



## **CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **Minutes of a meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 21 February 2024 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG**

- Present:** Councillors J Jones (Chair), Z Hannington, K Tonks, J Urey and O Vickers.
- Also Present:** Cllr P Watling (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Systems)
- In Attendance:** S Yarnall (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)), P Starkey (Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)), K Fisher (Lead Lawyer: Children & Adults), N Bevan (Service Delivery Manager: SEND & Personalisation 0-25) and S Wellman (Director: Education & Skills)
- Apologies:** Councillors L Parker  
Co-optee: S Fikeis

#### **CYP19 Declarations of Interest**

None.

#### **CYP20 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

#### **CYP21 Review of actions for improvement following March 2023 OFSTED/CQC SEND Inspection**

The Committee received a presentation from the Director: Education & Skills and the Service Delivery Manager: SEND & Personalisation on the Ofsted and CQC SEND Area Inspection Improvement updates. The Director: Education & Skills informed Members that the inspection included a review of the services provided by partners such as the NHS and the Police and focused on how education, health and care met the needs of children that were recognised as having a special educational need or required SEND support.

Members were informed that the inspection took place in March 2023 and it had been called following a new inspection framework published in January 2023. The inspection highlighted that the local authority had been ranked 8<sup>th</sup>



nationally and 1<sup>st</sup> in the West Midlands. The inspection focused on children and young people aged 0 to 25 year olds.

There were three potential outcomes as a result of the inspection and Members were advised that the best outcome would acknowledge how young people were being supported and that the arrangements in place had resulted in positive experiences. The worst outcome of the inspection would highlight a failing of the system to support young people with SEND needs. Members were informed that the local authority and system partners received the best outcome possible. The presentation summarised that inspection found that SEND arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for young people with SEND needs. It was highlighted that where there were improvements or actions that needed to be taken, the relevant teams had already begun work to address these. The report also recognised the passion and determination of local partners to support young people with SEND and disability needs.

In terms of the OFSTED and CQC reports, the presentation highlighted that the local authority and partners offered a wide range of accessible services across schools and academy trusts in the Borough. The provisions provided ranged from physical support, psychological and emotional support for individuals with SEND needs. It was discussed that SEND support was extended to the post-16 cohort and that individuals classed as SEND were given support to life after education. It was also highlighted that this included support with transition from children to adult social care services.

The inspection highlighted two areas of improvement for the system in the local area. These were to improve the governance, monitoring and oversight of diagnostic pathways for children and young people with SEND to ensure that their needs were assessed and met in a consistent and well timed manner. Other improvements from the inspection included the need for Partnership leaders to improve communication with families, beyond the formal consultation routes, to share effective information and advice about the provision available to children and young people with SEND. Each of these improvements have been published as part of the updated action plan to reflect the local offer for those with SEND needs.

In terms of improvements, there had been some actions already implemented to address this. This included working more closely with parents in a supportive environment such as a focus group to understand their perspectives. The improvements were across the entire system which included the local NHS Integrated Care Board, Shropshire Community Health Trust and other service leads.

Members were informed of the National Department for Education SEND Change Programme. This programme provided £70 million to pilot initiatives



to support young people with SEND needs. Telford & Wrekin Council were chosen to be the lead local authority in the West Midlands with a 2 year programme. Some of the investment from this programme included testing a three tiered approach to Alternative Provision services as well as knowledge sharing with other local authorities.

Following the presentation, the Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Health Systems explained to Members that this was the start of a journey of improvement for SEND provisions across the system. It was discussed that the authority was committed to working with parents and partners to ensure that the provisions provided were effective and appropriate.

Following the presentation, Members posed a number of questions.

*Schools like Newport Infants provided one-to-one support, would this type of provision be available across schools for children with SEND needs?*

The team were working hard to develop provisions and support for children and young people with SEND needs. As part of developing the strategy, it was determined that resources needed to provide the best support possible. This included providing support within school as well as supporting children to access mainstream education where appropriate.

*How many schools currently provided one-to-one support?*

Currently, there were five primary schools with another two at primary level able to offer this level of support and work was ongoing in some secondary schools to accommodate this.

*Members discussed the hard work of teachers and teaching assistants in supporting young people with SEND needs and the long waiting times for support particularly in regard to mental health support. It was asked what had been done to recruit further support staff and to reduce waiting times?*

It was recognised that waiting times were long and there had been a shortage of staff support across schools in the Borough, which had been an issue faced nationally. There were new initiatives to train and support future staff which included working with Telford College as well as having a local focus to recruit additional support staff. Nationally, schools had a budget of £6,000 to spend on young people with SEND needs to support them and funding was already stretched leading to an increase in waiting times for support.

*Was there any additional funding to support SEND provision?*



Nationally, the £6,000 budget was allocated to support with SEND needs. In Telford and Wrekin Schools there was additional funding to support with SEND provision within schools.

*Do you support school referral units that support young people with SEND needs?*

School referral units were supported and were offered as an alternative provision in a similar capacity as special schools. Officers were in regular conversation with schools to have students referred to them from key stage 1 to 3. It was said that there were four referral units owned by the Hadley Learning Trust in Telford.

### **CYP22    Work Programme**

The Democracy Officer (Scrutiny) presented the updated work programme to the Committee. Members were informed of the addition of a new item on the work programme from the last Keeping in Touch Meeting between the Chair and Officers which was to receive an overview of the work of Children's Services that had taken place in the last year. It was also highlighted that the item would provide a review of the current achievements of the service area and future steps. Members were informed by the Chair that if Members had any further suggestions for the work programme to contact the Scrutiny Officers.

### **CYP23    Chair's Update**

The Chair informed the Committee that the next scheduled meeting would take place on 17 April 2024.

The meeting ended at 6.40 pm

**Chairman:** .....

**Date:**            Wednesday 17 April 2024