



**Notice of a public meeting of
Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee**

- To:** Councillors D Taylor (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair),
Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Hollyer
- Date:** Wednesday, 26 February 2020
- Time:** 5.30 pm
- Venue:** The Thornton Room - Ground Floor, West Offices (G039)

AGENDA

1. Declarations of Interest

At this point, Members are asked to declare:

- any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests
- any prejudicial interests or
- any disclosable pecuniary interests

which they may have in respect of business on this agenda

2. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2020.

3. Public Participation

At this point in the meeting members of the public who have registered to speak can do so. The deadline for registering is 5.00pm on Tuesday 25 February 2020. Members of the public can speak on agenda items or matters within the remit of the committee.

To register to speak please contact the Democracy Officer for the meeting, on the details at the foot of the agenda.

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- 4. Overview of Children's Services** (Pages 9 - 18)
This report provides an overview of children's services using the children's inspection framework to set out what we know about quality and impact of social work practice in York and how we know it, improvements that are demonstrating impact and our improvement priorities over the next 12 months.
- 5. Regional Peer Review of our Children and Young People in Care (CYPIC)** (Pages 19 - 26)
This report provides a summary of feedback of the recent children in care regional peer review.
- 6. Young People's Mental Wellbeing in York** (Pages 27 - 30)
This report presents the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee with initial information and the draft remit proposed by the Task Group set up to examine Young People's Mental Wellbeing in York.
- 7. Work Plan** (Pages 31 - 34)
To consider the Committee's draft work plan for the municipal year 2019-20.

8. Urgent Business

Any other business which the Chair considers urgent under the Local Government Act 1972.

Democracy Officer

Louise Cook

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For more information about any of the following please contact the Democratic Services Officer responsible for servicing this meeting:

- Registering to speak
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我們也用您們的語言提供這個信息 (Cantonese)

এই তথ্য আপনার নিজের ভাষায় দেয়া যেতে পারে। (Bengali)

Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

Bu bilgiyi kendi dilinizde almanız mümkündür. (Turkish)

یہ معلومات آپ کی اپنی زبان (بولی) میں بھی مہیا کی جاسکتی ہیں۔ (Urdu)

 (01904) 551550

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City of York Council

Committee Minutes

Meeting	Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee
Date	28 January 2020
Present	Councillors D Taylor (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Daubeney, Fenton, Fitzpatrick, Heaton and Hollyer

43. 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.

Cllr Webb declared a personal non prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 5, (York CVS Bi Annual Report) in that he was involved in securing Growing Green Spaces funding for Heworth Ward.

Cllr Daubeney declared a personal non prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 4, (York Theatre Royal Bi Annual Report) in that he was an observer on the York Theatre Royal Trust.

44. Minutes

Resolved: That the minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 27 November 2019 be approved as a correct record and then signed by the Chair.

45. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Paul Healey a local resident spoke on Agenda Item 5, York CVS Bi Annual Report. He raised his concerns regarding the possible closure of Priory Street Nursery, which was run by York CVS. He highlighted the background to the consultation process and confirmed that another provider had shown interest in

running the nursery but should that not progress parents had, in principal, decided to form a staff/parent community interest company to take on the responsibility of the nursery. He questioned if there was a wider relevance to other nurseries in the city and suggested the Committee should consider this as a scrutiny topic.

Cllr Crawshaw also raised his concerns regarding the current early years provision across the city. He informed Members that childminders within the Micklegate Ward had reduced from 10 to 1 and that nursery places had also reduced leaving some nurseries with large waiting lists across all age groups. He felt there was a crisis in the early years provision, especially since the 30 hours of free places had been introduced, which had caused significant financial difficulties to a lot of providers. He suggested the Committee may want to consider a thorough assessment of the current early years provision across the city.

Cllr Crawshaw and Mr Healey answered Members questions and the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities confirmed an annual efficiency report was produced to map the early years need and provision across the city and that this could be considered at a future Committee meeting.

Two written representations were also received regarding Agenda Item 4, York Theatre Royal Bi Annual Report which addressed concerns regarding the recent announcements to change the creative direction of the pantomime.

46. York Theatre Royal Bi Annual Report

Members considered a report that informed them of the progress and performance of York Theatre Royal (YTR).

The Executive Director of York Theatre Royal was in attendance to provide the update and he confirmed:

- They were including the Youth Theatre waiting list in more large projects so it felt more like a participation scheme than a waiting list.
- They had received 512 Arts Awards since April 2019, the highest number recorded in a year.

- The hugely successful community drive initiative would continue and be used for the production of Quality Street later in 2020.
- In order for it to survive and thrive a decision had been made to change the creative direction of the pantomime, and further details would be announced early February.

The Executive Director highlighted the background to their decision to introduce and build a brand new pantomime after 41 years. He confirmed the decision was made with a heavy heart and that ticket sales had been in decline since 2008. Members noted that the decline in numbers was taking place before the remodelling of the main house and that the 2019 pricing structure did not have a negative impact on filling the house.

