work which would help to close the attainment gap including having highly detailed place based plans in place for the areas where there was low attainment and a health visitor review which would establish Early Help delivery and create links into the wider offer.

The Committee were shown some statistics which showed that by key stage two disadvantage children were doing better against national statistics but there was still a gap between them and their peers within Trafford. Tackling the ongoing gap in attainment was a main focus of the work in this area. By key stage four there had been a narrowing of the gap and by that point disadvantaged children who attended grammar schools achieved the same levels of attainment as their peers. At high schools Trafford had invested resources in narrowing the gap and there had been a reduction in the attainment gap during that time.

The Director informed the Committee that the Pupil Premium Network, which was a forum where schools discussed pupil premiums and to shared best practice, had been launched in October. It was hoped that this Network would help to ensure that pupil premiums were utilised correctly and that the forum would hold schools to account. A Member of the Committee enquired as to how the Network would work and they were told that one of the school improvement deputies had aligned the meetings with the deputy forum meetings. The Network then held additional reviews in between the meetings.

A Committee Member asked whether there was any evidence that schools were not using the pupil premium funding well. The Director responded that whilst Trafford were not able to directly review schools individual budgets but they were able to identify trends of underperformance through the data available.

Another Committee Member enquired as to whether Trafford had a full parenting offer in place. The Early Years Manager and Service Directory Lead stated that Trafford did have a parenting offer a full description of which was available on the Family Information Service. The Acting Corporate Director for Children's Services added that Trafford used a model called the Webster Stratton Model within their Children's Centres but they were not available for all parents. There were other offers available from Trafford CCG and some local private companies. Trafford were looking at working with these organisations to create a more comprehensive and cohesive offer for parents.

A Committee Member asked whether Trafford had been slow to utilise the impact that Health Visitors could have upon children in the area. The Director agreed with the Councillor and added that Trafford were now moving in the right direction and the review would further this work. The Acting Corporate Director added that the Council could look at the school readiness work which linked in with this work at

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their next meeting. The Committee agreed to the Acting Corporate Directors Suggestion for the item to be added to the next meeting agenda.

A Committee Member asked whether there was any work being done around people not accessing free childcare places. The Director responded that there was no work being done in this area as it was entirely down to parent choice. The Early Years Manager and Service Directory Lead added that the main reason that people did not take their free places was that they felt that their child was too young to be in nursery. The Family Information Service informed parents of other services available which are more suitable to their needs.

Another Committee Member enquired as to whether any data was gathered on children's quality of life. The Director stated that the only data relating to Children's standard of living were attendance figures. It was hoped that this would change with the new Curriculum approach that Ofsted were taking.

A Member noted that there were a lot of acronyms and abbreviations within the report and asked for a glossary of terms to be provided for future reports.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That School Readiness be added to the agenda of the next meeting.
- 3) That reports are to include glossary of terms.

5. OUT OF BOROUGH PLACEMENTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

The Acting Director of Safeguarding went through the presentation which supported the report which had been circulated. The Committee were informed that Out of Borough Placements referred to children who were Trafford residents but needed to be placed outside of the borough.

Research into the impact of placements had found that the further away children were placed from their original home the worse their outcomes were, so Trafford always aimed to place children as close by as possible. The Committee were shown a breakdown of all of Trafford's placements and their types including Foster Placements with the Council, placed with parents, residential inside and residential outside of borough. Out of 399 children 26 were placed outside of the borough. The Committee were shown the costs of all placements and they were told that there had been a slight increase in the costs since the last time this was reported to Scrutiny.

Because of the difference in price the Council's strategic priorities had been focused on increasing in house fostering within Trafford. This had included increasing the funding for foster carers to bring Trafford's payments in line with those with other Greater Manchester Councils. The Council had also introduced foster carer plus which was a set of very experienced and resilient foster carers who would be able to provide respite for other foster carers and children on the edge of care. There were plans to introduce a specialist fostering scheme with a

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high level support and therapeutic approach to enable those carers to look after children who would otherwise require specialist residential care.

The Council had drawn down money from Greater Manchester through a project called no wrong door. The aim of the project was that no child would be seen as un-fosterable so that all young people were able to remain in a family setting. Key element of the project was creating capacity to deal with Children in Crisis. The Committee were then told about the other work being done to reduce external placements and the role that commissioning played in supporting this work.

