



# Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel

## Minutes - 18 March 2015

### Attendance

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

Cllr Julie Hodgkiss (Chair)  
Cllr Paula Brookfield  
Cllr Christopher Haynes  
Cllr Martin Waite  
Cllr Daniel Warren  
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar

#### Invited Councillors

Cllr Val Gibson  
Cllr Phil Page

Cyril Randles

Emma Curran

Tanya Kasinganeti

Kashmire Hawker

Church of England – Diocese of Lichfield

Wolverhampton Youth Council

Wolverhampton Youth Council

Wolverhampton Youth Council

#### Employees

Earl Piggott-Smith  
Emma Bennett  
Rachel King  
Elaine O'Callaghan  
Alexandra Chilcott

Scrutiny Officer  
Service Director - Children and Young People  
Deputy Head of Social Inclusion  
Business Change Manager  
Head of Standards and Vulnerable Pupils

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

*Item No.*    *Title*

- 1        **Apologies for absence**  
Apologies were received from the following:  
  
Cllr Dr Michael Hardacre  
Cllr Lorna McGregor  
Cllr Peter O'Neill  
Cllr Mrs Wendy Thompson  
Hadeel A Ahmad
  
- 2        **Declarations of interest**  
Cllr Jasbinder Dehar and Cyril Randles declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 5 "End of stage outcomes – validated results from 2013/2014 academic year."

- 3 **Minutes of the previous meeting 14.1.15**  
The minute of meeting 14.1.15 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.
- 4 **Matters arising**  
The Scrutiny Officer agreed to send out details of a draft schedule of work linked to the report Emotional and Psychological Well Being Services Strategy for Children and Young People 2013-2016.
- 5 **End of Key Stage outcomes - validated results from 2013/2014 academic year**  
Alexandra Chilcott, Head of Standard and Vulnerable Pupils, gave a brief overview of the validated key stage results from 2013/14 academic year. Alexandra provided details of the how Wolverhampton's education results compare with the regional and national comparators. Panel commented that that the overall education results were a good news story of Wolverhampton.

Cllr Hodgkiss suggested that the Panel look at each key stage outcome to give members the opportunity to make comments and or ask questions about the results.

#### **Early Years Foundation Stage**

No panel comments or questions.

#### **Key Stage 1 validated results**

The Panel commented on Wolverhampton's performance and the progress from previous years. The Head of Standard and Vulnerable explained the attainment results need to be considered with some caution as some comparator schools start their children much earlier than Wolverhampton. The Head of Standard and Vulnerable Pupils explained that the average statistical neighbour figure quoted should have been 55% and not 32.75% as quoted in the report.

The Panel commented on the impact of reduction in the early intervention grant and also the change from being a ring fenced budget on the results. Emma Bennett, Service Director, Children and Young People, explained that there was no reduction in Children Centre provision. The changes in the budget affected were background services rather than front line provision. Cllr Page commented that many of the services were also delivered in the community and not in Children Centres

#### **Key Stage 2 validated results**

The Panel commented positively on the results for key stage 2. Head of Standards and Vulnerable Pupils explained that there is an inspection that future results will show even better results, but there is currently a lag in OFSTED inspections. It is expected that following future inspections that Wolverhampton will move up the national local authority rankings tables.

#### **Key Stage 4 validated results**

The Panel queried the results for St Peter's Collegiate Church of England school which showed that no children achieved 5 or more A\* to C GCSE's . The Head of Standards and Vulnerable Pupils explained that the reasons for the results and that secondary school advisor had been appointed to support schools with their curriculum development to avoid a repeat of the circumstances that led to this situation.

The Panel commented on the reasons for the number of schools with scores for english and mathematics below the England median figure. The Head of Standard and Vulnerable Pupils explained changes in assessment process which has affected school results following changes introduced by the Department for Education. For example, that BTEC results are no longer included in the count for five good GSCEs. The Panel comments on the merits of allowing children to sit exams early.

Cllr Page explained the local authority is only able to offer advice to schools on their curriculum and their work on going to maintain a positive working relationship with schools and academies. The local authority can if they have concerns about a school raise their concerns to the regional schools commission in order to hold them to account.

The Head of Standard and Vulnerable Pupils explained the work being done with done to build relationships with academies.

The Panel commented on the validity of school league tables as a measure of the performance and the criticism from teaching bodies. The Panel commented on the issue of children who may develop later and get much higher academic results, but who may score very highly using the current assessment process which is based on predicted score.

The Panel commented on the assessment of special needs children and how they will be affected by the changes.

### **Post 16 validated results**

The Panel praised the improved results but queried the reference to the number of students going onto higher education, when other data highlighted the high rate of youth unemployment. There was concern that the improved results do not translate into jobs when they leave school. The Head of Standard and Vulnerable Pupils commented on the impact of the raising of the compulsory school leaving age from 16 to 18.

The Panel queried the impact on the number of children currently recorded as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) as a result of this change.

### **Resolved**

The Panel welcomed the report and supported plans to improve educational performance standards across all Wolverhampton schools.

Emma Bennett, Service Director, Children and Young People, gave a brief overview of the families r first programme since the previous report in October 2014. Service Director described the key aims of the programme. A key priority was to support families through early intervention work so that the right children were admitted into care. Service Director commented that there had been a slight decline in the numbers of looked after children.

Service Director explained that CP referred to are child protection cases and CIN are children in need cases.

Service Director explained the tiers of support available to families under the programme. The rate of children being admitted into care has slowed down. Based on previous trends before the programme it would have been expected that 80 more children would have been added to the list of looked after children, there has been a net gain of 10 children in the period since the introduction of the programme.

The Panel commented on the evidence that the improvements were as a result of the programme or other changes such as changes to personal. Service Director explained the gateway into the care system had been tightened and offers more challenge to social workers to look at alternative support arrangements rather than care.

Service Director explained the work being done with a data analyst which had provided detailed information about the profile and characteristics that will help to identify families at risk and provide appropriate support. The information will help the service to decide where to focus its resources by identifying risk factors. Service Director commented on the particular needs of young parents and the work done to offer them support and the discussions with different services to work together.

The Panel commented on the concerns about how the different agencies working with families manage the balance between meeting their own responsibilities to protect children and working together to provide support in a more co-ordinated way. Service Director explained the powers of the police to intervene and work being done to build confidence in their professionalism and trust about how best to manage risks.

Service Director commented on the benefits of multi-agency and the sharing of information to support targeted interventions before the situation escalates and this would require more intensive support.

Service Director outlined future plans for the programme.

The Panel congratulated on the LGiU Councillor Achievement Award to Cllr Gibson which was nominated for the success of the families r first programme.

The Panel commented on the increase in the number of children in placements and the numbers of children on full care orders.

Service Director commented on the link between deprivation and number of children admitted into care and the work done to look at the risk factors. Service Director gave details of a number of funded projects and support available and the importance of services working together. Service Director commented that would have look at the

interventions to better to reduce the number of young people looked after in placement.

The Panel commented on the difficulties in managing risks in situations where there is evidence of abuse or neglect. The Panel wanted to congratulate the work of those involved in the programme.

Service Director commented on the work done to introduce the 'threshold model' so that all the different agencies understand their respective responsibilities and they can each support families and criteria that should be used before a decision is taken to admit a child into care. Service Director commented on the importance of professional judgement so that the right children are admitted into care.

Service Director commented on the impact of poverty and the challenge of getting families to engage with services. Service Director commented on the impact of child poverty.

The Panel commented on the best way of sharing the good news about the families r first programme with other Councillors and to raise awareness about the support available to families. Service Director and Cabinet Member commented on the possibility of an all member event and agreed to think about how the information could be shared

### **Resolved**

The Panel welcomed the presentation and the progress in meeting the needs of children and young people.

Service Director to advise the Panel on options for sharing information about the progress of the families r first programme and its impact on stabilising the numbers of looked after children.

### **7 The role, remit and priorities of the Early Help Service 5-18**

Rachel King, Head of Service, Early Help Service, gave a brief overview of the background to the new service model and the reasons for reorganising the service to achieve agreed savings and better services.

Head of Service explained the background to the introduction of MASTs and the changes made following a peer safeguarding review of the service. Head of Service outlined the new restructured service and the move from a child focus model to a family focused model of working.

Head of Service explained the introduction of new model of early help service to 5-18 is supported by the Troubled Families programme. Head of Service outlined the achievements of the programme to date and plans for the phase of the programme. The next phase of the programme starts in April and has profile funding for the next five years. Wolverhampton has been guaranteed funding for 12 months and has a target for supporting 2840 families over the 5 year duration. Head of Service explained that local authorities will be able to suggest their own key performance

indicators and will need to develop an Outcomes Plan. The measures will need to be agreed by the Department of Local Government.

The Panel welcomed the success of the programme and also report in detailing the progress. The Panel supported the focus in early intervention and targeted support.

Head of Service explained that a key part of the next phase of the programme is sharing knowledge and intelligence about families. This will involve looking at database and agreeing an information sharing protocol.

The panel commented on the reasons behind the achievement of 100% of payment by results in February 2015. Head of Service explained the work done to provide evidence of the work being done with families identified by the programme. Cllr Gibson commented on the difficulty in getting details of families and sharing the information.

The Head of Service commented on the target of engaging with 2840 families in the phase 2 of the programme starting in April 2015 and the work being planned to ensure the right families are targeted for support. The panel discussed the merits of payment by results schemes and the risks to the Council undertaking the work with no guarantee of payment. The Head of Service explained the funding process for the scheme. Cllr Gibson commented on the work being planned to promote the programme with Head teachers.

### **Resolved**

The panel welcomed the report. The panel welcomed a further progress report in 18 months to review progress

The meeting closed a 19:40