



# Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Minutes - 27 March 2019

## Attendance

### Members of the Children, Young People and Families Scrutiny Panel

Cllr Peter O'Neill (Chair)  
Cyril Randles  
Cllr Simon Bennett  
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar  
Cllr Celia Hibbert  
Cllr Asha Mattu  
Cllr Beverley Momenabadi  
Cllr Rita Potter  
Cllr Udey Singh

### Co-opted Members (5)

Cyril Randles Representing the Church of England  
Wolverhampton Youth Council

### Witness

Mags Court

Wolverhampton CCG

### Employees

Earl Piggott-Smith  
Amanda Newbold  
Alice Vickers  
Emma Bennett  
Adrian Leach

Scrutiny Officer  
Head of School Improvement  
Corporate Parenting Officer  
Director of Children's Services  
Head of SEND

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## Part 1 – items open to the press and public

*Item No.*      *Title*

- 1      **Apologies**  
Apologies were received from the following:

Cllr Clare Simm  
Cllr Obaida Ahmed  
Cllr Simon Bennett

Meredith Teasdale Director of Education

2        **Declarations of interest**

There were no declarations of interest recorded.

3        **Minutes of the previous meeting ( 16.1.19 )**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2019 were approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chair.

4        **Matters arising**

Minute 5 – Update on SEND Transformation

Scrutiny Officer advised the panel of the response sent on behalf of Adrian Leach, Head of Send, to the information requested at the previous meeting. An email was sent to panel members with the details.

5        **Wolverhampton's Joint Autism Strategy - briefing**

Rob Hart, Head of Inclusion Support, and Mags Court, Wolverhampton CCG, jointly presented the report. The report gives an update on the refresh of the Autism Strategy. The Head of Inclusion Support invited panel members to comment on the progress since it was approved in April 2017.

The Head of Inclusion Support advised the panel that strategy is a joint plan between City of Wolverhampton Council and Wolverhampton CCG. The Head of Inclusion Support advised the panel of the nine key objectives of the strategy and the linked priorities.

The Head of Inclusion advised the panel of events linked to Autism Awareness Week 2019 and the focus of the campaign was making small changes that can make a difference to the lives of people with autism.

Mags Court, Wolverhampton CCG, advised the panel of the work being done to improve the identification and assessment of people with a diagnosis of autism. The current focus of the work is children with the most complex needs. Mags Court briefed the panel on range of work being done to bring people with autism closer to finding training and employment opportunities. To support this aim work is being done with employers that help create a more autism friendly settings. Mags Court commented on the concern of parents and carers about the issue of people in transition from children and adult support services and work being done to improve the situation.

The panel were advised that the Autism Partnership Board has representatives from experts by experience and carers who have been appointed to hold professionals responsible for delivering the strategy, to account.

The panel shared examples of the issues experienced by carers of people with a diagnosis of autism and particular concerns about the quality of provision in schools. The Head of Inclusion Support advised the panel that there is an outreach services which offers support to schools needing specialist provision. In addition, Head of Inclusion Support, advised the panel of a range of initiatives aimed at helping schools to better support pupils with autism. The work is being supported by funding from DFE which will increase capacity to support people with special educational needs.

Mags Court advised the panel that there is a recognition of the need to better diagnosis in order understand the needs of a person after their initial assessment and the importance of involving other professionals to better meet their changing needs. The aim of the approach is to create a 'passport' which details the needs of the person and also highlight the need for ongoing assessment. Mags Court commented on changes to diagnostic arrangements from April 2019 and the involvement of other professionals in the process. Mags Court commented on the work done to review the case history of people admitted to hospital to identify possible training opportunities and improve workforce development.

The panel while welcoming the strategy suggested that the document should also include examples which celebrate the achievements of people with a diagnosis of autism. The Head of Inclusion accepted this point and agreed to discuss the matter further at a future Autism Partnership Board meeting.

The panel discussed the issue of supporting people with autism needing an interpreter and the difficulties experienced by carers. The panel commented on the need to deliver the vision detailed in Autism Strategy for all Wolverhampton residents to benefit from the strategy. Mags Court advised the panel about work done to make changes to the service specification to improve the service and train staff.

The panel queried the support offered to landlords to raise awareness of the needs of people with autism and where to get advice to help people to stay independent. The Head of Inclusion Support advised that discussions have been held with colleagues of the need to involve Wolverhampton Homes to help support independent living that meets their sensory needs. The panel discussed concerns when children move from specialist school to secondary school and the anxiety of parents concerned about reduced levels of support.

The Head of Inclusion Support advised the panel of work done with members of the Autism Parents Group and colleges to support young people during the transition period. The panel discussed the benefit of learning school assistants in helping children with a diagnosis of autism and supported the idea of champions to raise awareness.

The panel discussed concerns about the exclusion either permanently or temporarily of pupils with a diagnosis of autism. The panel commented on the issue of pupils who experience bullying and the need for them to better support by schools. The Head of Inclusion Support advised the panel of the work of Autism Heads Group which is working to reduce the number of exclusions and also improve the behaviour. The work is being supported by Education Psychology service with the aim improving outcomes.

The panel the reasons for the increase in the number of cases of autism, which have estimated to have doubled during the past four years. The panel discussed if the cause was due to better diagnosis of cases or changes in criteria. The Head of Inclusion Support advised the panel that based on earlier research the rate of cases was 1:10,000 in 1980s, this figure has reduced to 1:1000 based on more recent research. The increase in the number of cases is due to better diagnosis, improved understanding of the condition and better screening to identify people who previously would have been missed. The change in approach has been informed by guidance

issued by NICE. The panel discussed the final implications as a result of more children being assessed as being autistic.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the progress in the delivery of the Autism Strategy and changes to be made in the future.

**6 Children's Social Care Self Evaluation (report to follow)**

Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services, presented the draft Annual Self-Evaluation of Children's Social Care. The Director of Children's Services gave a short presentation with the main findings and commented that the overall picture of the service is very positive.

The panel discussed the issue of child sexual exploitation and the service is dealing with cases where the issue has been highlighted. The Director of Children's Services advised the panel that members of the HeadStart programme are working to identify people at risk and provide support needed. The Director agreed to include a reference in the draft to the issue of FGM. The panel were advised that there are only a small number cases involving the issue of FGM and the service continues to monitor the situation and is supported by voluntary organisations such The Haven.

Resolved:

1. The panel comments on draft to be considered.
2. The panel is satisfied that the self-evaluation report answers the three questions listed.

**7 Participation and Co Production Strategy 2019 -2021 (report to follow)**

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the report.

**8 Wolverhampton Youth Council Annual Report 2018-19 (report to follow)**

Alice Vickers, Corporate Parenting Officer, introduced the report. The Chair and Vice Chair Wolverhampton Youth Council presented the main findings of the annual report and key achievements.

The panel discussed the findings in the report and the future plans for the Youth Council.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the report.

**9 Revised EYFS, KS1, KS2, KS4 and KS5 outcomes (2018)**

Emma Bennett, Director of Children's Services, introduced the report and outlined the provisional educational outcomes for Wolverhampton Schools in 2018 at the end of each Key Stage. Amanda Newbold, Head of School Improvement, gave details of the performance and assessment against regional and national statistical neighbours.

The panel welcomed the report. The panel discussed the work being done to reduce the number of school exclusions and expressed concerns about youth violence. The

Director of Children's Services advised that a multi-agency task force had been established which is due to report its findings in January 2020.

The panel welcomed the report and the progress made.

Resolved:

The panel agreed to note the report.

The meeting closed at 19:55