

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Monday, 15 December 2014 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors John Paschoud (Chair), Brenda Dacres (Vice-Chair), Chris Barnham, David Britton, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Jacq Paschoud, Joan Reid, Luke Sorba, Alan Till, Sharon Archibald (Parent Governor Representative), Lisa Palin (Parent Governor Representative) and Monsignor Nicholas Rothon (Church Representative)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Hilary Moore and Mark Saunders

ALSO PRESENT: John Green (Strategic Leader, School Improvement Team), Andrew Hagger (Scrutiny Manager), Keith Martin (Service Manager, Children with Complex Needs), Councillor Paul Maslin (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Frankie Sulke (Executive Director for Children and Young People) and Warwick Tomsett (Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2014

Resolved:

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 12 November 2014.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr Jacq Paschoud declared interests as a trustee of Brent Knoll Trust, as a non-appointed governor at Watergate School and as Chair of the Lewisham Parent Carers Forum.

Lisa Palin declared an interest as she has a son with learning disabilities who took part in the EHC pilot.

3. Children with complex needs update

Warwick Tomsett (Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning) and Keith Martin (Manager, Children with Complex Need) introduced the report, highlighting the following key points:

- This is the first update since the change in law came into effect in September 2014.
- Officers are now implementing Education, Health and Care plans (EHC), including the EHC local offer, personal budgets and the Early Years work stream.
- The timetable for converting from statement of special educational need (SEN) to EHC includes the restructure of the team carrying this out.
- The EHC plan gives context for a child's life and allows the child to talk about their likes and aspirations as part of it, which is a big cultural shift from the statement of SEN.

In response to questions from the Committee, Frankie Sulke (Executive Director for Children & Young People) Warwick Tomsett and Keith Martin provided the following information:

- The majority of referrals for EHC will come from schools, although other agencies will also refer. The local authority will then need to complete the assessment.
- There are likely to be some ongoing gaps and anomalies in the figures for the 19-25 age range, especially as this is where the 3 year period of further education is covered. A young person is entitled to further education support for a 3 year period under their EHC. Once this period has finished their plan will follow them, although it will no longer cover further education support.
- The eligibility criteria for EHC are set by the national code of practice, although there is no standard model for the way that decisions around EHCs can be taken. Lewisham has adopted a multi-agency panel approach for its decision making panel.
- The size of team working on conversions from statements of SEN to EHC plans will decrease as the conversions are carried out and less need to be done.
- An individual child that has more complex needs may require more resource and there are cost implications around that but these are built into the budget.
- Every child with a statement will have to be converted to EHC and all children who went through the pathfinder project will have to be reassessed to have their EHCs taken via the statutory process. This is not what was initially set out and has created additional workload and resource demand on the local authority. Approximately 1400 SEN statements need converting to EHC.
- The biggest challenge and opportunity comes with the introduction of personal budgets. The challenge comes from costing the needs and outcomes for children and how to meet them. Many services are tied into big contracts with suppliers which is unsuitable for the flexibility required of personal budgets. However the opportunity is there to provide autonomy for families through bespoke packages of support. This could massively improve the lives of parents and children and the EHC gives much more control to parents and is a less adversarial process.
- Points of transition can be very difficult, but EHCs offer a better chance here by allowing more planning for transition at an earlier stage.
- Officers are working alongside colleagues in Communications about how to make the local offer more accessible for parents and children. At the moment it meets the statutory requirements but this should be improved and is a key strand of work.

The Committee resolved that:

- A case study of an EHC should be circulated to the Committee so they can see what a completed EHC looks like.
- Information on the numbers of children that will need to convert from statement of SEN to EHC plans and the number of children expected to be on EHC plans should be provided to the Committee.

4. Nursery Education and Childcare Review - Update

Sue Tipler (Head of Standards and Achievement) and John Green (Strategic Leader, EYFS) introduced the report, highlighting the following key points:

- The recommendations for increased flexibility in provision has started to happen, with more providers looking to meet parents' needs.
- There has been an increase in the number of childminders offering the free 2 year old provision and there has been work carried to help the development of childminders.

In response to questions from the Committee, Frankie Sulke (Executive Director for Children & Young People), Sue Tipler and John Green provided the following information:

- Work has been carried out to make sure that parents know they are eligible for the free 2 year old childcare offer. Those eligible are those that would be eligible for the Pupil Premium and the information on this is provided by the Department for Work & Pensions (DWP).
- Lewisham did receive a letter from the minister saying that take-up for the 2 year old offer was low, but the numbers cited were incorrect. However work was carried out around this and the number of parents up the offer should now improve. In Autumn 2014 there were 1174 eligible for the 2 year old offer and 832 had accessed it.
- There will be a funding change, so that funding will only come for those that take up the 2 year old offer, not as previously for all those eligible. This will mean a cut in funding. The extra money in the DSG had been supplementing a high needs overspend, so the change will create some cost pressures.
- Children's Centres can publicise the 2 year old offer and encourage take up, but only so many will want childcare and some parents are happy to look after their children with no other childcare.
- Those children that take part in some sort of EYFS activity do better than those that do not, but those taking part in activity at school based nurseries do not have better outcomes than those at private, voluntary or independent nurseries. The best outcomes are for those that have 6 or more contacts with Children's Centres.
- The number of childminders that provide the free 2 year old offer has increased, though these are not necessarily new childminders and are likely to just be new to providing the 2 year old offer.
- In Lewisham 9% of childminders are rated as Outstanding (against 10% nationally) and 57% are Good (against 66% nationally).
- EYFS officers have been offering training around SEN for childminders to promote take-up of children with SEN. Shared training has been offered for nurseries, but this can be difficult as PVI's are competitors so not always keen on sharing training.
- Clyde Nursery School has been a forerunner on integrating 2 year olds and their model is being shared.

5. Young People's Mental Health Review - Draft Report and Recommendations

The Committee discussed the report, including recommendations to CAMHS services and around schools. The Committee could not agree the final wording for

recommendations and resolved to consider reviewed and updated recommendations at their next meeting.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to further discuss the draft recommendations and agree the final report and recommendations at their meeting on 4th February 2015.

6. Select Committee work programme

The Committee discussed the work programme and the need, in light of recent development surrounding Sedgehill School, for there to be an item on this added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to add an item on Sedgehill School at their next meeting on 4th February 2015.

7. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

There were none.

The meeting ended at 9.40 pm

Chair:

Date:
