

# CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

(Committee Rooms 1 and 2, Port Talbot)

**Members Present:**

**16<sup>th</sup> July 2015**

**Chairman:** Councillor A.R.Lockyer

**Vice Chairman:** Councillor H.N.James

**Councillors:** R.G.Jones, J.D.Morgan, Mrs.S.Paddison,  
M.Protheroe, A.L.Thomas and Mrs.L.G.Williams

**Co-opted Non Voting  
Members:** A.Hughes

**Officers InAttendance** A.Evans, A.Jarrett, Mrs.A.Thomas, C.Millis,  
J.Hodges, M.Lazarus, D.Harding, Ms.H.Lewis and  
Ms.C.Gadd

**Cabinet Invitees:** Councillors P.A.Rees and P.D.Richards

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1. **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND  
EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 28TH MAY 2015**

Noted by the Committee.

2. **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND  
EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 18TH JUNE  
2015**

Noted by the Committee.

3. **SCRUTINY FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15**

The Committee were informed that the Forward Work Programme would be updated following the workshop that had been held with Members.

Noted by the Committee.

#### 4. **PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

##### Cabinet Board Proposals

#### 4.1 Performance Indicator Monitoring Report 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2014/15 - Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning

The Committee received the report and presentation on the actual performance achieved for 2014/15 financial year and the Complaints and Compliments for 2014/15 (i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015) for Education, Leisure and Lifelong Learning, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members noted that there had been a small drop in the number of pupils receiving a teacher assessment at end of key stage 2 and 3 in Welsh first language (EDU/006i and EDU/006ii) and queried the reasons for this, as there had been an increase in the school roll for the Welsh Medium Comprehensive in Neath Port Talbot. Officers informed them that the cohort of pupils may be slightly smaller than the previous cohort and this would not be directly related to the school roll. Members queried if Officers knew the number of pupils who choose not to move from a Welsh medium primary to a Welsh medium secondary school and the reasons why they did not. Officers informed them that the amount of pupils would be reported back to the Committee. The reasons for not transferring were not clear and would be investigated further.

With regards to exclusions from both primary and secondary schools (EDU/010a, EDU/008b and EDU/009b) the Committee requested a breakdown of the reasons for exclusions. Officers agreed to circulate this information to the Committee and outlined that the top reasons were violence towards adults and pupils and violent behaviour. It was highlighted that there were more pupils with complex needs. Members noted that a report on Support for Behaviour Management that included an update on the work that had been undertaken was due to be reported to the Committee and it was queried when it would be presented. Officers would find out this information.

Members highlighted that there had been a drop in performance in the average number of school days that permanently excluded pupils did not receive an offer of part time appropriate education provision during the academic year (EDU/009b). It was explained that it was mainly due to a clash in definitions between the indicator and the

Neath Port Talbot Home Tuition Policy and in most cases pupils were receiving support. It was also noted that there had been three extreme cases where it had been hard to find suitable tutors.

Members queried if the number of final statements of special educational needs affected the budget. It was confirmed that it had an implication for schools, which could have budgetary implications depending on the support that was required. It was highlighted that the approach was to try to ensure that pupils with additional needs remained involved in the mainstream classroom.

The Committee noted that there had been a re-classification of childcare/day centres (Local (FP) 1+) and it was queried if this had resulted in a reduction in the number of placements. Officers would investigate this query further and report back to Members.

Members noted that one stage 2 complaint had been partially upheld and asked what change of procedure had taken place to address this. Officers informed them that the Service had looked at the journey of a Statement of Special Educational Needs and ensured that it was a more fluid process. Clear guidance had also been given to schools in how to manage this process. It was highlighted that the section had received two written compliments during the year, which was pleasing.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

#### 4.2 Children and Young People Services – End of Year (2014-2015) Performance Report and Key Priority Indicator Information

The Committee received the report on the performance management information within Children's Services for the End of Year (April 2014-March 2015) and Monthly Key Priority Indicator information (May 2015), as detailed within the circulated report.

It was noted that as Children's Services had been removed from the Serious Concerns Protocol a report would be presented to Members at the next meeting to obtain their views on which are the Key Priority Indicators going forward.

Members noted that there had been lower performance this year in comparison with 2013/14 in regards to the percentage of children looked after with Personal Education Plans within 20 school days of entering care or joining a new school (SCC/024). It asked how the

Service was addressing this. Officers explained that there had been an improvement in performance over the year and the Education Co-ordinator for Looked After Children (LAC) now attends planning meetings, which had been beneficial and the quality of plans had improved. Previously the Service had not identified educational needs for LAC. Senior Officers had monitored this area and all LAC who had not had a Plan in place within timescales now had one.