In answer to Members questions the Executive Director confirmed:

- There were currently 300 names on the Youth Theatre waiting list and ways to reduce this were being considered.
- There were no full houses for any pantomime performance in 2019, apart from the last night and lower priced tickets were introduced, including children concession tickets for off peak pantomime performances.
- A family ticket would be introduced for the 2020 pantomime.
- All actors and creatives received new contracts year by year and the new creative team could, if they wished, engage with any of the actors that had been involved in past pantomimes.
- York Theatre Royal was committed to ensuring they were a diverse organisation.
- To expand the Access All Areas initiative, YTR would be engaging with property owners, community venues and libraries regarding availability of space.
- Consultation with communities who had a tendency to not engage with the theatre would take place and officers would respond to their reactions accordingly.
- The community drive initiative would continue and be funded by YTR.

Members thanked the Executive Director for his update and welcomed the community focused initiatives, they noted just how important the pantomime tradition was to some residents and congratulated the Theatre on receiving 512 awards.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To fulfil the Council's role as a funding body.

47. York CVS Bi Annual Report

Members considered a report from York CVS that provided an update on their activity from April 2019 to September 2019.

The Chief Executive of York CVS was in attendance to present the report and she gave an overview of their practical support, fixed and flexible services and bespoke support that built strength and resilience across the sector particularly within local charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises. Members were made aware of their main core work and it was noted that:

- Since May 2019 a Funding and Development Officer had been in post and she had provided support and advice to 70 voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Voluntary and community sector forums continued to be well attended and they focussed on specific subject areas identified in York.
- Voluntary sector assemblies were held twice a year to allow York's voluntary sector to start conversations and instigate social action towards some of the challenges faced in York.
- The Chief Executive continued to represent the voluntary and community sector on various key Partnership Boards, which allowed her to identify any issues that needed to be raised within the sector.

The Chief Executive highlighted the various issue based forums, focus groups and social action projects that had encouraged a more collaborative way of working across the whole sector. It was noted that the Ways to Wellbeing initiative linked the voluntary sector with primary care and that social prescribing had now been embedded across the whole of York. This model would now be tested across other services including the ambulance and Police service.

Members were also made aware of the organisation's future areas of work and that funding for a voluntary centre was still ongoing.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees was in attendance to provide an update regarding the closure of Priory Street Nursery. He explained the background and highlighted the risks including the continuing deficit. Members were informed of the options the Board of Trustees considered, which included, to:

- transfer the nursery to a third party.
- change the way York CVS operated the nursery.
- close the nursery.

The Chair of the Board confirmed the Trustees, in November 2019, consulted with staff and parents/carers regarding the closure. Since then further meetings had taken place and an expression of interest had been received by a third party. Parents had also considered ways in which the nursery could operate, including the option for them to form a community interest company to manage the nursery. Members noted that the Board considered all the options and took the difficult decision that York CVS would no longer manage the nursery, leaving two options for the Board to consider at its next meeting on 12 February 2020.

Members raised concerns regarding the closure of the nursery and the Chair of the Board answered Members questions. It was also noted that:

- The Chief Executive would confirm if the Growing Green Spaces Advisory Group would welcome new members
- The Safe Places scheme had 19 venues registered so far across York and had also expanded away from the city centre to Vangarde. York CVS were keen to develop the scheme and would welcome any suitable location suggestions from Members. The Chair agreed that this should be disseminated to all Councillors.
- The themes of the forums were influenced by issues raised from discussions at the various Partnership Boards.

Members thanked the Chief Executive and the Chair of the Board for their update and hoped a suitable resolution regarding the nursery would be agreed. Members also agreed that the early years provision across the city did require further scrutiny.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the Committee on the activity of York CVS.

48. Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Overview: Improvement Journey Progress

Members considered a report that presented an overview of the development and progress in the improvement journey for York Children's Social Care (CSC) over the past 12 months.

The Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities gave an update and informed Members of the activities taken place to drive forward improvement practices across CSC.

In answer to Members questions the Corporate Director confirmed:

- Phase two of the improvement journey would focus on strengthening practice, consolidating progress and bringing clarity to the approach to permanence for children.
- The Council were committed to growing their own social work workforce and move away from using agency staff.
- A close working relationship with the Universities continued and newly qualified Social Workers were offered lower caseloads to give them the opportunity to develop and grow and be fully supported throughout their first year.
- Team Manager roles were stabilising and embedding to support a more confident workforce with a clear focus on reflection, learning and development.
- Feedback from Social Workers confirmed they felt their caseloads were reasonable and caseloads were monitored weekly.
- Advanced Practitioner drop in sessions were well attended.
- Fundamental changes were disseminated through various Boards and forums including the Partnership Improvement Board, Show Me That I Matter and the School Improvement Board.

Members thanked the Corporate Director for her update and noted the commitment to the journey to drive forward continuous improvements.

Resolved: That the progress in improvement over the past 12 months be noted and that CSC be supported to continue this improving trajectory.

Reason: In order to be updated on the development and progress in the improvement journey for York Children's Social Care (CSC) over the past 12 months.

49. 2019/20 Finance and Performance Second Quarter Report

Members considered a report that analysed the latest performance for 2019/20 and forecasted the final outturn position by reference to the service plans and budgets for all of the services falling under the responsibility of the Corporate Director of Children, Education and Communities.

