

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 3 March 2015 at 6.00pm in Meeting Rooms G3/G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford.

PRESENT: Councillors K R Guy (Chair), G M Green, J Loveridge, J Pinter, R G Scammell, C R Turley and Co-optees S Ali, S Rayner and Mel Ward.

ALSO PRESENT: Jo Banks, Associate Director Patient Safety at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust and Cllr P R Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families.

IN ATTENDANCE : F Bottrill, Scrutiny Group Specialist and D Moseley, Scrutiny Officer

CYPSC-17 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 14 November 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CYPSC-18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr A Atkinson (Co-optee) and Mr A Mason (Independent Chair of Telford and Wrekin Local Safeguarding Children's Board).

CYPSC-19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-20 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MULTI AGENCY WORKING AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Consideration of public consultation process and feedback received on the Terms of Reference

The Chair invited the Scrutiny Group Specialist to give an overview of the feedback received. She advised that 21 responses had been received in total and a number of issues raised had already been responded to following consultation with the Chair:-

- The Probation Service had been invited to attend the inquiry day on 13 March 2015 and representatives had been nominated to attend.
- Representatives from the Borough's further education colleges (Telford College of Arts and Technology and New College) had accepted an invitation to take part in the Inquiry Day and representatives from Madeley Academy and Ercall Wood Technology College had also agreed to attend. Representatives from Primary Schools, Independent Schools and Special Schools were still being sought.

- Contact had been made with Shropshire Council to inform the Head of Public Protection that the review was taking place and that the issue of taxi licensing would be included in the work undertaken by the Working Group
- The Chair would attend a meeting on 6 March 2015 with a voluntary organisation supporting victims of CSE. The Chair expressed the opinion that this could result in an opportunity to co-opt an expert in the field onto the Working Group, depending upon the individual's ability to commit their time, or at least receive some expert knowledge in evidence.

The Scrutiny Group Specialist highlighted that one of the main themes that came from the public feedback was that the survivors of CSE and their families wanted to help develop services that better met the needs of victims, survivors and their families.

Members were disappointed at the low number of responses received and queried who had been invited to respond. The Scrutiny Group Specialist outlined the consultation process and the local media coverage which had taken place, which included a number of radio interviews with the Chair and newspaper reports. The deadline to respond had also been extended in an effort to give more time for responses to be made. Despite the low response rate, this did not detract from the value of the responses received. The Chair hoped that the lack of response was a positive indicator that the public thought the terms of reference were thorough enough and required no further comment, rather than demonstrating a lack of engagement or confidence.

Finalising the Terms of Reference

The Chair asked Members to consider whether the scope of the review and Terms of Reference had been drawn broad enough to reflect the feedback or whether the Committee wished to further respond to issues regarding:

- Ongoing support for victims and their families
- How to engage with young people in a safe and unpressured environment (both young people in general and victims or young people at risk)
- How to engage with parents during the review (both in general and parents of children affected by CSE)
- Engagement with Primary Schools
- Role of councillors in tackling CSE. The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board had offered to give evidence on his experiences of Operation Chalice.
- Engagement with Landlords
- Engagement with voluntary organisations working with young people to seek the views of staff and volunteers and young members regarding awareness and the referral process.
- Engagement with other services for vulnerable people (eg Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (DARS), NACRO, TACT, Axis counselling)
- Whether to invite the chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee and LSCB Chair in Shropshire to the meeting which discusses Taxi Licensing in Shropshire

The Chair encouraged Members to read the recently published report of Louise Casey's Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. For the avoidance of doubt, he felt that Ms Casey clearly identified the significant role of Local Authorities in addressing CSE: "Tackling CSE effectively requires a council and its partners to mobilise their services and powers together. The Council has a duty to safeguard the victims. It also governs the landscape in which CSE is played out including many schools, care homes, parks, taxis and take away food shops. Councils have powers of licensing and regulation which can be used to disrupt illegal activity in these places and keep the community safe. *This is in addition to the duties and powers of the police*". [Chair's emphasis].

The Chair had noted a theme in some recently published reports which demonstrated a breakdown in communications between agencies, which was also a concern in the recent HMIC National Child Protection Inspection of West Mercia Police. The Chair asked Members to endeavour to read the HMIC National Child Protection Inspection report prior to the Inquiry Day on 13 March 2015.

Members considered each paragraph of the Terms of Reference alongside the feedback received and were satisfied that the feedback fitted into the broadly drawn Terms. Members also requested that the Oxford Serious Case Review and HMIC National Child Protection Inspection be added to the background documents.

Members were conscious of the borough election in May 2015 and, due to the importance of the Review, requested that reassurance be sought from all Group Leaders that the Review would be continued by the Committee (or any successor Committee) following the election.

Information to be requested from participants prior to the Inquiry Day

Members had previously informally raised a number of initial lines of inquiry which had been circulated to the participants. Members identified some further issues to explore during the course of the review as follows:-

- How the Police engage and share sufficient information with the Cabinet Member and Senior Officers with regard to current cases whilst maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Whether young people are successfully made aware of where to seek support and guidance, and, after disclosure, whether processes are adequately explained to them and their families.
- How the National Probation Service and local Community Rehabilitation Companies work together and with others to share information regarding Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Availability of training for Councillors and the role of Councillors in supporting affected community members.

Members were concerned to ensure that all participants at the Inquiry Day understood the role of Local Government Scrutiny. Some information had been provided to participants when the Chair initially wrote to organisational leads but it was agreed that explanatory information would be distributed to the participants in the Inquiry Day.

Members considered the draft agenda for the Inquiry Day on 13 March 2015 and were satisfied that, within the time available, sufficient organisations had been included. In later stages of the review, the Committee would seek to meet with Shropshire Council's Head of Public Protection, the voluntary sector, Councillors, front line staff in various agencies, and a cross-section of young people. It was agreed that it was important that the scope of the Review remained manageable.

Jo Banks, Associate Director Patient Safety at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust was in attendance at the meeting and made a commitment that the Hospital would take part and engage in the review. She reflected on the Trust's experience of CQC Inspection, noting the outstanding rating received for safeguarding, and drawing on this experience, she supported the Committee's commitment to challenge information received by Managers by also seeking to engage with frontline staff.

CYPSC-21 CHAIR'S UPDATE

There were no other relevant issues upon which to update the Committee.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....