

**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
27 SEPTEMBER 2017
7.30 - 10.00 PM**



Present:

Councillors Mrs Birch (Chairman), Brossard (Vice-Chairman), Ms Gaw, Mrs Hamilton, Ms Hayes, Peacey (Substitute) and Mrs Temperton
Miss V Richardson, Teachers' Representative

Apologies for absence were received from:

Councillors Skinner and Virgo

Executive Member:

Councillor Dr Barnard

Also Present:

Councillor Leake
Ian Dixon, Head of Targeted Services
Nikki Edwards, Director of Children, Young People and Learning
Karen Frost, Head of Early Intervention
Cherry Hall, Strategy and Development Manager Under 5's
Peter Hodges, Head of Looked After Children
Lorna Hunt, Chief Officer: Children's Social Care
Rachel Morgan, Head of Standards and Effectiveness
Kashif Nawaz, Virtual Head Teacher for Vulnerable Pupils
Andrea Carr, Overview & Scrutiny Officer

68. Apologies for Absence/Substitute Members

Councillor Peacey attended as a substitute for Councillor Virgo.

69. Minutes and Matters Arising

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 18 July 2017 be approved as a correct record, and signed by the Chairman.

70. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

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

71. Urgent Items of Business

There were no items of urgent business.

72. Public Participation

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

73. **Quarterly Service Report**

The Panel considered the latest trends, priorities and pressures in terms of departmental performance as reported in the QSR for the first quarter of 2017/18 (April to June 2017) relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

The Chief Officer: Children's Social Care gave a presentation concerning children in need, looked after and subject to child protection plans. Data indicated that although the numbers of all of these children had increased prior to June 2017, numbers were beginning to reduce since then with the exception of children in care. There were currently 650 children in need, 142 children looked after and 143 children subject to protection plans. The increase in the latter number earlier in the year had reduced possibly because some children had been placed in care. Ward data showed where the greatest number of children on child protection plans or looked after were located. In terms of placement types, although the number of children looked after (CLA) in residential care had increased owing to complex needs and high risk, the majority were placed in Bracknell Forest foster care. More foster carers were sought owing to the increase in the number of children in care. Placement stability for children in care for two and a half years in the same placement for two years had increased. Situations of three or more placements in a year were tightly monitored and subject to change during the year with performance less strong by 2% than it was at this time last year. The presentation included information and case studies to explain the reasons for the placement moves.

The following points arose from questions and discussion:

- There were many care places outside Bracknell Forest and if foster carers relocated to another Borough it was likely that their fostered children would move with them. There were no residential care facilities in Bracknell Forest with the exception of Larchwood, a short breaks unit for children with disabilities.
- Ofsted inspections were based on current practice and did not take account of future housing and population predictions.
- There were currently no Bracknell Forest children in secure residential accommodation. The amount in other types of residential accommodation totalled 24, a number of whom were children with disabilities.
- There was a mixture of individual children and those from large families in care.
- Owing to the relatively small number of CLA in Bracknell Forest, a modest increase led to a large percentage change. The increase locally was a trend reflected in benchmarking against statistical neighbours and local authorities in the south east and nationally. The reasons for children becoming looked after included neglect, domestic abuse, mental health and substance misuse and the age ranged from birth to teenagers.
- Fluctuations in the number of CLA had an impact on resources and the step up to and step down from child protection would be addressed in the Gateway Review.

Data was circulated at the meeting which provided the rates of local permanent primary and secondary exclusions in 2016/17 and fixed term exclusions over a three year period from 2014/15 to 2016/17 at primary and secondary levels compared to the national trend.

The number and rates of both types of exclusion increased nationally in 2015/16 (latest published national data) and a recent Freedom of Information request had suggested that this had continued exponentially in 2016/17. In Bracknell Forest the

number of permanent primary exclusions had remained static and well below the national average. Although there had been an increase in the level of permanent exclusions at the secondary phase, this also remained below the national average. Whilst the Pupil Referral Unit was well below the national average for permanent exclusion, it was above for fixed term exclusion and Kennel Lane Special School was below the national average for both types of exclusion. One possible reason for the increase in exclusions was the updating of statutory guidance to provide head teachers with increased confidence in their use of exclusion as a disciplinary measure and to provide greater clarity to independent review panels and governing bodies on their consideration of exclusion decisions.