The Corporate Director provided an update and responded to Members questions, where it was noted that:

- Further clarity regarding the home to school transport provision could be provided at a future meeting.
- The Glen overspend was linked to temporary staffing whilst a restructure was taking place.
- The majority of children placed outside of York were living with extended families.

Following a discussion regarding external provision the Corporate Director confirmed they were looking at a range of provisions including the option to purchase a property in York that would be Ofsted registered.

Resolved: That the report be noted.

Reason: To update the Committee on the latest financial and performance position for 2019/20.

50. Work Plan

To consider the Committee's draft work plan for the 2019-20 municipal year.

Following discussion, Members agreed to update the work plan with the following:

Tuesday 24 March 2020

- A report highlighting the home to school transport provision

Wednesday 22 April 2020

- A report highlighting the current early years provision across the city, including information from the annual efficiency review. It was also suggested that a selection of nursery providers be invited to either attend the meeting or provide feedback.

The Scrutiny Officer agreed to arrange an informal meeting with Committee Members to consider the remit for the child poverty review.

Cllr Fitzpatrick confirmed she attended the service held to commemorate Holocaust Memorial day at York St John University and she thanked the Assistant Director of Communities and Culture for chairing the excellent event.

Resolved: That the work plan be approved subject to the above amendments/additions.

Reason: To keep the Committee's work plan updated.

Cllr D Taylor, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.25 pm].



Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee**26 February 2020**

Report of the Assistant Director Children's Services

Overview of Children's Services**Summary**

1. This report provides an overview of children's services using the children's inspection framework to set out what we know about quality and impact of social work practice in York and how we know it, improvements that are demonstrating impact and our improvement priorities over the next 12 months.
2. The inspection framework provides a useful lens for this approach as it sets out a national benchmarking framework for children's services.

Background

3. In 2018 a new universal children's services inspection framework was introduced. This framework, ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) focuses on the local authority functions regarding the help, care and protection of children and young people.
4. This framework was designed as a whole system approach, to "catch services before they fall". This approach means that social workers are far more engaged with inspectors about their cases with the inspection team undertaking extensive case sampling.
5. The framework involves:
 - a. The submission of an annual self-evaluation by the LA
 - b. An annual conversation between the DCS and the relevant regional director, based on the LA's self-assessment
 - c. Up to two focused visits between the three-yearly judgement inspection, one of which may be a joint targeted area inspection (JTAI)

- d. Ofsted's local authority intelligence system using data to inform key lines of enquiry.
6. The local authority self-assessment is predicated on the following areas:
- a. What do you know about the quality and impact of social work practice with children and families in your authority
 - b. How do you know it
 - c. How do you plan to maintain or improve practice?

Local Authorities report that this new inspection framework is thorough and challenging, bringing a different emphasis and feel to the way children's services are inspected.

What do we know about the quality and impact of social work practice in York and how do we know it?

7. Over the last 15 months York has undertaken extensive work to understand the quality and impact of social work practice i.e.
- a. Delivered a live learning model of coaching and mentoring throughout 2019.
 - b. Introduced an audit framework and audit of 67 cases of open Children in Need (April 2019)
 - c. Commissioned an LGA peer review of help and protection services. (May 2019)
 - d. Established an improvement board and single improvement plan to scrutinise progress in delivery of the plan (June 2019)
 - e. Commissioned an external review of front door services and early help interface and implemented a multi-agency safeguarding hub (July 2019)
 - f. Undertaken an internal audit and external review of data accuracy commissioned and project accuracy board in place (August 2019)
 - g. Commissioned an external audit of 378 additional cases (August 2019)
 - h. Commissioned a regional sector led review of services for looked after children (Nov 2019)

- i. Appointed a very experienced Head Quality Assurance and Principal Social Worker (Nov 2019)

In addition Ofsted undertook a Focused Visit into the experiences of Children in Need of Help and Protection.

8. Key findings are that practice is variable across the teams and as such a significant improvement programme has been put in place. Whilst this programme is still in relatively early stages there is some evidence of improvement. This improvement has also been validated by external sources as confirmed by the most recent peer review and feedback from Trade Unions and staff.
9. The variable practice has been found to be longstanding in some areas. York had lost sight of what good quality practice should look and feel like for our children and young people.
10. An Improvement Board was established in June 2019 to grip practice and drive improvements. The Improvement Board meets on a monthly basis and is chaired by the Corporate Director of Childrens Services. The Improvement Plan sets out 6 key priorities for change, listed later in this paper.

