

## KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

---

### **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH CABINET COMMITTEE**

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children's Social Care and Health Cabinet Committee held in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 23 March 2017.

PRESENT: Mrs J Whittle (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, MBE (Vice-Chairman), Mr H Birkby, Mrs P Brivio, Mrs P T Cole, Mrs V J Dagger, Mr D S Daley (Substitute for Mr M J Vye), Mrs M Elenor, Mr G Lymer, Mr M J Northey, Mr C P Smith and Mrs Z Wiltshire

ALSO PRESENT: Mr G K Gibbens and Mr P J Oakford

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr A Ireland (Corporate Director Social Care, Health and Wellbeing), Mr A Scott-Clark (Director of Public Health), Mr P Segurola (Director of Specialist Children's Services) and Miss T A Grayell (Democratic Services Officer)

#### **UNRESTRICTED ITEMS**

##### **202. Apologies and Substitutes**

*(Item A2)*

1. Apologies for absence had been received from Mr M J Vye. Mr D S Daley was present as a substitute for Mr Vye.
2. The Chairman advised the committee that Mr Ireland and Mr Segurola were attending interviews with visiting Ofsted inspectors and so would be delayed in joining the meeting, and that the Cabinet Member, Mr Oakford, was serving on an interview panel and would attend only briefly to give a verbal update.

##### **203. Declarations of Interest by Members in items on the Agenda**

*(Item A3)*

There were no declarations of interest.

##### **204. Minutes of the meetings held on 11 January 2017 and 16 January 2017**

*(Item A4)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meetings held on 11 January 2017 and 16 January 2017 are correctly recorded and they both be signed by the Chairman. There were no matters arising from either set of minutes.

##### **205. Minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 20 January 2017**

*(Item A5)*

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 20 January 2017 be noted.

## **206. Verbal updates by Cabinet Members and Directors** *(Item A6)*

### **Children and Young People's Public Health**

1. The Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health, Mr G K Gibbens, gave a verbal update on the following issues:-

**6 February – visit from Duncan Selbie, Chief Executive of Public Health England.** Mr Selbie had been very complimentary about the County Council's work in public health since it took over responsibility for it in April 2013, especially on addressing health inequalities, and acknowledged the ongoing challenge faced by Kent and many other local authorities across the country in tackling this issue.

**9 March – attended Local Government Association Public Health Conference in London.** At this event, the Minister had focussed on the Childhood Obesity Plan and the prevalence of obesity among Year R children. There was much integrated working between professionals to address these issues. Local Authorities would be judged by the way in which they managed public health issues, since taking responsibility for them in April 2013.

2. The Director of Public Health, Mr A Scott-Clark, then gave a verbal update on the following issues:-

**Public Health ring-fenced budget extension** - at the Local Government Association Public Health Conference in London, it had been announced that the ring-fencing of local authorities' public health funding would continue until 2019. Thereafter, it would form part of an authority's care budget.

**Public Health Mandate for 0-5 Healthy Child Programme extension** – the timeframe within which local authorities had to implement this mandate had been extended by 18 months, which was helpful in terms of work management as there was much work to do.

**NHS Maternity Transformation Event 'Implementing Better Births'** – Mr Scott-Clark had recently attended a meeting with NHS England which had discussed work to reduce the number of still-births by 2030. This work would be helped by the closer working between public health and maternity services.

In response to a question about what the County Council could do to press for maternity services to stay at Maidstone Hospital, rather than move to Tunbridge Wells, Mr Scott-Clark advised that the County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) would need to discuss any such major change as a 'substantial variation of service', but said he was not expecting there to be such a change. Another speaker, who served on the HOSC, advised that it was proposed that only the day unit should move from Maidstone to Tunbridge Wells; there would be no change to Maidstone's pre-natal or post-natal clinics or the birthing unit. This smaller change was a clinical decision and would not therefore need to be discussed by the HOSC.

In response to a question about heavily-sugared drinks, Mr Gibbens advised that the LGA had done a lot of work on the sugar tax and that this issue would gain prominence in the political agenda in the future.