Members highlighted that for some statutory timescales, such as the percentage of looked after children's reviews carried out within statutory timescales (SCC/021), improvements had been made but they were not reaching 100%. It was queried if 100% was achievable. Officers highlighted that the aim for the Service would always be 100% and the performance was monitored closely. However, it was noted that some timescales do slip and Members were reassured that it was checked that it was not the same staff missing the timescales, as this would result in disciplinary actions taking place and the reasons for the timescales being missed were looked at.

Members noted that there had been a big improvement in performance for Young Carers that were known to social services who were provided with a service (SCC/030) and asked what the story was behind the improvement. Officers informed them that it had previously been recorded incorrectly and this had been addressed. However, it was noted that not enough young carers are being identified.

In terms of school attendance for looked after pupils whilst in care (SCC/022), Members asked what support could be provided to Foster Carers to help improve performance in this area, especially for primary school attendance. Officers informed Members that support was given to Foster Carers and they would consider with Education colleagues how to address this further. Members also highlighted that the average external qualifications points score for 16 year old children (SCC/037) had dropped compared with the previous year. It was noted that the measures that had been put in place to improve educational attainment of LAC would come into effect and improve performance going forward. It was recognised that there were different cohorts of children with different number of children which would affect the figures.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

#### 4.3 Centralisation of Student Finance

The Committee received the report on the centralisation of student finance, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that the Council previously administered student finance in respect of Neath Port Talbot students pursuing Higher Education courses. With effect from 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015, Student Finance Wales was centralised. Members queried how and where it was being administered from since the changes came into effect and if it had a positive impact on the budget. Officers informed them that the responsibility of administering Student Finance Wales was delegated by Welsh Government to the Student Loans Company based in Glasgow. It was noted that there had not been a positive budget impact and money had been clawed back by Welsh Government.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

#### 5. ACCESS TO MEETINGS

**Resolved:** that pursuant to Section 100A(4) and (5) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded for the following items of business which involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 12 and 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A to the above Act.

#### 6. PRE-SCRUTINY

The Committee scrutinised the following matters:

##### Cabinet Board Proposals

##### 6.1 The Children's Home (Wales) Regulations 2002

The Committee received the report on the Children's Home (Wales) Regulations requirement for monthly visits to Hillside Secure Centre by a member of staff who was not directly concerned with the conduct of the Children's Home, as detailed within the circulated report.

Members were informed that Hillside was dealing with children and young people with complex needs and this does result in some incidents. It was noted that any complaints received had been dealt with satisfactorily. A restorative justice approach is taken, however,

at times there have to be restrictions and sanctions put in place. It was recognised that having cases with more complex needs puts extra pressure on staff and a review of the staff rota was being undertaken to facilitate increased time for clinical support and training, which would have a significant impact on the well-being of staff.

Members queried if there had been an increase in the number of placements in Hillside. Officers informed them that there had been positive engagement with the Youth Justice Board and the Service was being used more frequently and the demands on welfare placements had increased. Work had also been undertaken to further develop a complete wrap around service. It was highlighted that a refurbishment programme was underway and part of this was the development of a walled garden with horticultural area in Education.

The Committee was informed that the Service was in the process of developing an overarching Comprehensive Risk Management Strategy to improve risk management for both young people and staff. There had also been the introduction of a post incident reviewing process. Members highlighted that appropriate action needs to be taken in regards to any incidents that occur. Officers agreed that they would ensure robust systems were in place and would report back to the Committee.

Members asked if there were facilities for children and young people to teleconference or facetime with their families if they were placed far from home. It was confirmed that there was teleconferencing facilities there and they were looking at trying to utilise SKYPE.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

## 6.2 The Manager's Report on Hillside Secure Children's Home

The Committee received the Manager's Report on Hillside Secure Children's Home for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February 2015 to 28<sup>th</sup> May 2015, as detailed within the circulate report.

The key points from the report were highlighted to Members. It was queried if any young person from Wales had to be accommodated outside of Wales. It was confirmed that local demand had been met and the only reason a referral would not have come to Hillside would have been due the nature not being appropriate for the support available, for example, specific mental health issues.

Members highlighted that the time young people were spending in Hillside seemed to have reduced and this could be more disruptive and more can be achieved over a longer period. However, it was the decision of the courts how long young people stay. It was noted that the Service was piloting a trauma recovery pilot to assess the impact on those becoming involved in the criminal justice system. Officers would circulate information on this model to the Committee outside of the meeting.

Members recognised the qualifications being achieved despite the short length of stay of some young people. It was also highlighted that a Resettlement Officer had been appointed to improve the transition process of young people returning home.

It was noted that there had been a reduction in incidences of long term sickness of staff, however, there was still improvements to be made. The development of the new staff rota would assist with this.

It was recognised that it was positive that Hillside had been visited by two ex-residents who wanted to thank everyone who had supported them through their time there.

Following scrutiny, it was agreed that the report be noted.

**CHAIRMAN**

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