

Minutes of the Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Board

24 January 2022

-: Present :-

Councillor Bye (Chairman)

Councillors Barnby, Mandy Darling, Douglas-Dunbar and Loxton

Co-opted Members

Tatiana Wilson, Church of England Diocesan Representative

Laura Colman, Primary Parent Governor Representative

Non-Voting Co-opted Members

Jo Morrell, Torbay Youth Trust

Dave Hammond, Devon and Cornwall Police

(Also in attendance: Councillor Law)

33. Apologies

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Independent Group, the membership of the Board had been amended to include Councillor Loxton instead of Councillor Mills. An apology for absence was also received from Mike Cook (non-voting co-opted Member, who was represented by Jo Morrell).

34. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 22 November 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

35. Education and Learning

Jane Inett, Head of the Virtual School, outlined the submitted final Annual Report (2020-21) of the Virtual School Governing Body and responded to Members' questions in relation to the following:

- What happens if a child was placed outside of Torbay and does not get a school place straight away.
- Torbay has a lot of academies, were there different arrangements for each school in terms of a designated teacher for cared for children.
- The merit of including data on local authority area for children placed out of Torbay and if such placements had a positive or negative impact on the child.

- There were a lot of Year 11s being permanently excluded, what was the strategy to help keep Year 11 pupils in school so that they can continue to attend school and take their exams.
- How the family were supported as a whole, when sometimes the parents may also have suffered from trauma such as domestic violence.

The Board thanked Jane Inett and the Virtual School team for their hard work to support our cared for children and young people.

Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services and Rachael Williams, Divisional Director of Education, Learning and Skills, gave a presentation in response to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted Joint Area SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) Inspection in Torbay. This was an inspection of all partners involved in the delivery of SEND which identified a number of areas for improvement as well as recognising some good work already being undertaken. Members noted that the formal response (known as the written statement was due within 70 working days from 13 January 2022 and had to be accepted by the CQC and Ofsted in order for it to be taken forward) would be led by the SEND Strategic Partnership to ensure a collective and codesigned approach across all agencies. Nancy and Rachael responded to questions in respect of the following:

- The report was disappointing and highlighted the lack of clear ownership of the service as it was not clear who had overall responsibility and a need to ensure clear governance structures.
- The report did reflect that some areas were working well but that this was not consistent across all areas.
- Where do schools fit in with the inspection, especially as many of Torbay's schools were academies.
- The inspection had identified a weakness and lack of consistency of support across some of the schools in Torbay but this was not reflected in the Ofsted results of those schools, what was being done to address this and ensure a consist level of support.
- The challenges facing schools with increasing numbers of children with additional needs, some of whom have an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP).
- What support was available to help parents prior to formal assessment for additional needs such as the SENDIAS service which was run through the Torbay Community Development Trust and how this could be expanded wider.
- How you enable a fair and consistent approach to change and working with children and families with additional needs when each school and community was different.
- How the Council and partners were going to engage more positively with carers and parents to ensure they receive the support they need.
- How the number of children with SEND compares to other areas.

Councillor Law, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Rachael Williams outlined the submitted report on exclusions and home schooling and responded to the following questions:

- What action was being taken to take a more in-depth look at why children were being excluded, what was happening in schools around those children who were being permanently excluded.
- How the links between speech, language and trauma were impacting on exclusion and what was being done to look at early identification of issues and providing support at an earlier stage.
- The reasons behind why so many exclusions related to children with SEND.
- The reasons for the increase in number of parents home educating their children and what checks and balances there were to ensure the child was receiving appropriate education and to identify any potential safeguarding issues or risks.
- How GPs were involved in diagnosis of anxiety and finding the best ways to support children.
- How the managed move process worked and if the children and family were involved in the decision-making process.

Members noted the links across all three areas discussed under the theme of 'Education and Learning' especially around the impact on children and families with additional needs and the importance of ensuring consistent and early help was available to help prevent the need for formal intervention later in the child's journey.

Resolved (unanimously):

1. that officers be recommended to include details of the local authority area where children who are placed when they are placed outside of Torbay and provide information on whether this has a positive or negative impact on those children in future Virtual School Annual Reports;
2. that progress on the written statement in response to the CQC and Ofsted Joint Area SEND Inspection be brought back to the Board meeting on 28 March 2021 and the progress of the SEND Strategic Partnership Board; and the Director of Children's Services be requested to identify relevant partners from health and to represent the schools to be invited to attend the meeting;
3. that the SEND Board be requested to give consideration as part of the wider codesign of services to utilising the skills of the Imagine This Partnership;
4. that the Divisional Director of Education, Learning and Skills be requested to present the exclusion appeal data to the Board once it has been qualified in July 2022 and also to obtain the views of those children who have been excluded; and
5. that the report on Elected Home Education to be brought back to a future meeting of the Board once it has been through the Children's Continued Improvement Board.

36. Children's Improvement Plan Quarterly Update

Nancy Meehan, Director of Children's Services and Matt Fairclough-Kay, Divisional Director for Corporate Services provided an update on the implementation of the LiquidLogic software and the impact that it had on the ability to present quality assured data in respect of Children's Services and responded to questions in respect of the following:

- Why was the original configuration not correct and once the user acceptance testing failed, why was the roll out not stopped at that point.
- When would officers have confidence in the data and reporting from the software.
- What additional work was required to ensure that the data was accurate whilst the investigation work continued to be explored.
- What was the additional cost to the Council of the delay in the roll out and the consultants employed to find out where the errors in configuration were and what action was required to put it right.
- What was the training requirement for staff to ensure that there was good quality data and the software was used correctly.

Nancy Meehan provided an overview to the background of the Review of Leadership, Management and Governance and the Board noted the progress made as set out in the submitted update report and Nancy responded to the following questions:

- Was the Council still expecting the roll out of LiquidLogic to be completed by May 2022.
- How the audits worked and linked together.
- What sort of areas were being explored by the Sub-Groups, particularly around child exploitation.
- The CAMHS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) was the formal process what support was available, including through the voluntary sector, to help provide support before CAMHS was involved.
- Young people have identified the desire to have some after school sessions to talk about issues outside of school, how this could be explored further.

Chairman
