



**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
8 JUNE 2016
7.30 - 9.05 PM**

Present:

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Brossard (Vice-Chairman), Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Ms Hayes, Mrs McCracken, Mrs Temperton and Peacey (Substitute)
Ms C Barrett, Children's Social Care Representative
Mr R Briscoe, Parent Governor Representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillor Virgo
Miss V Richardson, Teachers' Representative

Also Present:

Andrea Carr, Policy Officer (Overview and Scrutiny)
Ian Dixon, Head of Targeted Services
Karen Frost, Head of Prevention and Early Intervention, Bracknell Forest Council
Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care
Dr Janette Karklins, Director of Children, Young People & Learning
Christine McInnes, Chief Officer: Learning & Achievement
David Watkins, Chief Officer: Strategy, Resources and Early Intervention

1. Election of Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs Birch be elected Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2016/17.

2. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

RESOLVED that Councillor Brossard be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Children, Young People and Learning Overview and Scrutiny Panel for the municipal year 2016/17.

3. Minutes and Matters Arising

The minutes of the 13 April 2016 meeting of the Panel were approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

4. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest, nor any indication that Members would be participating whilst under the party whip.

5. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

6. Public Participation

No submissions were made by members of the public under the Council's Public Participation Scheme for Overview and Scrutiny.

7. Quarterly Service Report

The Panel received the Children, Young People and Learning Quarterly Service Report for the period 1 January to 31 March 2016.

The Director of Children, Young People and Learning highlighted some headlines from the report including:

- the imminent handover of the new Warfield West School
- the continued success of the online school place application system
- the publication of a range of annual Statements of Purpose for Children's Social Care
- the successful launch of the MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) based at Easthampstead House
- a pleasing external assessment report received regarding the Youth Offending Service's recent inspection
- the beginning of Ofsted's SEND (Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities) inspections in May 2016; the closest inspection to Bracknell Forest had been in Brighton and Hove
- the new education Bill, entitled Education for All was expected in June 2016

Ian Dixon, Head of Targeted Services in Learning and Achievement attended the meeting to present on School Exclusions and Attendance.

It was explained that only a headteacher of a school could exclude a pupil, and only on disciplinary grounds. Exclusions could last for a maximum of 45 school days in a school year, or they could be permanent. In exceptional cases requiring further evidence or a police investigation, a fixed term exclusion could be extended. All exclusions had to be reported and counted, including lunchtime exclusions for disruptive behaviour. Informal or 'unofficial' exclusions were unlawful.

Data demonstrated that for the number of primary school fixed period exclusions and of primary school days lost, Bracknell Forest was significantly below the national average. With regard to the number of secondary school fixed period exclusions, Bracknell Forest was in line with its statistical neighbours and below the national average. However, it was reported that although the number of secondary school exclusions was below the national average, there were an average of 7.1 days lost as a result of exclusion in Bracknell Forest compared to the national average 4.9 days lost. Work was ongoing to establish the cause for the high number of days lost.

The number of fixed period exclusions in schools between 1 April 2015 and 31 March 2016 demonstrated that The Bracknell School had reported 156 exclusions, the most of all Bracknell Forest schools. College Hall Pupil Referral Unit had reported 87 exclusions, and it was noted that there were no national benchmarks for PRUs against which to compare.

With regard to attendance, it was explained that absences were monitored rather than attendance. Absence could be defined as a pupil's overall absence, an authorised absence which was usually on medical grounds, an unauthorised absence such as a term-time holiday, or persistent absence where a pupil's absence equates

to 10% of their possible attendance. It was noted that this number had been tightened from 15% last year.

It was reported that Legal Services were examining the judgement following the Isle of Wight case with a parent taking his child on an unauthorised holiday, and the Department for Education intended to strengthen the guidance around unauthorised holiday.

The total absences for primary and secondary schools demonstrated that Bracknell Forest was below its neighbours and the national average.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were raised:

- Ranelagh School and the other academies were included in the data, as a state-funded school.
- There was no common criteria for exclusion, but in all schools it would be resultant of persistent poor behaviour.
- The number of fixed period exclusions was rising both in Bracknell Forest and nationally. There was no clear reason for this, and Ian agreed to produce the trend data for each school individually.
- Curriculum work issued to excluded children was not monitored by the Local Authority, but Members were assured that Ofsted would recognise and measure whether work for repeatedly excluded children was below standard.

Christine McInnes, Chief Officer: Learning and Achievement provided an update on the Ofsted Inspection Outcomes to June 2016. Fox Hill Primary School had been inspected since the last Panel meeting and had been graded 'Requires Improvement'. Jennett's Park Primary School and Easthampstead Park Secondary School were due to be inspected. The Panel commented on the difficulties faced by Easthampstead Park and other schools which were inspected during exam season when lessons were replaced by revision sessions. It was reported that this had been raised with the link Ofsted Officer, and it had been proposed that the schedule of inspections be amended. Officers commented that this was unlikely to happen.

8. Annual Report on the Statutory Roles and Responsibilities of the Director and Lead Member for Children's Services 2015-16

The Panel considered the Annual Report on the Statutory Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member for Children's Services 2015/16.

Members were pleased with the report and the progress it demonstrated. It was suggested that the report be amended to include reference to the work with Young Carers and Home Educated children in the year 2015/16 before going to the Executive.

9. Family Focus Programme Update

The Panel considered the report on the Phase 2 of the Family Focus programme.

Karen Frost gave an update on the Family Focus programme. Phase 1 had run for three years and had completed in March 2015. Bracknell Forest officers had worked with 115 families in Phase 1, and the targets for these families had been met. The Bracknell Forest programme had been recognised as one of the best performing programmes in the country, and the team had been invited to work with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on the new programme for Phase 2.

The new programme would be a five year programme to focus on a minimum of 380 families in the Borough. The criteria considered when assisting the families would be broader, and would include a holistic approach to tackling domestic abuse, mental health needs, substance abuse, poverty, debt and housing issues. All referrals to the programme would be assigned an allocated key worker through the Early Intervention Hub. Every family would develop an Outcome Plan, and the focus was on working alongside the family.

The success of the programme would be measured by a National Impact Study with the DCLG who would process the details of all families who agreed to their details being shared.

10. Update on Provision for Young People Not In Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

The Panel considered the Update on Provision for Young People Not in Education Employment or Training (NEET).

It was explained that NEET levels and statistics gave a reliable indication of future economic and employment rates in the Borough. It was highlighted that the number of young people who were NEET could change at any time, but was generally around 100-115.

There had been a successful bid for European funding to fund the Elevate hub which was due to transfer from the Chief Executive's Office to the Children, Young People and Learning directorate.

In response to Members' questions, the following points were raised:

- The report data had been gathered from a range of sources including Advisa and the Secondary Schools and was reported to the Department for Education. The figures for the 'Not Known' category has been included as it was expected that these people were NEET.
- Prevention work against becoming NEET began in Year 8 in the Secondary Schools, and a new employment programme at Kennel Lane Special School had begun in 2016 with good feedback.

Young people benefited from good mentoring relationships with adults, and this had particularly been key with Looked After Children in the Borough who had been assigned mentors.

11. Report of the Review of Child Sexual Exploitation

The Report of the Review of Child Sexual Exploitation was postponed to be discussed at the September Panel meeting.

12. Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions

The Panel considered the scheduled Executive Key and Non-Key Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

CHAIRMAN