

Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee- Commissioned Slot
Date	20 February 2023
Present	Councillors Daubeney (Chair), Fitzpatrick, Heaton, Orrell and Webb (Vice-Chair)
Apologies	Councillor Hollyer
In Attendance	Councillor Waller, Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education  Martin Kelly, Corporate Director of Children and Education (DCS) Maxine Squire, Assistant Director Education & Skills Danielle Johnson, Director of Safeguarding

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## **5. Declarations of Interest**

Members were asked to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal interests, not included on the Register of Interests, or any prejudicial or disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in respect of business on the agenda.

None were declared.

## **6. Minutes**

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the committee held on 20 December 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## **7. Public Participation**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

## **8. The Outcomes of the Local Area SEND Inspection Revisit**

The Assistant Director of Education and Skills presented a report on the outcome of the Local Area SEND Inspection Revisit. It was reported that sufficient progress had been made against the four areas of weakness.

Members were informed that the next inspection would be against a new SEND framework which mirrored the Health and Social Care ILAC (Inspecting Local Authority Children's Services) and was to take place annually. It was noted that the government green paper was to be published in the near future.

The next steps in the post Ofsted improvement journey were outlined and it was highlighted that Co-production had been viewed as a significant strength by Ofsted and CQC. It was confirmed that the substantive SEN Services Team would be in place by the end of March which would improve capacity.

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, paid tribute to staff. He reported that the partnership with Health had been critical in developing EHCPs (Education, Health and Care Plans). He highlighted the strong team that was in place to continue the improvement journey.

In response to questions from Members covering the rationale for the operational plan, parental support for transition from primary to secondary school, the inclusion model for SEND students, role of educational psychologists and identification of needs, officers noted the following:

- During the last two years the pandemic had meant that it had been difficult to undertake partnership work. There was now clarity in the roles of Health and Education and what each service was leading on.
- There was an aim to establish consistency across schools in terms of what was meant by 'reasonable adjustments' and the focus was on need rather than diagnosis.
- It was important to ensure that the best use was made of special school places and the service was working towards developing confidence in mainstream placements with reasonable adjustments. Annual reviews were held to assess placements and assistive technology such as an AV robot had proved useful in supporting children.

- Educational psychologists provided preventative information as well as statutory assessments and had developed SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) support for schools and continued to provide clinics and helplines.
- Early years screening of speech and language enabled appropriate early provision to be put in place and was reviewed annually.

Members thanked officers for their hard work and it was

Resolved: that the outcomes of the SEND inspection revisit and the work taking place to embed improvement through the co-production and implementation of the Local Area SEND operational plan were noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated.

## **9. Ofsted Action Plan, Children in Care and Workforce**

The Director of Safeguarding, Children's Services outlined the report which provided an update to the Committee on the Ofsted Action Plan. She noted that since she had last reported to Committee in November 2022, an Ambition Plan had been developed, contained in Appendix 1 of the agenda.

In relation to Children in Care, it was reported that a Registered Manager had been appointed which meant that the new model for children's homes could be developed at pace.

Members were informed that the use of agency staff had been reduced by 50% and the senior management team was now permanent.

In response to questions from Members which covered children in care residing outside of the city, numbers of experienced social workers, the sharing of findings with other service areas from children's voice initiatives and feed back to young people, young people's involvement in democracy, and recruitment agreements, officers noted the following:

- Since August 2022, no new care placements had been made outside of York.
- The support provided to social workers was a key factor in retention.

- The Director of Safeguarding, together with the Corporate Director of Children and Education, sat on the Executive, which provided an opportunity to share experience with other service delivery areas.
- A pay cap on agency workers, within the local area network had not proved workable.

The Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education, noted that young people had been involved in the design of the action plan and their views helped to inform policy. He highlighted the work of the apprenticeship team in providing opportunities for young people and the recent recruitment event which aimed to give confidence in York being a good place to work.

Members thanked officers for their hard work and it was:

Resolved: that the report be noted.

Reason: To keep the Committee updated on the progress of areas reported on.

## **10. Work Plan**

Members considered the work plan for the final meeting of the Committee, 07 March 2023. It was

Resolved: that the work plan be noted.

Reason: To ensure that the Committee discharges its statutory duties and covers all items on the Work Plan.

Cllr S Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 6.39 pm].