The following points arose from questions and discussion:

- The data indicated the causes of exclusions and it was acknowledged that there was usually more than one reason for an exclusion.
- Concern was expressed at the level of primary fixed term exclusions as approximately 20% of the Borough's schools had exclusion levels above the national average and overall above statistical neighbours.
- There were two methods of obtaining exclusion data, one was through schools' termly returns and the other was via the school census, both of which were utilised by Bracknell Forest. The Council usually became aware of an incident leading to an exclusion at an early stage as head teachers tended to make contact seeking support and information concerning the process. The Council would not advise a school whether or not to exclude.
- Children would rarely be excluded more than once, unless they had significant behavioural issues, and their school career was unlikely to be adversely affected if their re-integration was successful.

74. Children's Services Ofsted Inspection Outcome

The Director of Children, Young People and Learning advised on the outcomes of the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers, carried out in May 2017 and published on 14 July 2017, and on the proposed Action Plan resulting from this, including the new departmental vision. The post inspection Action Plan Objectives, Plan for September 2017 to April 2019, and Inputs and Context to the Department's Strategic Position were circulated at the meeting for Members' information.

As the overall inspection judgement was good with outstanding elements, the Action Plan was not onerous and its timescales were achievable. Progress updates would be submitted to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board and to this Panel.

The Panel was encouraged to attend the Transformation Programme Gateway Review of Children's Services taking place the following evening as it would throw further light on services and offer another opportunity for questions to be answered.

The following points arose from related questions and discussion:

- The inspection outcome was favourable and recognised that the Council delivered the most effective services within the available funding.
- Homeless young people were assessed and work was undertaken with families with a view to returning them home in the first instance. All homelessness cases had been considered by the inspectors. A clearer and more accessible leaflet for affected young people was welcomed.

- The inspection report highlighted successful partnership working and Members were proud of the Council's corporate parenting function.

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Learning summarised the inspection outcome making reference to whole system working, effectiveness of services, and innovative and creative practice which focused on the most vulnerable children and young people.

75. **Schools Ofsted Inspection Outcomes**

A paper outlining the outcomes of Ofsted inspections of schools in Bracknell Forest, including published reports to September 2017, was circulated at the meeting. Members paid particular attention to the outcome of the inspection of Ascot Heath CE Junior School which had been received since the last Panel meeting and gave a grade of 'Requires Improvement'. As this was a decline from the previous rating of 'Good' and a source of some concern, it was suggested that the Panel could give consideration to the full inspection report and/or action plan at a future meeting.

Arising from questions and discussion around the Inspection Outcomes report and the QSR, the Panel noted that:

- The School Improvement Strategy covered the steps to be taken to secure improvement which could be followed by statutory powers in the event of no improvement. Achieving school improvement was a lengthy process.
- Performance Indicator L139p (percentage of primary schools rated good or better) did not take account of the Ascot Heath CE Junior School rating as it had been received after the latest quarterly performance figures had been published. Clarification on the number and identity of secondary schools included in Performance Indicator L139s (percentage of secondary schools rated good or better) would be provided.
- The Ofsted inspection framework had changed considerably over the last four years when many schools in Bracknell Forest were last inspected. There was a real focus on the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Schools graded as 'Outstanding' were evaluated by a desktop exercise and would only be re-inspected in the event of a serious issue being raised.
- The 'Red' rating for Performance Indicator L281 (number of individual clients attending Youthline sessions) was queried and an officer undertook to provide the reason for this under performance.

76. **Life Chances Team Annual Report 2016-17**

The Panel considered the Life Chances Virtual Team for children looked after (CLA) Annual Report 2016-17 which provided information in respect of the process, performance and impact of the multi-agency team.

The following points arose in response to questions and discussion:

- All CLA received physical and emotional health checks using a Strengths and Differences Questionnaire. Work with the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service took place in order to embed mental health care into the service. Review of the Questionnaire results was key and enabled necessary interventions and services to be put into place rapidly.
- The Life Chances Conference held on 28 March 2017 had been well attended and valuable focusing on a child's journey.

- A graph indicated the number of CLA each month during 2016-17 and the results of a RAG (Red, Amber and Green) traffic light system used to highlight the risk or concern identified. If two or more domains were highlighted as being an issue for a particular child then the child's name was given a Red status. It was not always the same children which remained Red. Members felt that the results were positive.
- It could be challenging to persuade some CLA to attend dental appointments and creative methods were used.

77. **Pupil Premium Consultation**

The scope of the Pupil Premium reviews extended to 11 schools identified by the School Improvement Team, including 3 secondary schools, and 1 additional school which opted for a self review. The reviews took place between January and June 2017 and featured meetings with leaders, governors, pupils and staff and also teaching and learning observations. The information resulting from the reviews was shared with all schools and a report with clear recommendations was provided to the relevant school following the review.

The reviewed schools looked at the systems in place to support disadvantaged pupils and were aware of the need to diminish the difference and have tracking systems in place to enable them to analyse data forensically. The schools knew their strengths and areas for development in terms of the Pupil Premium and there were a number of new initiatives in place in some of the schools and in time these would show an impact. Schools were aware of the need to secure quality first teaching for all pupils and also to monitor the teaching of the Pupil Premium pupils (particularly in KS3). With the changes to the National Curriculum and the assessment processes for GCSE, the head teachers had focused attention and resources on the current Year 6 and Year 11 pupils to ensure that as many pupils as possible made good progress from their starting points. There was a sense of urgency and determination to secure the best outcomes for all children within the Borough and the schools were working holistically as well as forensically with all pupils to make a difference. In 7 out of the 12 schools, provisional data for July 2017 showed an overall improvement for Pupil Premium pupils.

Recommendations arising from the reviews focused on leadership and management; governance; teaching and learning; and personal development, behaviour and welfare.

In terms of leadership and management, Pupil Premium was to be kept as a standing agenda item in staff meetings, data analysis would include Double Disadvantaged pupils and outcomes for disadvantaged pupils should be a key element of self-evaluation. Upskilling all members of the workforce to deliver quality first teaching consistently in a whole school approach and reviewing the impact of interventions, curriculum and assessment through the lens of disadvantage pupils was required. Secondary schools were to make better use of measures to accelerate progress in KS3 and governors were to monitor the impact of Pupil Premium spending.

The reviews identified questions that governors should ask at each Full Governing Body meeting to establish whether there was a gap between disadvantaged and other students in the school and, if so, what actions were being pursued to narrow and close the gap.

Teaching and Learning was intended to set high aspirations; make better use of focused learning walks; mark disadvantaged pupils' books first; undertake analysis of numbers of disadvantaged pupils in lower sets and of who was teaching them

(secondary); strengthen and monitor the work of teaching assistants; focus on developing a love of reading; create more opportunities for engaging parents with children's learning; and check that the disadvantaged pupils had the correct materials for home learning.

With regard to personal development and behaviour and welfare, actions were needed to address the gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupil attendance and to consider the nature and frequency of rewards received by disadvantaged pupils. It was acknowledged that attendance by Pupil Premium students was generally poor and needed to be tackled.

The Panel was advised that Ofsted inspections focused on Pupil Premium and work had been carried out during the Autumn term prior to the reviews. A Pupil Premium champion had been appointed and attended an Ofsted working party. Early work with Pupil Premium students and their parents was sought. Interventions should be tested to ascertain whether they were successful and, if not, changed to meet needs. Members welcomed mentoring of Pupil Premium students by governors and the focused learning walks to check the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

78. **Working Model for Child Minders and Available Funding**

The Head of Early Intervention and the Strategy and Development Manager Under 5's gave a presentation in respect of the Working Model for childminders and available funding.

In order to become a childminder the candidate would need to contact the Family Information Service and attend termly briefing sessions operated by Council officers and also attend a pre-registration course run by either Bracknell and Wokingham College or the Professional Association for Childcare and Early Years. Ofsted registration commenced during the course. Although there was currently no local authority funding available to support course fees, once Ofsted registration was approved childminders could apply for a childcare business grant of £500 from the Department of Education subject to signing up to deliver the free entitlement.