Following the presentation the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions. One Member asked whether children who turned 16 in care had to make a transition. The Director responded that if they were already with a carer they did not have to change their placement however, the regulations relating to children older than 16 were not as robust as for younger children.

Another Member asked whether there were private fostered children in the area and what drove the placements of children to these services. The Director answered that Trafford did have some children placed with private agencies and that there were many factors that could result in children being placed with a private foster agency. One reason was if there was a sudden rise in demand and Trafford did not have places available. There were other factors such as the number of children that a foster carer could place and factors surrounding the child such as need for specialist care. The Head of All Age Commissioning explained that the commissioning team arranged these placements using the North West Framework for providers and then negotiated the price for that particular placement with the provider.

The Chair enquired whether the increase in pay for foster carers had helped with recruitment. The director responded that there had been a large intake of foster carers in the last year and it was hoped that they would get the same response in the next year.

Another Member asked how long it took to train a foster carer. The Director stated that it took roughly 16 weeks from the expression of interest to them being fully trained. She added that the feedback which had been received from foster carers showed that they liked to feel part of the organisation and liked that they were working for the same employer as the others involved with the children they looked after.

The Member then asked how many who applied to be foster carers were rejected. The Director did not have those figures to hand but could get hold of that information for the Committee. They added that there were also a number of potential foster carers who completed the training and then withdrew as they decided that it was not right for them.

A Member of the Committee asked whether Trafford would continue to review the payments made to foster carers to ensure that Trafford did not end up at the bottom of the list again. The Corporate Director assured the Committee that the Council would conduct either conduct reviews either annually or every two years.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That the number of foster carers rejected or that drop out be provided to the Committee.

6. COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS FOR CHILDREN

Associate Director of Commissioning explained the makeup of the Integrated Commissioning Unit (ICU) and their commissioning priorities. She then spoke about how commissioning was linked in with the other services being delivered by the Council. The Associate Director informed the Committee that the report provided an overview and that a more detailed update could be provided on any areas that the Committee were interested in. Trafford CCG had just published its ten year plan and children and young people's services formed a key aspect of that plan.

The Committee were informed that the new provider of Community services within Trafford was to be MFT. Trafford CCG and MFT were currently going through due diligence prior to working out the details and finally awarding the contract. The Committee were told the governance arrangements for the transition and the process that would be followed to switch services from Pennine to MFT.

The Head of All Age Commissioning told the Committee that as she had not written the report she did not have the greatest depth of knowledge on all the services but she would do her best to answer the Committees questions. The Head of all age commissioning then went through the report. The report covered Children's Mental Health (Wider Projects & Services), Children's Mental Health (Healthy Young Minds), and Children's Community Services. There were a number of services listed in each of these areas and the Head of all age Commissioning gave a brief overview of each one.

The Trafford were working on making the Rapid Assessment Interface Discharge (RAID) an all age service. This was an adult service which had great success and they were looking to expand this to include Children. There were also plans to expand the service to cover mental health in the same way as for physical health.

A new training offer for staff was being delivered to address a lack of confidence in their abilities to deal with children's mental health issues. Feedback from the training provided showed that it had given staff members the confidence to support children with low level issues and stopped those children's issues escalating.

There had been a number of issues in the transition from the old CAMHS model to the new Healthy Young Minds service model. The delays caused by these issues had added to the development of a long waiting list for the service. In response additional funds had been allocated as the new model was in place it was hoped that the waiting lists would be reduced quickly. A large part of the new service model was bringing parents into the process and the coproduction of services where possible.

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Early help services had proven very popular and had attracted a large demand so waiting lists had developed for them. In response to the waiting lists some changes had been put in place including 42nd street moving to holding their first meeting over the phone rather than face to face. The team were looking at other ways to reduce these waiting times.

Trafford were heavily involved in the development of the Greater Manchester CAMHS service specification which looked to enable a standardised approach to be taken across GM. The specification laid out a list of targets that Trafford were working towards including the need to hire an additional 5.8 FTE staff. The services supporting eating disorders were functioning well although there were some concerns regarding the contracts held with Pennine which had been agreed jointly with other authorities.