Improvements are demonstrating impact

11. **The relationship between workers and their children is good.**
12. Children and Young People report that staff members know them well. The U Matter Survey of the experiences of young people in care which was undertaken between November 2018 and January 2019 highlighted that 74% (42) of young people said they were happy with how often they saw their Social Worker.
13. When asked about their views on the reliability of their Social Worker, 75% (42) of young people expressed that they thought their Social Worker was reliable. This is an increase from both 2017 (54%) and 2015 (65%). This year's results also revealed that 77% (44) of young people felt that their Social Worker listened to them.
14. In the recent peer review of children in our care the voice of children was positive on files and reviewers found some excellent direct work with children.
15. **We know ourselves well and staff are enthused by the improvement journey**

16. The Local Government Association were confident that we are now a service which knows itself well. They validated our self-assessment. Senior managers know cases as appropriate and service improvement in key areas can already be seen to be having an impact. The focused visit identified we had an honest and accurate self-assessment and plans in place to improve.
17. The appointment of the DCS, AD and Head of Quality Assurance (QA) has created momentum and a clear direction of travel leading to better use of resources and confidence building across the workforce.
18. Staff continue to report greater inclusivity and welcome permission to innovate, challenge and contribute. In the most recent peer review staff talked of a breaking down of hierarchies and feeling more listened to.
19. The triangulation of recent scrutiny (externally commissioned Front Door Review, extensive Child in Need (CIN) audits, staff engagement events and partnership feedback) indicates direction of travel is welcome and required.
20. Work has been done with staff and partners to agree, practice standards, manager standards, a revised quality assurance framework, clearer scheme of delegation, re alignment of the front door and the development of a MASH, stronger case transfer protocols. The impact is strengthened practice through a comprehensive approach within an agreed framework.
21. **We have revised our recruitment and retention and are investing in our staff and culture change**
22. We have been very successful at recruiting new social workers and have developed a social work academy model which has received very positive feedback. The recruitment of experienced workers remains a challenge, not only in York but across the country.
23. Staff report they feel more able to undertake their roles and have greater clarity of what is required of them. We have strengthened the advanced practitioner role. They no longer case holding and are working to the Head of QA to support practice learning and development. The new Advanced Practitioner (AP) role is supporting practice improvement and ensuring audit drives practice development.
24. We have joined Research in Practice (RIP), a national partnership that supports evidence-informed practice with children and families. We are supporting staff to share learning and good practice and have developed a directorate newsletter and "let's talk about" lunches. A revised

supervision policy has been introduced and supported by reflective supervision training from RIP. We have also launched a leadership academy which has started with a leading practice programme for all managers.

25. We have a "grow your own" approach to workforce which has a number of elements:-
 - a. Focused recruitment of NQSWs
 - b. Over recruitment of staff
 - c. Frontline
 - d. Return to social work
 - e. Step up to social work
 - f. Social work apprentices
26. **We have introduced a performance management and improvement culture where staff are encouraged to learn and develop their practice**
27. We commissioned a live learning model with coaching and mentoring by experienced managers embedded alongside the teams to support them to learn and develop through their practice. This approach also supported the development and launch of six key documents that underpin our culture and practice:-
 - a. Scheme of delegation
 - b. Quality assurance and audit framework
 - c. Practice standards
 - d. Managers standards
 - e. IRO Escalation and resolution process
 - f. Case transfer between teams
28. We have introduced regular performance meetings to support increased ownership by managers of performance data and the use of this in their day to day work to support improved grip and management oversight. Managers are required to provide a narrative around key performance information relating to their teams including capturing strengths and areas for development. Managers have received training in how to use

the performance management system and the meeting also supports peer learning. They now get daily performance information for their teams.

Early intervention and community focus

29. We are fortunate to have a strong communities and cultural offer in addition to early help and edge of care services. Multi agency and externally commissioned reviews of services have helped to develop a new Directorate plan, threshold document and early help strategy that build on the NESTA Good help principles to have a comprehensive programme of community based support which includes social prescribing.
30. **We have revised structures in some key areas to support a better focus on the needs of our most vulnerable children.**
31. We have changed the children in need model to strengthen social work oversight and created a dedicated court team. We have no cases allocated to un-qualified workers.
32. We have moved the management of the Healthy Child Service from the early help to the Director of Public Health. This is to improve the clinical governance of the service and also to ensure the Head of Early Help can have a stronger focus on the work of the Local Area Teams and quality assurance of them. The teams remain co located and work closely together in communities.
33. Re-enabled Health & Disability social work team to refocus on child protection and children and young people in care, moving this team back in to the main safeguarding service. Supported by a highly effective Advanced Practitioner within the Health and Disability service, children in need will now experience less handovers when need escalates.
34. We have a Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation single point of contact who will be leading a bespoke team dedicated to practice in this area and have introduced a revised multi agency child exploitation and missing panel co-chaired by Police and the Exploitation Lead. We are also delivering the Trusted Relationship Project for vulnerable young people at risk of criminal exploitation which aims to engage their wider family to keep them safe.
35. Our approach to restructure has been proportionate and the recent peer review found we had appropriately balanced the need to change practice and structures.

Corporate support

36. Members and corporate leadership team have recognised the need for additional resource to support service improvement activity. There has been additional investment in the live learning model, audit capacity, and in business intelligence. We have also re graded the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to give them parity with the team managers (their posts were downgraded in a restructure in 2016). The recent peer review demonstrated impact of the renewed IRO service.

Data accuracy

37. The accuracy of data is of fundamental importance to children's services. The improvement board relies on accurate data within its scorecard to be able to understand progress and challenges in performance. In addition one of the first actions within an Ofsted inspection is the local authority being able to supply a data set known as Annex A. Annex A is a large child level data-set and gives a board first impression of the state of children's services. Because of its importance we commissioned a review of data accuracy and Annex A in 2019 and have a well-developed work stream in this area. This includes a development programme for all managers in relation to the use of the MOSAIC system and the use of performance data. In addition it also includes significant investment in the system, the development of which has not previously been undertaken with sufficient rigor.
38. The data quality within Annex A has improved significantly and is now within accuracy tolerance levels. There is further work to continue this improvement across all data lists contained within Annex A.