## Children's Social Care

3. The Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services, Mr P J Oakford, gave a verbal update on the following issues:-

**Interviews for Strategic Commissioner post** – these were going on today and he was on the interview panel, but had arranged a break to allow him to attend the CSCH meeting. *NOTE: The panel subsequently appointed Vincent Godfrey.*

**Ofsted inspection** – Ofsted inspectors had been in Kent for three weeks and had undertaken many interviews with staff, service directors and Members. In his interview he had raised the issue of the high number of children placed within Kent by other local authorities (OLAs). Two Kent MPs were currently on board and he was aiming to meet with all Kent MPs about this issue. There were currently 1,316 children placed in Kent by OLAs, while Kent's own care population was 1,400.

**Annual Foster Carers awards evening** - he had recently attended this excellent event, at which one Kent couple had been rewarded for 35 years of fostering, during which time they had cared for 55 children and young people.

**Kent Fostering Association** had recently held a Family Fun day for foster families, including both birth and fostered children. This event had taken over a bowling alley for the day and had been attended by 144 people.

**UASC** – there were now only 500 UASC under 18 in Kent, half the number there had been at the peak in 2015. A large number were reaching 18 and attaining care leaver status; there were currently 750 but this was expected to rise to 1,000 by mid-2017. This cohort brought a number of challenges, including accommodation, provision of English as a Second Language (ESOL) courses, etc. The **Leaving Care** service had recently been restructured and the number of personal advisors increased. He reassured Members that both citizen children and UASC now had access to the same services as care leavers. The **National Transfer Scheme (NTS)**, which Kent lobbied the Government for, was introduced as a voluntary scheme in July 2016 and has moved 300 UASC from Kent to other local authorities around the UK. These receiving authorities would take over full responsibility of caring for the UASC sent to them under the scheme. The **Millbank** reception centre now housed only 11 young people who were waiting to be moved under the NTS, and in the last week there had been only 23 **new arrivals** in the county.

The Chairman thanked Mr Oakford for his commitment and passion as Cabinet Member in pursuing the issues faced by children and young people in care and leaving care, for the active role he had taken in lobbying the Government to address the burden placed upon Kent by UASC and excessive OLA placements and for the time and energy he had given to travelling around the county to meet and talk to frontline staff.

4. The Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, Mr A Ireland, then gave a verbal update on the following issues:-

**Ofsted inspection** – to what Mr Oakford had said, Mr Ireland added that the Ofsted inspection would conclude on 30 March, after which a draft report would then be prepared. A draft report and letter would be sent to the County Council, but not until after the May election, to allow the Council an opportunity to comment on any factual inaccuracies, and then the final report would be published towards the end of May.

**Education Select Committee – fostering inquiry.** This had taken place two weeks ago, had been well chaired and a very useful session, to which Kent had been able to make a good contribution.

**Social Work Bill** – the County Council had made contributions to the consultation stage of this, after which, clauses 32–39, which had caused much controversy, had been removed. It had had its third reading on 7 March and would then go on to the Commons amendment stage and then to the House of Lords, hopefully with a straightforward passage.

5. RESOLVED that the verbal updates be noted.

**207. 16/00133 - Proposed Revision of Rates Payable and Charges Levied for Children's Services in 2017-18**

*(Item B1)*

*Miss M Goldsmith., Finance Business Partner, was in attendance for this item.*

1. Miss Goldsmith introduced the report and Mr Segurola responded to a question about the cost of services provided to children in care placed by other local authorities within Kent. These costs were not extensive, relating only to in-house respite residential beds, but were recouped by the County Council.

2. RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services, to:

a) approve the proposed changes to rates payable and charges levied for Children's Services in 2017-18, as detailed below:

i. The increase to:

All Placements under 2	£148.62
All Placements 2-4	£152.92
All Placements 5-8	£170.15
All Placements 9-10	£170.15
All Placements 11-15	£192.77
All Placements 16-17	£227.23
All Placements 18+	£227.23

ii. The Foster Care Reward element to increase to:

Non related placements 0-8 yrs -	£110.29
Non related placements 9-18 yrs -	£209.49

iii. The Foster Care Skills based payment increase to:

Level 2 -	£20.43
Level 3 -	£51.05

iv. The Single placement supplement increase to:

Age 0-8 yr -	£220.58
Age 9-18 yrs -	£418.98

v. To increase the Therapeutic Fostering Supplement to:£646.21

vi For Local Authority Charges for Children Services

vii Assessment hourly rate to increase to £70.27 per hour

viii Administration Fee increase to £10.46

b) note the rates which are dictated by external agencies, i.e. Inter-agency charges and Essential Living Allowance;

c) confirm that the charge for other local authorities for use of in-house respite residential beds is to be calculated on the basis of full cost recovery; and

d) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to implement the decision,

be endorsed.