Council support for childminders consisted of a home visit to undertake a risk assessment; provision of advice regarding Ofsted and setting requirements e.g. safeguarding, room layouts, accessible equipment and garden safety; a Buddy scheme; a visit to support completion of paperwork taking account of policies, planning, observations and assessments; and provision of an observation and assessment course.

The current situation was:

- 210 registered childminders of which 150 had an Ofsted grade - 32 'Outstanding', 114 'Good', 4 'Requires Improvement'. In previous years numbers had ranged from 280 to 320 and then plateaued at 210. 22 minders were not in receipt of a grade as they had no early years children.
- 38 minders were registered with Ofsted but yet to have an initial inspection.
- 58 minders had signed up to deliver 30 hours (28%) of child care, an increase from the previous 9.5%.
- Minders had received support from the Council to help develop sustainable business models with business skills training delivered in September/October 2017.

Local authority childminder duties were set out in the Childcare Act 2006. Section 6 of which placed a duty on local authorities to secure sufficient childcare for working

parents. Section 7 placed a duty on local authorities to secure early years provision free of charge and regulations made under this section set out the type and amount of free provision and the children who benefit from free provision. Section 1 placed a duty to secure the equivalent of 30 hours of free childcare over 38 weeks of the year for qualifying children. Children qualified if they were under compulsory school age and met the description set out in regulations made under Section 2. These regulations also set out the conditions to be met by parents in order for their children to qualify.

Under free entitlement the funding base rate for childminders was £4.00 per hour and the average hourly rate charged was approximately £4.75 to £5.00. The maximum funded hourly rate that a childminder could claim for the universal hours (15 hours) was £5.94 and the extended hours (up to a further 15 hours) was £4.64. Childminders could also access supplements to their hourly rate subject to meeting individual criteria in the areas of Early Years Pupil Premium, deprivation, flexibility and quality.

Funding reforms had changed Bracknell Forest's position from a loser to a winner as the Council's 2017-18 hourly funding rate had increased by 14.1% compared to an average national increase of 8.3%. Although a further 5.8% increase in per child funding was expected in 2018-19 this was still to be confirmed.

Future developments consisted of targeted support for childminders delivering funded places without a current Ofsted grade and work with Bracknell and Wokingham College to develop a 'blended' pre-registration course.

The following points arose from related questions and discussion:

- In the case of minding children over five years of age, Ofsted allocated a rating of 'met' or 'not met' the required standard without specific gradings.
- Childminders were becoming more flexible to meet parents' needs around working hours etc.
- The Council worked with childminders to meet demand and 86% were able to offer the extended hours. The increased employment opportunities associated with the redeveloped town centre was a factor for childminding.
- The requirement for childminding settings to have outside space for children's use could be met by access to local parks and countryside.
- The automated system of inputting information into the provider portal in order to claim the childcare business grant worked well in Bracknell Forest. The demand for childminder places in September was estimated at the end of the previous summer term and subsequently rationalised when actual numbers were confirmed.
- Pre-school and nursery provision were alternatives to childminders and not all parents sought to take up the full 30 hour allocation.

The Panel indicated that it would welcome an update in respect of the childminding situation at a future meeting.

79. **Working Group Update Report**

As the Panel did not currently have a Working Group owing to limited resources there was nothing to report under this item.

80. **Executive Forward Plan**

Having expressed some interest in the School Places Plan and Capital Strategy item, Members noted the scheduled Key and Non-Key Executive Decisions relating to Children, Young People and Learning.

81. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended and having regard to the public interest, members of the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the consideration of the following item which involves the likely disclosure of exempt information under the following category of Schedule 12A of that Act:

(3) Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

82. School Improvement Accountability Board

The Panel received and noted the Terms of Reference of the School Improvement Accountability Board and the draft minutes of its first meeting, held on 13 July 2017. Members were advised that the Board was linked to the Learning Improvement Strategy which would be circulated to Panel Members in the near future. The Board had replaced the School and Children's Centre Performance Advisory Panel and had a proactive role reviewing Ofsted inspection reports and monitoring measures to secure school improvement with a particular focus on schools of concern. Although the Board may invite head teachers and chairmen of governors to its meetings to hold them answerable for school improvement, it generally held Council officers accountable for this.

CHAIRMAN