

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Panel – Meeting held on Tuesday, 20th April, 2021.

Present:- Councillors Basra (Chair), Kelly (Vice-Chair), A Cheema, Ajaib and Sandhu

Apologies for Absence:- Councillor Begum

PART 1

49. Declarations of Interest

Cllr Basra declared that she worked closely with a number of organisations in the education sector. There was no conflict of interest with any of the items on the agenda and she therefore stayed and participated in the meeting.

50. Minutes of the Meeting held on 16 March 2021

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 be approved as a correct record.

51. Member Questions

Responses to Member Questions had been circulated to Members by email. A remaining question would be circulated to members, when available.

52. Youth Offending Team Report

The Youth Offending Team Manager introduced a report that provided an update on the developments within the Youth Offending Team and the Justice sector since February 2020.

Some of the points highlighted included the following:

- The data from March 2021, showed that the average young person referred to the YOT was white, male between age 16 and 17 and charged with the crime of violence against a person.
- The top three offences committed by males in 2019/20 period included Violence against the Person, Drugs, and Criminal Damage with Violence against the person, Theft and Handling Stolen Goods, and Breach of a statutory Order for female offenders.
- Slough YOT had identified through work with community safety partners, Slough safeguarding partnership and violence reduction unit that a tailored response to violence in Slough was needed.
- Slough was required to report key performance indicators nationally on reducing first time entrants, use of custody and reoffending figures.

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- 54 young people had entered the criminal justice system in 2018, as First Time Entrants, which equated to 332 young people per 100.000, with a slight reduction in 2019 with 52 young people, which equated to 309 young people per 100.000.
- Three young people received custodial sentences in 2018 and 2019, with none sentenced in 2020.
- Reoffending figures were calculated on an 18 months delay and in 2018, 31% of Slough cohort that had ended YOT intervention had gone on to reoffend. Ten of the young people from a cohort of 32 went on to reoffend. Compared to regional data for the reporting period, Slough had the second lowest reoffending rate for 2018. This was due to the preventative measures delivered across Slough with partners providing tailored and unique approach to frontload intervention, in order to build up resilience and capabilities of young people, providing them with better choices and opportunities to resist from further offending.
- In preparation for inspection by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation (HMIP) in March 2020, Slough Children's Services Trust (SCST) commissioned Hampshire Children's Services to carry out a peer review of the quality of practice and intervention provided by the YOT (the last YOT full inspection was in 2011 with a short quality screening in 2015).
- In 2020, SCST went through changes resulting in the amalgamation the service with the Front Door element of social care with the aim of referring all prevention cases through the Front Door, in order to monitor, identify and assess any themes and need for future interventions. The YOT also expanding prevention offer to include a more bespoke offer for young people at risk of extra familiar harm and exploitation and working closely with partners to assess and plan to intervene at an early stage in order to safeguard children in Slough.

Members asked a number of question about specific aspects of the report, including the lack of more recent data to those currently provided. It was explained that the reoffending data was reported on an 18 month time delay, due to the time it took to process data on the Police National crime computer and the amount of time it took to convict and process a child through the system. The data for 2019 would be produced in due time. The figures would be circulated if required to Members when they are published.

Referring to the 35% white male offender data, Members asked about the breakdown of the remaining 65%. It was explained that the white male was the predominant young person, followed by young male from the black Caribbean community, followed by young male from the Asian Community and split further into certain demographics.

A Member asked about the age group that the YOT supported. It was explained that the YOT worked with young people from aged 10 – 18; with some caveat depending on the statutory intervention that the young person

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was subjected to. For instance, if a young person received a referral order a day before their 18th birthday, the YOT would continue to work with the young person until the end of that intervention. This was because referral orders were issued to first time entrants to ensure that work was undertaken under YOT rather than through adult intervention.

A Member asked about the number of 18 year old young people that were going through YOT that had currently progressed into council partnerships and apprenticeships, and about prospective improvement, given the various projects that were going on within Slough. It was explained that YOT had indeed identified these projects but no young person was currently undertaking an apprenticeship. However, YOT had identified the need for young people to have positive life choices and provide the needed support to place them on to those pathways. Members were informed that a dedicated worker was now working from the Virtual School with the role of identifying clear pathways for young people and announced that two apprentices had been recruited within Slough Children First.

The YOT Manager would provide details on the number of 17 - 18 year old young people that were in traineeships or apprenticeships in the Council.

Resolved – That the Youth Offending Team report be noted.

53. Slough Children's Services Trust Annual Report

The Interim Chief Executive/Director of Children's Services presented the Slough Children's Services report for the period of April 2020 to March 2021. The report provided an update on the activities of Slough Children's Services Trust over the last financial year, outlining some highlights of successes and areas of focus for further improvements. It also informed the Panel of the transition of a Local Authority Owned Company and change of name to Slough Children First.

During the discussion, the following points and questions were raised:

A Member asked about the current financial position, given that historical liabilities had been cleared and whether services would be able to operate within current financial and additional pressures. It was explained that pressures on finance and services including those on the safeguarding of children existed nationally. Additional funding had been secured from the Department for Education (DfE) to inject into transformation work and everything that could be possibly done to stay within budget was being done. The impact of Covid-19 had resulted in many families being in stressful situations, as well as impacting on services. Additional work including, workforce development and increasing foster carers was being undertaken.

A Member highlighted that Children's First (SCF) was now aligned with the Slough Borough Council (SBC) and asked about the benefits of the new independent model. It was noted that the major benefits included better

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integration across the Council and SCF, as well as improved joint working with management teams across children's services in SBC and SCF.