**208. 17/00023 - Future Commissioning Arrangements for External Fostering Placements**  
*(Item B2)*

*Ms K Sharp, as Head of Children's Commissioning, and Ms M L Hall, Commissioning Manager, were in attendance for this item.*

1. Ms Sharp introduced the report and explained that the County Council needed to commission a small number of external foster placements to supplement its in-house fostering service. Ms Hall added that the renewal deadline for the current commissioning arrangements of September 2017 had brought an opportunity to review the effectiveness of the current arrangements and assess how these could be simplified in the future. With Mr Ireland and Mr Segurola, they responded to comments and questions from Members, as follows:-

- a) 83% of the market had reported that very little of their custom came from the County Council; most came from children placed by other local authorities, and competing with this, and the rates paid by other local authorities, many of them from London, would be a challenge;
- b) the type of placement sought was changing, and increasing demand for wraparound care would decrease the use of external fostering placements. The County Council needed to be able to offer choice and range of placement, and this range was as important as the quantity of the placements available;
- c) it was envisaged that the amount of custom given to external providers would diminish over the life of the new commissioning arrangement, but working with a smaller section of the external market would give better value for money. External providers could be recruited to work exclusively with the County Council and guaranteed a volume of trade;
- d) in response to a question about the extent of spot-purchasing over the last financial year, Ms Hall undertook to provide this information outside the meeting;

- e) in response to a question about the extent of competitive tendering which was possible within the market, Mr Ireland explained that the market was limited to a finite number of accredited and approved foster carers, and the County Council had to compete with independent fostering agencies (IFAs) to engage them. The extent to which foster carers could be matched was limited by the number of foster carers available at the time, and would need to take account of the needs of the child and the foster family; and
  - f) in response to a question about the possibility of reducing costs by not using an agency but employing external foster carers directly, Mr Segurola added that, to be able to accommodate all the children in care it was asked to place, the County Council had necessarily to work with external providers. It was vital that it could be confident that external providers were of good quality.
2. RESOLVED that the decision proposed to be taken by the Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services, to:
- a) approve the approach to the future commissioning of external fostering placements for children and young people aged 0–18 years; and
  - b) delegate authority to the Corporate Director of Social Care, Health and Wellbeing, or other nominated officer, to undertake the necessary actions to award the contract and implement the decision,

be endorsed.

**209. Draft Specialist Children's Services Divisional Business Plan 2017/18**  
*(Item C1)*

*Mr M Thomas-Sam, Head of Strategy and Business Support, and Dr J Maiden-Brooks, Policy Advisor, were in attendance for this item.*

1. Mr Thomas-Sam introduced the report and explained that Business Plans for the coming year had been prepared using the new Directorate names which would come into being in April 2017. Dr Maiden-Brooks added that the Business Plan included a new section on operating environment and a simplified list of services. As part of earlier consultation, the Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services had asked that safeguarding be listed as the first priority in Section C of the Plan, and this change would be made. The Cabinet Committee was now being consulted on the Plan content, and any changes requested would be made before the final Plan was approved by the Corporate Director and Cabinet Member. Mr Ireland and Mr Segurola then responded to comments and questions from Members, as follows:-

- a) to the amendment requested by the Cabinet Member and any comment made by the Cabinet Committee, any comment or recommendation made by Ofsted, following the current inspection, would need to be included in the final Plan;