Our improvement priorities for the next 12 months

Achieving a consistent approach to practice

39. As stated practice in York has been highly variable, with an inconsistent over optimistic understanding of what good practice looks like. The initial reviews of social work practice undertaken by the new leadership team highlighted longstanding and embedded practice challenges. There has been significant drift and delay for some children including children referred to the front door, children where there is a plan of adoption, children who are subject to child in need plans, children where a decision has been taken to initiate proceedings and children subject to child protection plans.

40. We have seen the system re calibrate with a reduction in the number of children on Child in Need plans but a significant rise in both Child Protection and children and young people in care. These are young people who had experienced drift and are not receiving the correct level of service at a Child in Need level and as such have had to step-up. Numbers in these areas would appear to be levelling out. The most recent Children and Young People in Care peer review looked the 10 most recent children who came into care and confirmed the strength of decision making.
41. The newly introduced audit tools and QA framework must now strengthen standards of practice. We recognise that audit activity has been under developed in the service and that staff need support to effectively understand the quality of their work.

Tight focus on core priority areas

42. The six key priority areas in the improvement plan are:
 - a. Strengthen the Front Door to ensure the rigorous application of thresholds and timely assessment of the highest standard
 - b. Ensure all children in need, children subject to a child protection plan and children in care have an up to date, outcome focussed plan and that children are visited in accordance with their plan, ensuring, as a minimum, adherence to statutory visit timescales
 - c. Ensure managers at every level understand their role and responsibilities ensuring scrutiny and oversight of the quality of practice in their teams
 - d. Ensure social work time is used to maximised outcomes for children
 - e. Strengthen our approach to attract, recruit and retain social workers to ensure a stable and confident workforce with a clear focus on reflection, learning and development
 - f. Ensure effective governance, scrutiny and oversight through the Children and Young People's Safeguarding Partnership, the Improvement Board and Senior Managers

Strengthening our Approach to Permanence

43. The recent peer review of Children in Our Care has identified that we have the right plans in place for strengthening our approach to permanence but these are yet to demonstrate sufficient impact.

Safeguarding Partnership

44. Whilst the Board was deemed to be Outstanding in 2016 there have been issues in relation to the rigor of the quality assurance of the Partnership and this was evidenced by the LGA Peer review undertaken in May. The Corporate Director has met with the Independent scrutineer and there will be a review of the overview and scrutiny the Partnership offers. A new partnership manager is also being recruited.

Key risks we face

45. Staff recruitment and retention: recruitment of experienced social workers is a challenge due to a number of factors including, house prices and competition from local LAs who have received an inadequate judgement and are paying significantly higher rates. The Workforce Development Strategy seeks to address a number of these issues as City York Council seeks to become an employer of choice. Recent recruitment campaigns have attracted a much better level of application and we have been successful in filling posts at all levels.
46. There has been longstanding poor practice in York with many of the basic aspects of effective social work not in place. Whilst under new leadership arrangements we now have the correct plans in place and these are starting to have impact the pace of change has been necessarily ambitious. Sustaining and embedding this change is a challenge.

Recommendations

47. This report is for discussion and comment, there are no options put forward for consideration. However, support from the Scrutiny committee is sought in the ongoing improvement journey for Children's Social Care.

Reason: To ensure the Committee are kept up to date with progress in Children's Social Care.

Council Plan

48. The children's social care improvement plan directly relates to the Council Plan 2019-2023 priorities:
 - a. good health and wellbeing

- b. well paid jobs and an inclusive economy
- c. a better start for children and young people
- d. creating homes and world-class infrastructure
- e. safe communities and culture for all
- f. an open and effective council

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Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Amanda Hatton
Corporate Director of Children, Education and
Communities

Report Approved **Date** 18.2.20

Specialist Implications Officer(s) N/A

All



Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report



Children, Education & Communities Policy & Scrutiny Committee**26 February 2020**

Report of the Assistant Director Children's Services

Regional Peer Review of our Children and Young People in Care (CYPIC)**Summary**

1. This report provides a summary of feedback of the recent children in care regional peer review. This was undertaken in November 2019.