Within Children's community Health Services there were waiting lists for speech and language therapy but Trafford were looking to reduce these. A new pathway had been introduced and there had been a reduction in waiting times since September. A report on the speech and language service was overdue and would be published in the next couple of months. A review of the weight management was being undertaken however in light of the transition to MFT the review had put on hold.

Following the report the Committee were given the opportunity to ask questions. The Chair asked for figures on the number of children on pathways, the numbers of children on waiting lists, and the waiting times.

A Committee member then asked who delivered the training to staff. The Head of all age Commissioning state that she did not know but would find out and pass that information onto the Committee.

The Committee Member then asked who were able to refer into services and whether the waiting lists were to get into the actual service or just initial assessment followed by further waiting. The Associate Director responded that she would look into the referral process and provide a detailed response to the Committee.

The Committee Member then asked whether the Committee could be provided with the speech and language therapy report when it was ready. The Head of All Age Commissioning confirmed that they would report back to the Committee once the report was released.

Another Committee Member requested that they are provided with details as of how the commissioning team were performing strategic commissioning. This was to include how the work reflected wider agendas and the impact that can be had through commissioning and procurement. The Head of All Age Commissioning stated that this was something that they could definitely bring to a later meeting. They explained that the brief that had been received for the report had been very vague and they welcomed input from the Committee as to what information they wanted to receive going forward. The Associate Director pointed out that the

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current Commissioning of services was due for a review especially in light of the creation of the ICU. There was the opportunity for commissioners to look at the wider determinants and the work of partners in order to take a more strategic approach to commissioning and service delivery as a whole.

A Member then asked whether the focus upon lower level needs and identification would have an impact upon the children who had pre-existing conditions and had higher level needs. The Head of all age Commissioning responded that there was investment being made across all parts of the service so it was hoped that improvements would be seen for all service users. Trafford were looking to develop a wide range of services to deal with the differencing need as of children. The Associate Director added that this was part of Trafford's approach to focus upon the person rather than their condition.

Another Member asked about the Trafford overweight strategy and whether enough was being done. The Associate Director answered that commissioners recognised the issue which was why a large review had been conducted in 2017. Whilst there had been a delay on the implementation of this review it was a key priority and focus for commissioning. The Committee Member then requested that an update on this be brought to the Committee in the next municipal year.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That figures on the number of children on pathways, the numbers of children on waiting lists, and the waiting times be provided to the Committee.
- 3) That information regarding who provides training for staff is to be provided to the Committee.
- 4) That the referral process for services be provided to the Committee.
- 5) That the report on Speech and Language Therapy be shared with the Committee.
- 6) That an update be provided to the Committee on Trafford's Strategic Commissioning and how it fits into the wider agenda for the area.
- 7) That an update on Trafford's overweight strategy and implementation of the Commissioning review be added to the Committee's work programme for 2019/2020.

7. OVERVIEW OF FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE

Early Years Manager and Service Directory Lead went through a presentation which had been circulated and summarised the report which had been sent out with the agenda. The presentation covered what the Family Information Service was and it could be accessed. The FIS had around 7500 contacts with people annually and they engaged with stakeholders from across the area including professionals and employers. The service received over 1700 enquiries each year

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via phone, email, and through the website. The Early Years Manager then gave breakdown of these interactions by the reason why people contacted the services.

The FIS covered council services and those of local providers and VCSE services in the area. The Committee were given an overview of how the FIS functioned with users able to adjust pages which were then moderated by the team before being updated upon the site. The Early Years Manager told the Committee about a Survey that had been conducted with 200 young people which asked them how engaged they felt with their EHCP. 56% of the children gave positive feedback about their annual EHCP review and around the same number said that they felt that they were listened to. The FIS were also involved in developing a parent guide to the SEND graduated approach and had created a SEND Local offer promotional video.

Following the presentation a Committee Member asked that given that the team only received around 5 office enquiries a day whether most interactions came through the website. The Early Years Manager answered that they had seen a large channel shift in recent years of how people accessed the service. The Committee Member then followed up by asking what the size of the team was. The Early Years Manager informed the Committee of the makeup of the team that supported the FIS.

The Chair asked if the Committee could be showed the video and the Early Years Manager displayed the video to the Committee. The video was accessed through a link on <https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/localoffer.page?newlocalofferchannel=0>

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the update be noted.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 8.35 pm