- b) in response to a question about the target listed for performance indicator SCS03 in Section J of the Plan, Mr Segurola undertook to check the figures and advise Members outside the meeting of the correct target;
- c) in response to a concern about recruitment and retention of qualified social work staff (priority 4 in Section B), Mr Segurola reassured Members that the posts not filled by permanent social workers were filled by temporary, agency social workers. No frontline social work posts were filled by unqualified staff; a social worker must be fully qualified to undertake regulatory work;
- d) in response to a concern about the expense of employing agency staff, balanced with the short-term nature of their employment, Mr Segurola added that employing temporary agency staff offered flexibility at a time of change. It was always the hope that some staff recruited via agencies may wish to join the County Council as permanent staff, and the tax incentive attached to agency working was soon to be discontinued. The usual pattern of recruitment was that a quantity of newly-qualified social workers would join the County Council each summer;
- e) regarding development of the corporate parenting agenda (priority 3 in Section B), Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel had never been as well informed as they currently were, but many other County Council Members clearly did not understand the corporate parent role they all shared as elected Members. A challenge for the forthcoming election was to boost corporate parenting training to help new Members to better understand this role, and attendance at such training should be compulsory for all Members. Mr Ireland commented that many Members retiring in May had long-term experience of the corporate parent role, and building the understanding of remaining and new Members would be a challenge for the period following the election. The presence of this target in the Business Plan was welcomed and would raise the profile of the need for increased training;
- f) in response to a question about missing children, how many of these were UASC and how the risks around this group were managed, Mr Segurola advised that there were currently no citizen children missing but several UASC. It was known from past patterns that some UASC tended to go missing early, soon after arriving in the county, as they used Kent as a stopping-off point *en route* elsewhere. The County Council retained its duty of care to these UASC and monitored numbers of those going missing. Every UASC arriving in Kent would be risk-assessed, to try to predict their risk of being trafficked and of going missing. It was suggested that a report on missing children be made to a future meeting of the Cabinet Committee, to set out figures and patterns, what was and could be done and the process for handling periods of absence, eg return interviews. Although any figure quoted would only ever be a snapshot of a moment in time, any repeated absence was a concern to be addressed. Some young people reported missing had simply returned home late, but their foster carer was obliged to report them as 'missing', while other young people went missing for longer periods, or did so repeatedly; and

- g) the inclusion in the Business Plan of aspects recommended by the former Corporate Parenting Select Committee was welcomed, and officers were thanked for their work in developing the new Plan.
2. RESOLVED that the draft Directorate Business Plan 2017/18 for the Specialist Children's Services Division be welcomed, and the comments made by Members, set out above, be noted, prior to the final version being approved by the Corporate Director and the Cabinet Member.

## **210. Financial Element of the Updated Care Leaver Policy** *(Item C2)*

1. Mr Segurola introduced the report and outlined the changes made to the policy. These changes included, under 'Staying Put', giving young people in care the same opportunities to stay with a foster family as a family's birth children would have, to cover the end of their compulsory full-time education at 18. Kent was ahead of many other local authorities in the UK as it had published its core offer to its care leavers before being obliged to do so. The document had been prepared to be clear and user-friendly for young readers.
2. The clear and comprehensive content of the policy was welcomed, and a comment made that the document, with training on the corporate parent role discussed under the previous item, be shared with all newly-elected Members after the May election. In response to a question about the wording of part 17 of the Policy – 'Ending the Staying Put Arrangement' – which seemed incomplete, Mr Segurola undertook to check and advise Members outside the meeting of the full wording.
3. RESOLVED that the proposed guidance documents, the proposed changes and the publishing of the attached policy and guidance documents be welcomed and endorsed, subject to the clarification of the full wording of part 17.

## **211. Risk Management** *(Item D1)*

*Mr A Mort, Customer Care and Operations Manager, was in attendance for this item.*

1. Mr Mort introduced the report and explained that the risk register would be adapted to reflect the new Directorate structure. He and Mr Ireland responded to comments and questions from Members, as follows:-
  - a) in response to a question about the pattern of risk over recent years, Mr Ireland explained that, over the whole of the former Social Care, Health and Wellbeing Directorate, some risks had been increased to cover growing pressures, eg adult safeguarding;
  - b) for issues such as UASC, the level of risk would need to take into account the much reduced numbers of new arrivals but the increase in the number of UASC reaching 18 and attaining care leaver status, with the related costs and new responsibilities which this brought for the County Council. Although the National Transfer Scheme was working well, it would only apply to and address the needs of new arrivals; it would not help Kent's



residue UASC population, and those reaching 18. Government funding, given to cover the costs of receiving and caring for UASC, would not cover the time and commitment invested in supporting them, finding them education placements, safeguarding and supporting them, etc; and

- c) the County Council would continue to cope with the significant impact of UASC and placements by other local authorities and had to manage these responsibilities.

2. RESOLVED that risks presented in the Directorate Risk Register be noted.

## **212. Specialist Children's Services Performance Scorecard**

*(Item D2)*

1. Mr Segurola introduced the scorecard and explained the reasons behind the one area of performance rated red, the percentage of returner interviews completed within three days of a missing child's return. Sometimes it proved difficult to meet a child and complete an interview until four days after their return. He reassured Members that, despite these difficulties, every missing child would be interviewed about their reasons for going missing.