Background

2. To inform our self-assessment and future plans, CYC commissioned a Regional Peer Review of our children and young people in care (CYPIC). This review was led by an experienced regional Director of Children's Services and peer team, supported by a Sector Led Improvement Advisor. The review took place in November 2019. Staff were advised that a peer challenge is not an inspection of service, but an opportunity to receive peer support and reflections from regional colleagues.
3. The Peer Team were asked to consider 5 key lines of enquiry (KLOEs) and to complete an audit of a selection of case files. The Key Lines of Enquiry were drafted by the service as were as follows:
 - a. To test out the decision making process by officers for children becoming looked after and remaining in care, especially given a recent rise in CYPIC
 - b. To confirm the quality and timeliness of care planning including effective challenge from the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)
 - c. To confirm the City of York response to Safeguarding including Vulnerable groups and overall Risk Management of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing
 - d. Consider responses to Children and Young people in Care with an Education and Care Plan (EHCP) and consideration in of Special Educational Needs (SEN) in care planning and outcomes

- e. Is the LA sufficiently ambitious for CYPIC?
- f. To audit a selection of case files and feedback on the quality of work undertaken

Methodology

- 4. The team spent two days working in CYC collecting evidence with which to frame their findings and then drew together and presented their conclusions on day three of the Peer Challenge. Prior to the on-site activity CYC shared a range of information with the team to support its preparations.
- 5. As well as a desk-based analysis of documentation, the Peer Challenge process involved a wide range of on-site activities, including discussions with over 45 people. These discussions were with leaders, managers, practitioners, partners, foster carers and young people. The peer team also looked at a selection of case files, working alongside practitioners to do so.
- 6. As a result of this activity the team identified over 120 strengths and areas for consideration. They also gave headline strengths and areas for consideration. These form the basis of this report and form the Peer Teams “Top Tips” for the local authority and partners to consider.

Key findings

- 7. The ambition for change and improvement is welcomed across the organisation. There is increasing clarity about roles and responsibilities and this is providing a framework for improving practice.
- 8. There is a “competent and determined senior leadership team” with a clear understanding of the strengths and challenges in the system. Managers and staff are reflecting on the pace of change and are rightly deferring some aspirations (i.e. restructuring), conscious of the system’s capacity to manage such major turbulence.
- 9. Managers reported that the new Senior Leadership team are starting to break down hierarchies, creating a more open structure and culture, ‘Managers are more empowered’...hierarchies have been broken down’
- 10. Staff feel more engaged and support the changes we are seeking to achieve and report that 'we are being listened to' (Service Managers and IROs)
- 11. The Peer Team noted some strong staff development practice, such as

- a. Staff engagement events led by the Assistant Director, which have been highly valued and enabled greater visibility of leaders and managers
 - b. New processes to identify staff development needs by team, which enable more customised and targeted workforce development
12. This was seen as strength, but also noted is the importance of a continued investment in the development of an even more open, transparent culture in which staff are empowered.
13. Reassuringly from audits the Peer Team found the right children are coming into care - including a number of teenagers who have experienced long term neglect. This supports the recalibration story across our system where much has been done to address the drift and delay for children that informs our improvement journey. The Peer team believed we have the right plans in place to develop a comprehensive understanding of the needs of our children in care and where they are on the journey through the system.
14. Key systems and processes are starting to bring greater clarity and accountability. Examples of these included: recently published practice standards; trackers being developed (I.e. the Public Law Outline tracker) more regular performance and team meetings; QA of Health Assessments; regular meetings with the legal team; weekly reports from IROs for senior manager.
15. There is a better understanding in the organisation of what good looks like and a commitment to improve. This starts at the top, with senior managers having a clear and well-articulated view about how their services need to develop. The team also heard from service managers that staff recognise the need for change and are viewing improvement initiatives positively.
16. Despite the changes CYC continue to benefit from a strong commitment and underpinning values to support relationship based practice at practitioner level.
17. The voice of the child is strong and evident in case files and care leavers were able to describe the ways in which they are engaged and listened to. The team identified that the young person's advocacy service is undertaking some innovative and creative work.
18. Of note some excellent practice was seen in audits of direct work with children.

19. Issues of stability and capacity in the workforce continue to have a significant impact on CYC ability to consistently embed quality of practice. The Peer Team noted that a number of gaps in key management posts, vacancies and turnover of social workers all make embedding sustainable change a more challenging task.
20. CYC ability to implement and sustainably embed our new processes and systems may be adversely impacted by the pace of change within the organisation. They noted CYC are already reflecting on the pace of change but recognised CYC may want to balance change with implementation.
21. The lack of a robust infrastructure to support the emerging performance culture was seen as posing a significant risk. The team recognised the new and comprehensive QA framework, but also saw little understanding in the system about how and when performance will be scrutinised and who will be engaged in the process. The team noted however some improvements in this area with performance discussions now in place.
22. The team noted the drive for permanence is not well established but recognised plans to address this.
23. The team saw drift and delay in most parts of the system, but could also see that CYC are starting to address them, again noting a secure, stable and competent workforce is key to achieving this.
24. Neglect in teenagers was noted; the team identified better engagement of health partners would help provide an enhanced understanding of the impact of neglect on the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and would provide a baseline from which to measure impact and improved outcomes.
25. The Peer Review identified that MASH has already strengthened the arrangements for agencies working together and for Section 47 investigation arrangements, bringing confidence that strategy discussions happen in a timely way.
26. The Peer Team noted high ambitions for our care leavers and a good offer already in place on which you want to continue to build.
27. Placement Sufficiency plans were seen as a strength, with "ambitious plans for developing placement choice which build on some of the high quality local foster placements you already have in place"
28. The Peer Team noted the pace of change has been considerable and consideration has to be now given to allowing changes to embed.

Recognising Senior Leaders have had to implement change quickly and across many areas of your service the feeling now is that this pace of change and the extent of external scrutiny invited in could start to get in the way of sustainable implementation.

