

Wiltshire Council

Children's Select Committee

28 January 2014

Task Group update

Purpose

1. To provide an update on recent task group activity and propose any decisions requiring Committee approval.

Task Group update

1. Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group

Membership:

Jon Hubbard (Chairman)
Ken Brough
Andrew Davis
Alice Kemp
Bill Moss
Bridget Wayman

Terms of reference:

- a) To monitor the implementation of any recommendations made by the Safeguarding Children and Young People Task Group that are endorsed by the Children's Select Committee and accepted by the executive.
- b) To scrutinise Wiltshire Council's delivery of improvements to safeguarding children and young people as set out in the Safeguarding and Adoptions Improvement Plan.
- c) To receive a twice-annual report from the Council's Lead Member for Safeguarding Children and Young People providing details of their safeguarding activity.
- d) To continue/conduct ongoing scrutiny of services for Looked After Children (LAC).
- e) To work in collaboration with the Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel to clarify future joint-working arrangements.

Recent activity:

The Task Group met on 6 December 2013 and discussed the following:

Safeguarding Improvement milestones

- The average social care practice audit score had improved but the percentage of audits achieving the desired category had reduced slightly, thereby missing the improvement target.
- A low number of audits were completed June-September, but this had now increased. The task group will undertake a 'deep-dive' look at the auditing process.
- A low percentage of social worker appraisals is shown on SAP. This may be because the figure includes all agency workers in the total, who are not formally appraised. SAP is capable of measuring this better but we are not using its full capabilities.
- During the most recent Ofsted inspection, no cases (of 120) were identified by inspectors where children and young people were left at unnecessary risk of harm.

Key Indicators

- The number of children going through the child protection system is still higher than we would like.
- Wiltshire is now below the national average for adoption timescales and have reached our annual target of 30 adoptions.

Children in Care – Placement Permanency

- The Task Group received a report on current placement permanency figures and the reasons behind these. 7 of the 17 children who's placement had been disrupted had actually moved on because they had been adopted. Therefore, although the percentage appeared poor it actually reflected progress.
- In the last year the Council has secured 21 special guardianship orders and 4 children on residency orders – this has not been achieved before.

Multi Agency Forums (MAFs)

- Multi Agency Forums are local forums where frontline practitioners share issues, information and expertise to help address the difficulties of individual local children, young people and families. Members received a report that RAG-rated MAFs across the county in terms of their sustainability and operation. Members were concerned at the impact of the MAFs losing admin support due to funding for Extended Coordinators being removed and the number of MAFs RAG-rated 'red'. A report will be received on this at a future meeting.

Implementing the Task Group's recommendations

- Recommendation 8: "Wiltshire Council should create a new, permanent 'Safeguarding Peer Liaison' post to give professionals around Wiltshire advice and guidance on the appropriate courses of action and tiers of services for potential child in need or child protection cases."

The Cabinet Member advised that she would not be accepting this recommendation. However, the Corporate Director will be applying for funding from Central Government for a MASH coordinator post.

- Recommendation 35: "The Council to establish a Safeguarding Children and Young People Panel."

Draft terms of reference for the Panel were circulated. It was agreed that the Task Group would consider these in more detail at its February meeting, prior to the Panel's first meeting in March.

Task Group operation

- The Task Group has now adopted the following meeting schedule:

4 x data-focused meetings per year, looking at performance indicators. The Corporate Parenting Panel will no longer consider these data sets in detail (to avoid duplication) but will be invited to attend the Task Group's meetings.

2 to 4 'deep-dive' meetings per year, each looking at a specific topic in detail. The first will look at the social care auditing process.

2. Further Education in the Salisbury Area Task Group

Membership:

Mike Thompson (Chairman)
Richard Britton
Mary Douglas
Jon Hubbard
Jacqui Lay
Bill Moss

Terms of reference:

- a) To identify the number of young people from the Salisbury area who travel out-of-county and for long distances to access post-16 educational provision.
- b) To identify why those young people travelling long distances to access provision do so, the quality of life and employment implications, and the financial and environmental impact.

- c) To seek young people's perception of the post-16 education provision available in the Salisbury area, both in- and out-of-county.
- d) If a gap is identified in the provision of post-16 education in Salisbury area, to make constructive, workable recommendations as to how that gap might be filled.

Recent activity:

The Task Group's 18-month review of progress with its recommendations took place on 14 November and is reported elsewhere in this agenda.

3. Further Education Task Group

Membership:

Kaylum House
Jon Hubbard
George Jeans
Gordon King
Jacqui Lay
Mike Thompson

Terms of reference:

To review the quality, range and equity of access to further education in Wiltshire.

Recent activity:

On 9 January the Chairman and Vice-Chairman met with officers and the Portfolio Holder for Schools to discuss how this task group can add value.

The Task Group's first meeting is scheduled for 21 January and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

4. SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Task Group

Membership:

Alice Kemp
Ken Brough
Mary Champion
Sue Evans
Simon Jacobs
Trevor Carbin
John Walsh

Terms of reference:

To explore how we can best prepare young people with SEND for Adulthood, including:

- local education and training options, including managing transitions
- planning for employment and supporting local employers to employ young people with SEND
- providing housing options to support young people with SEND to live in their communities
- developing communities that are inclusive, welcoming and supportive of young people with SEND.

Recent activity:

On 26 November the Chairman and Rev Alice Kemp met with the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and the Associate Director for Quality Assurance, Commissioning, Performance, Schools and Early Years to discuss where this task group could add most value.

The Task Group's first meeting is scheduled for 23 January and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

5. Schools and the Local Authority Task Group

Members:

Phillip Whalley
Sheila Parker
Horace Prickett
John Hawkins
Jon Hubbard

Terms of reference:

- a) To explore how the Council promotes excellence and fulfil its statutory duties to children and young people in Wiltshire's schools.
- b) To explore whether the services offered by the Council meet the needs of schools and students, and if not, how they could be developed to help improve outcomes.

Recent activity:

On 1 October the Committee asked Cllr Whalley and other interested members to undertake an informal scoping exercise to investigate where the Committee could add value in terms of the Council's work with academy schools and report back. On 26 November Cllr Whalley, the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Associate Director for Quality Assurance, Commissioning, Performance, Schools and Early Years met to discuss this. The terms of reference above were agreed and endorsed at Committee on 3 December.

The Task Group's first meeting is scheduled for 23 January and a verbal update will be provided at the meeting.

Proposal

2. To note the update on task group activity provided.

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