2. RESOLVED that the performance scorecard be noted.

## **213. Public Health Performance - Children and Young People**

*(Item D3)*

*Ms K Sharp, as Head of Public Health Commissioning, was in attendance for this item.*

1. Ms Sharp introduced the report and highlighted that progress across the range of performance indicators had been mixed. Work to address the number of women smoking during pregnancy had necessarily had to become more creative, to tackle this difficult and complex area. A campaign called "What the Bump?" was currently running on Sheppey, with leaflets being circulated in locations such as nail bars. Research had shown that, if a pregnancy were unplanned, women may take longer to adjust their habits to accommodate the pregnancy. Midwives and maternity services would shortly have a greater role to play in advising women during pregnancy, and the positive influence of this would hopefully be seen in future figures. Ms Sharp and Mr Scott-Clark responded to comments and questions from Members, as follows:-

- a) in response to a question about how the UK compared to other countries in terms of breastfeeding rates, and what could be done to improve the UK's rates, Mr Scott-Clark advised that there were two stages to the campaign to increase breastfeeding rates; initiation and continuation. Work on these could be helped by closer working between public health and the NHS, and public health would urge more involvement by maternity services. In some European countries, eg Russia, to breastfeed was the norm;
- b) a factor in mothers' views on breastfeeding was the speed at which new mothers were sent home from hospital after giving birth. Years ago, a hospital stay of several days would allow a mother to rest and recover from

the birth, while encouragement and support were on hand to attempt and persevere with breastfeeding. Many mothers gave up trying to breastfeed simply due to exhaustion and lack of sleep. In addition, many women had to return to work as soon as possible after the birth and did not have the family support network that would once have been common. All these were factors in a decision not to start, or not to persevere with, breastfeeding;

- c) in response to a query about smoking rates in Kent and nationally, and what could be done to address these, Ms Sharp explained that work to address this, and to increased engagement with expectant mothers, was ongoing. In a survey in Sheppey, 133 out of 510 expectant mothers had continued to smoke through their pregnancy. Two local schools had offered to run campaigns to address this issue, using material supplied to them by the County Council's public health team, and local Members were also able to take part in promoting public health messages in their local communities. Mr Scott-Clark added that NHS England had given £3m to CCGs in Thanet, Swale and South Kent Coastal to target smoking during pregnancy. This could help to extend CO2 monitoring of expectant mothers, as this was not currently available universally. The effectiveness of the 'stop smoking' message would depend in part on who was delivering it to mothers;
- d) in response to a question about childhood obesity pilot projects in Dover schools, Mr Scott-Clark undertook to put the speaker in touch with the colleague working on the projects;
- e) in response to a comment about the number of home visits completed within 14 days of birth, on which performance was mixed but for which figures did not seem low, Mr Scott-Clark advised that approximately 17,500 such visits were undertaken in Kent each year. This presented a huge workload for Health Visitors, who needed to identify the needs of every family visited; and
- f) the Cabinet Member, Mr Gibbens, referred to the number of children being assessed as having excess weight in Year R and commented that, as those children were only just starting their school career, the excess weight had not been gained as a result of the school's regime. The committee then discussed the value of establishing a policy to encourage all school children to run one mile a day, and the benefit to their physical fitness of those who were able to walk to school. Some Members said that schools in their local area already had a policy of running one mile a day. Mr Scott-Clark advised that, although there was much evidence of the value of daily physical activity for children, and the proven value of school sports clubs, the County Council could not impose a policy of any particular daily activity. The Council could instead foster an environment of encouraging physical activity, and raise awareness of its value, and could support any school which wanted to establish such a policy or try a project.

2. RESOLVED that the current performance and actions of public health-commissioned services, and the information set out in response to comments and questions, be noted.

## **214. Work Programme 2017**

*(Item D4)*

RESOLVED that, with the addition of a report on missing children to a future meeting, the Cabinet Committee's work programme for 2017 be noted.

## **215. Vote of Thanks**

1. The Chairman ended the meeting by thanking committee Members for their interest in the items reported and the quality of debate and depth of questioning which the Committee had achieved at its meetings.

2. She then thanked Mr Ireland, Mr Scott-Clark, Mr Segurola, report authors and presenters for the quality and clarity of the information presented in reports and given in response to Members' questions, and the Democratic Services Officer, Miss Grayell, for her support and advice on the smooth running of the Committee's meetings.