29. Of note, whilst care leavers receive a good service from the Pathway Team the Council has more work to do to fully embed its commitment to corporate parenting and to becoming the 'family firm' for children in care.
30. The permanence team know their children very well, with strong supportive relationships between the team and the wider partnership and positively, there is a robust and confident system of oversight of unregulated placements

Top Tips as recommended by the Peer team

31. Following an intensive two days activity in York, and in consideration of the 120 strengths and areas for consideration identified the team identified 6 top tips for further consideration.
 - a. Find ways of keeping things as simple as possible - focus now on core practice alongside compliance to give time to develop your practice model.
 - b. Continue to communicate and embed what good looks like - we have seen evidence that people are starting to 'get it'.
 - c. Focus on the deal breakers- case supervision is a powerful tool to improve practice.
 - d. Develop an effective, joined up response to meet the needs of teenagers, including key partner agencies (housing, health, and police). Partners appeared keen to consider a standalone Adolescent strategy that could map the needs of this cohort through Early Help to becoming a child in care
 - e. Tell your story using evidence of distance travelled
 - f. Don't underestimate the importance of your partners' and staff's pride in the City - inspire assertiveness and confidence in what is good and help your partners unite behind your ambitions for your children and young people.

Analysis

32. It was felt that the key lines of enquiry were sufficiently robust and would test threshold for care, timeliness and robustness of decision making,

specific consideration to be given to vulnerable groups and aspirations for children in care, recognising that these are the most vulnerable group of children in the city.

33. The methodology employed in a peer review process is well tested and robust, and as such the findings can assumed to be reliable; that being said it should be noted that the sampled cohort is relatively small and as such the positive messages in their findings should be acknowledged with some caution.
34. The LA Improvement Journey is predicated on a combination of three main components – Vision, Culture and Practice. The focus of work over the last 15 months has focused in these areas and information brought previously to Scrutiny has highlighted the work undertaken by ISOS in ensuring these three areas are equally addressed in any improvement work.
35. It is encouraging that staff are reporting feeling engaged and motivated by the changes in place. The pace is recognised as relentless with a sharpened focus on children’s experiences, strengthening quality of practice and getting the basics right.
36. Phase two of the improvement journey is focussing now on audit and quality of practice, embedding the basics and being clear on non-negotiables.
37. As a result of this review an Adolescent Strategy is being developed with partners, with a focus on Neglect, CSE, CCE and Transitional Safeguarding.

Actions following the review

38. A Task and Finish group has been set up to write an Adolescent Strategy. This will be finalised by April 2020 and will focus on teenagers to include those at risk of neglect and child sexual and criminal exploitation.
39. Managers are now “Live Auditing” two cases with staff on a monthly basis
40. A Childrens Vision is being developed with support from Corporate
41. A Practice Model has now been agreed and will be rolled out to staff over the next few months
42. A Task and Finish group is in place to finalise a Permanence Strategy. This will be followed by training and development sessions for all staff

43. Work continues to recruit and retain staff; the social work academy will run three times a year, open days for new applicants are planned and a further commitment Front Line has been given.

Recommendations

44. This report is for discussion and comment, there are no options put forward for consideration. However, support from the Scrutiny committee is sought in the ongoing improvement journey for Children's Social Care.

Reason: To ensure the Committee are kept up to date with progress in the ongoing improvement journey for Children's Social Care.

Council Plan

45. Children and young people in care services relates to the Council Plan 2019-2023 priorities:
- a. good health and wellbeing
 - b. well paid jobs and an inclusive economy
 - c. a better start for children and young people
 - d. creating homes and world-class infrastructure
 - e. safe communities and culture for all
 - f. an open and effective council

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Report Approved **Date** 18.02.20

Specialist Implications Officer(s) N/A

All



Wards Affected:

For further information please contact the author of the report

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**Children, Education and Communities Policy
and Scrutiny Committee****26 February 2020**

Report of the Director of Governance

Young People's Mental Wellbeing in York**Summary**

1. This report presents the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee with initial information and the draft remit proposed by the Task Group set up to examine Young People's Mental Wellbeing in York.

Background

2. The Vice-Chair of this Committee, Cllr Robert Webb submitted a topic request form which sought to understand and assess the factors contributing to mental health for young people and the systems in place in York.
3. At the meeting on 27 November 2019 the Committee considered a feasibility report on Young People's Mental Wellbeing in York. The report detailed the role of partners including the local authority, Clinical Commissioning Group, local NHS providers and the voluntary and community sector working together at a strategic and operational level to treat young people's mental health in York. The Committee was also provided with information on current strategies and activities in the city.
4. The Committee agreed that it was a topic worthy of review and appointed a Task Group comprising Cllrs Webb, D Taylor and Daubeney to undertake this work on the committee's behalf and to recommend an appropriate remit for the review.
5. The Task Group met for the first time on 23 January 2020, to scope an appropriate remit for its work. They decided to focus on better understanding why young people in York are self-harming and the reasons for this, what interventions are currently in place and what the

Council could contribute to addressing the situation. They also requested further information on why there had been a spike in the numbers of young people in self harming, over or since etc.