A Member asked about the use of regional agency adoption services. It was explained that nationally, local authorities were required to join a regional adoption service, as having separate services had led to delay in getting satisfactory placements for children. Joint provision enabled quicker responses for children and provided bigger choice of adopters. SBC Adoption Service had continued to work as key partners and would continue to be responsible for taking the adoption process through the court system, whilst the regional agency would focus on recruiting and preparing adopters and in ensuring the right placements and match for children.

A Member asked what incentive had been put in place to retain and encourage staff not to leave, and whether there were any programmes in place for upskilling staff. It was explained that retaining workforce was still an issue that could not be resolved with a single solution and indeed, there was a national shortage of social workers. It was however, acknowledged that the problem was more acute in the Slough region. DfE funding had been secured to help look at the issue of how to improve the image of Slough and to speed up recruitment. A career development scheme was already in place and was being reviewed in order to enhance the programme, in addition to a proposed scheme designed to forge closer links with some universities.

A Member asked about the number of people that were expected to be recruited from the campaigns in India and Africa and it was noted that the aspiration was to recruit five from each campaign.

Members suggested that some residents may question why local residents were not being trained, instead of undertaking recruitment promotion in other countries. It was explained that work had been undertaken in previous years to try and recruit locally. A number of apprentices were currently on social work programmes and new staff had been recruited. The vast majority of staff were new recruits working alongside more experienced staff. However, staff tended to leave once they had been trained, which was a disadvantage.

Resolve – That the Slough Children's Services Trust Annual Report April 2020 -March 2021 be noted.

54. Annual Safeguarding Report on Social Care

The Panel received the Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report for 2019 - 2020 presented by David Peplow, the Independent Scrutineer for the Safeguarding Partnership, which outlined progress made against the objectives set in the 2018/19 annual report and agreed priorities for 2019-20. It also set out the difference, partnership working had made to how children and young people and vulnerable adults were protected from harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation.

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Members noted the change to the report heading on the agenda from Annual Report on Social Care to Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report for 2019-2020.

It was reported that the requirement to transition from the previous Local Safeguarding Children's Board to the new safeguarding Partnership arrangements needed to have been completed by 29th September 2019, which was half way through the reporting year.

Events in the report covered up to the end of March 2020 due to the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the reporting period. More details would be provided in the next report.

During discussion, the following points and questions were raised:

In answer to a question about the rise in modern day slavery, it was confirmed that there had been an increase to 3% in Slough and acknowledged that, as this was a new area, it would be reasonable to assume that an increase represented success in the campaign to raise awareness of this issue.

(Louise Noble joined the meeting)

A member asked whether the increase in the last 6 months (2019/20) in child protection activities was due to Covid-19. It was acknowledged that there had indeed been a rise in child protection but the increase in the last 6 months could also be attributed to various factors, including the complexity of children and families, neglect, furloughed jobs, tipping children into poverty as well as legacy work and increased workload.

In answer to a question about sharing good practice with other local authorities. It was noted that the key priorities were in ensuring that the focus was on recording quantitative data and reflecting safeguarding activities in the data. Members noted that Local safeguarding partnerships reflected their differences and shared practices with other forums.

Resolved – That the Annual Safeguarding Partnership Annual Report for 2019 - 2020 be noted.

55. Positive Change to the Commissioning and Delivery of our Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Tier 4 provision in Berkshire

Louise Noble, Clinical Transformation Lead, Berkshire CAMHS Tier 4 and Crisis Service presented a briefing on the Positive Change to the Commissioning and Delivery of our Children & Adolescent Health Service Tier 4 provisions in Berkshire. The report outlined the change to the commissioned service model for the CAMHS Tier 4 service provided by Berkshire Healthcare.

During a presentation tabled at the meeting, it was explained that a review of service provision at the Berkshire Adolescent Unit (BAU) by NHS Specialist

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Commission in 2015, had concluded that the Willow House building, which operated as 9 bedded CAMHS Tier 4 General Adolescent Unit (GAU) was unsuitable.

The national new Models of Care programme and the Review of the Accelerated Bed Programme for the South East Region in 2020 had concluded that there was not a requirement for more general adolescent beds in the South East region.

Subsequently, a new Tier 4 'out of hospital' clinical model service was developed collaboratively, to deliver an enhanced community care model for the majority of children and young people being admitted to CAMHS Tier 4 inpatient bed. The Willow House inpatient provision was therefore scheduled to close on 30 April 2021 with the new 'Out of Hospital' service model starting from May 2021.

The new service model would support 16 young people, compared to 9 supported at Willow House. Additionally, the service could be provided to more young people closer to home. Through consultation, it had been established that the service would not be suitable for young people who had experienced breakdown of family or of placements; or for those experiencing severe behaviour issues, due to other challenges.

At the conclusion of the presentation, the Panel noted the changes to the Tier 4 provision in Berkshire but recognised that the changes did not allow for the provision of inpatient service.

Resolved – That the briefing on the Positive Change to the Commissioning and Delivery of our Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Tier 4 provision in Berkshire be noted.

56. Forward Work Programme

Members noted that the ECS panel would be changing to People Scrutiny, which would have a wider remit.

It was noted that outstanding item on Forward Work Programme would be put forward to the new People Scrutiny Panel meetings.

57. Attendance Record

Resolved – That the details of the Members' Attendance record be noted.

58. 2021 - 2022 Date of Meetings

The 2021-2022 meeting dates would be confirmed once the changes in the Scrutiny Panels have been concluded.

Chair

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(Note: The Meeting opened at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.08 pm)