

Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel

25 July 2019

Commenced: 6.00pm

Terminated: 7.20pm

Present: Councillors S Homer (Deputy Chair), Boyle, Cooper, Martin, Mills, Patrick, Welsh, Wild.

Apologies for absence: Councillors T Smith (Chair), Affleck, Drennan, Gosling, Jackson, Owen.

8. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel held on 13 June 2019 were approved as a correct record.

9. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT

The Panel welcomed Councillor Bill Fairfoull, Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families); and Richard Hancock, Director of Children's Services, to provide an update on outcomes from the Ofsted inspection of Tameside Children's Services.

It was reported that the Ofsted re-inspection of Tameside Children's Services concluded on 24 May 2019. This was an unannounced 3 week inspection programme, with the final two weeks spent on site and inspectors located with social work teams and reviewing frontline practice and case files. The final judgement of 'Requires Improvement to be Good' was received across all four categories, which represents an improved position when compared to the 'Inadequate' judgement received in 2016.

Councillor Fairfoull informed members that this is an extremely positive step in the long-term improvement journey of Children's Services, with the aspiration for services to be good or better. Having improved the pace and effectiveness of service development, services are now in a position to ensure Ofsted feedback directly informs improvement priorities and monitoring going forward.

In summary, greater impact has been achieved more recently with a strengthened whole-council commitment to improve outcomes for children and young people. This is accompanied by a position of improved awareness and understanding to how well services are working. The Panel heard that self-assessments have proved incredibly useful when reviewing the standard of case work and the impact that an increasingly stable workforce is having on quality.

The presentation detailed Ofsted findings with regards to achievements and areas in need of further improvement. Mr Hancock touched upon the way a new multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) is ensuring that referrals with a safeguarding concern are dealt with quickly and appropriately. Challenges remain in achieving timely permanence for children in care, with a need to deliver more appropriate options and practice methods.

The next full inspection will take place within 3 years, with a number of focused visits to be scheduled and annual Ofsted conversations to continue. The Children's Improvement Board will meet on a bi-monthly basis with a newly appointed independent chair.

The Panel asked that with a reduction in the frequency of Ofsted monitoring what plans are in place to ensure that internal arrangements will be effective enough to continue delivering the

required level of service improvements.

Mr Hancock advised members that next steps are to update self-assessments and to ensure improvement plans are reviewed and updated in light of inspection findings. The service has taken learning from Ofsted feedback and it is now important to create a clear plan for the coming years to ensure the correct governance and oversight measures are in place.

The Chair advised members that since 2016 the Scrutiny Panel has continued to work closely with Children's Services to monitor outcomes for children and to remain informed of key challenges. This will continue with a need to ensure regular contact is maintained.

Resolved: That Councillor Fairfoull and Mr Hancock be thanked for attending the meeting.

10. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF FOSTER CARERS

The Panel welcomed Councillor Bill Fairfoull, Deputy Executive Leader (Children and Families); and Richard Hancock, Director of Children's Services, to provide an overview of the recruitment and retention of foster carers in Tameside, to inform future activity.

Members received an overview presentation of fostering services in Tameside. This included a snapshot of current carers, the number of children receiving care and placements. The national picture shows there is a shortage of high quality foster carers and the local picture reflects this scenario. It is estimated that Tameside require 20 to 30 new foster carers and methods of recruitment can become challenging when taking account of the ways to attract and retain carers in a competitive market.

Resolved: That Councillor Fairfoull and Mr Hancock be thanked for attending the meeting.

11. CHAIR'S UPDATE

Having been agreed at the previous meeting held on 13 June, the Panel will progress activity to review the recruitment and retention of foster carers in Tameside. The Chair invited panel members to express an interest in establishing the new working group. The following members agreed to join the group.

- Cllr T Smith
- Cllr S Homer
- Cllr Martin
- Cllr Mills
- Cllr Owen
- Cllr Welsh

The Chair informed members that all relevant activity of the Council's Scrutiny Panels is routinely reported to the Council's Overview Panel, with a number of items to be presented at the next meeting on 29 July 2019. A section on this is to be included within the next monthly update email sent to all scrutiny members.

Resolved: Details of future working group meetings for the review to be circulated to members by email and as a calendar invitation.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

To note that the next meeting of the Integrated Care and Wellbeing Scrutiny Panel will take place on Thursday 12 September 2019.

13. URGENT ITEMS

The Chair reported that there were no urgent items for consideration at this meeting.

CHAIR