6. Task Group therefore suggest the following draft remit to the Committee:

Aim

To raise awareness and better understand the reasons why young people self-harm and in doing so highlight to young people, parents and carers where support can be found.

Objectives

- i. To consider the main reasons why young people in York self-harm;
- ii. To examine the latest performance data about the levels of self-harm in York compared to regional and national data and the accuracy of this data;
- iii. To review the policies and practices City of York Council has in place to help, support and intervene early where young people self-harm and whether these processes are timely, effective and cost efficient;
- iv. To assess what services are available in the community for young people with anxieties or mental health problems to talk to people and how accessible these services are;
- v. To consider ways of raising awareness of self-harm among young people, parents and carers, the signs to look for and any further prevention and early intervention methods that can be used.
- vi. To highlight where positive work is already being done and identify areas where further support is needed.

Consultation

7. To progress the review the Task Group agreed to invite representatives from various city organisations for discussions, including the local authority, Clinical Commissioning Group, local NHS providers and the voluntary and community sector.

Options

8. The Committee is asked to note the information in this report and can:
 - i. Endorse the draft remit proposed by the Task Group;
 - ii. Amend the draft aim and/or objectives;
 - iii. Add any further objectives the Committee agrees are relevant.

Analysis

9. There is no analysis at this stage.

Council Plan

10. This report supports Good health and wellbeing, a better start for children and young people and an open and effective Council elements of the Council's Plan 2019-23.

Risks and Implications

11. There are no known risks or implications associated with the recommendation in this report.

Conclusions

12. There are no conclusions at this stage.

Recommendation

13. Members are asked to consider and endorse the above suggested remit or suggest appropriate revisions.

Reason: To enable the Task Group to proceed with work on the agreed scrutiny review

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Report Approved **Date** 17.2.20

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

**Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Draft Work Plan 2019-20**

<p>Tuesday 25 June 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arrangements for Scrutiny in York 2. York CVS Bi-annual Service Level Agreement Update 3. York Theatre Royal Bi-annual update 4. Children, Education and Communities Service overview-Power point presentation 5. Draft Work Plan
<p>Tuesday 23 July 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance of the Executive Member for Culture, Leisure and Communities 2. York Museums Trust – Partnership Delivery Plan Bi annual update 3. Year End Finance and Performance Monitoring Report 4. Update on Review of Ward Committees 5. CSMC Food Poverty Scrutiny Review 6. York Learning Governance arrangements 7. Work Plan
<p>Tuesday 24 September 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Attendance of Executive Member for Children, Young People and Education 2. York Safeguarding Partnership Bi Annual Update Report 3. Cultural Passport for Young People Update 4. Children’s Specialist Services Overview Report 5. Local Area Teams Audit Update 6. Work Plan

<p>Tuesday 29 October 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tenant Involvement Update Report 2. SEND Overview 3. Cultural Leaders Update 4. Work Plan
<p>Wednesday 27 November 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Young People's Cultural Entitlement 2. Narrowing the Gap - Improving the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in York 3. Youth Mental Health – Feasibility Report 4. Corporate Review – Food Poverty 5. Work Plan
<p>**MEETING CANCELLED** Wednesday 18 December 2019 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Plan
<p>Tuesday 28 January 2020 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality Assurance 2. Finance and Performance Monitoring Bi annual Update report 3. York Theatre Royal Bi-annual Report 4. York CVS Bi annual report 5. Work Plan
<p>Wednesday 26 February 2020</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. CEC Directorate Peer Review 2. Children's Specialist Services Overview Report

<p>@ 5.30pm To be chaired by Cllr Webb, Chair's Briefing – Weds 19 Feb at 9am in the Alcuin room</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Youth Mental Health Scoping Report 4. Work Plan
<p>Tuesday 24 March 2020 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) Annual Report and review of York Schools' Agreed Syllabus 2. Foster Carer Remuneration update 3. Home to School Transport Report (information only) 4. York Safeguarding Partnership Bi Annual Update Report (to include an update on harmful sexual behaviour and address the rise of child sex offences reported in North Yorkshire) 5. Child Poverty Scoping Report Work Plan
<p>Wednesday 22 April 2020 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Skills Report 2. Cultural Entitlement Update 3. Nursery Provision Update (to include information from the Annual Efficiency Review) 4. Work Plan
<p>Wednesday 20 May 2020 @ 5.30pm</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Work Plan

Council Plan priorities relating to Children, Education and Communities
A Better Start for Children and Young People
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen the work of communities, local organisations and agencies so that families become more resilient.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue the improvement of children’s social care to provide excellent services for vulnerable young people.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritise improved outcomes for our most disadvantaged children and young people in the city.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work across sectors to improve apprenticeships and in-work progression.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with our partners to identify and tackle issues relating to the rise in mental health problems in the city.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on the importance of the early years and the impact that this stage of life has on a child’s development.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give every child and young person access a full and rounded arts and cultural offer.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the number of foster carers and adopters
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve play and sports provision for young people
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a York citizenship offer in conjunction with schools in the city
Safe Communities and Culture for All
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a cultural and sporting offer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver an inclusive cultural strategy
Good health and Wellbeing
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make open spaces available to all for sports and physical activity