



PEOPLE OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 23 May 2022

10.00 - 11.40 am in the Council Chamber, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Ashley Kendrick

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Present

Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Peggy Mullock (Chairman)

Councillors Claire Wild (Vice Chairman), Roy Aldcroft (remotely), Peter Broomhall, David Evans, Nat Green, Ruth Houghton, Hilary Luff, Kevin Pardy and Kevin Turley

43 Apologies and Substitutions

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Roy Aldcroft who would be joining remotely.

44 Disclosable Interests

Declarations of interest were received from Councillors Ruth Houghton and Hilary Luff.

45 Minutes

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 30th March 2022 and 12th May 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

46 Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

47 Members' Question Time

There were no member questions.

48 Virtual School Head

Jo Kelly, Virtual School Head, introduced herself and provided Members with an overview of the Shropshire Virtual School, which currently supports 549 young people in care to Shropshire from the ages of 2-18. The team included the Virtual Head, Assistant Head, a Business Support co-ordinator, Post 16 Officer, Educational Advice and Support Worker and Specialist Access to Education Officer.

Members noted that the GCSE results for the students had been higher than other Looked After Children in the country, and that KS2 results had also been well above the national performance indicators. Focus was now being put on the progress of children with an EHCP.

The Post 16 cohort had been recognised within the recent Ofsted report which was a great success.

Members noted that it is statutory that all Children who are Looked after must have a Care Plan, of which the PEP (Personal Education Plan) is an integral part. The PEP should reflect a personalised approach to learning that meets the child's identified educational needs, raises aspirations and builds life chances – and the PEP should be used to support achieving these for our children.

Members questioned how the post-16 pupil to staff ratio compared with other areas and the support available to them. Members were advised that the DFE is running a pilot which looks to give more support options for these children as they are not eligible for pupil premium. Shropshire did have a higher ratio of staff to children at approximately 1:98 rather than 1:55 in other areas.

Members expressed their pleasure at seeing such great progress and requested that an update be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the following recommendations be approved:

- a) A proposal to be developed for the Director by the Virtual School Head Teacher re future proofing the Shropshire Virtual School and reviewing the structure to reduce caseloads.
- b) The Virtual School Head Teacher to lead a working group across Social Care to focus on improving PEP quality and effectiveness across the LA - the PEP itself being a joint responsibility and integral part of the Care Plan. Key outcomes will need to be an agreed process, clear roles and responsibilities and agreed standards of quality practice as every child in care deserves to have a good quality PEP. The Virtual School Head Teacher to also consult with Schools on how the new Shropshire PEP will develop ready for a September 2022 start.
- c) The Virtual School Head Teacher to plan for improving Attainment and Progress data capture on the PEP as this will support robust reporting and planning. This would be for roll-out in the new academic year 2022-23 so no current data is lost on the ePEP system.
- d) The PEP working party to consider how all Year -1 and Year -2 children will have high quality PEPs as a joint responsibility across the LA; this will also be dependent on staffing ratios and capacity at the school (in relation to Recommendation a)
- e) Consideration to be given to how the Post 16 PEP can be developed on to an electronic platform for September 2022 so that it is fit for purpose and robust reporting is able to be achieved.
- f) The Virtual School Head Teacher to review the PP+ Policy for the new financial year 2022-23.

- g) The Action Plan for PLAC and CSW to be rolled out with the support of the new Asst Head.
- h) A celebration event for Shropshire's Children in Care to be created in consultation with the Participation sub-group. Development of the Children in Care Council to also be a key focus of this group.
- i) The Virtual School Head Teacher to work in conjunction with Health and Social Care in order to develop effective use of SDQ information in relation to supporting positive mental health of our Shropshire Children in Care.

49 SEND Written Statement of Action

Karen Levell, SEND Service Manager, and David Shaw, Assistant Director Education & Achievement, introduced themselves to Members. They provided an update on work to deliver the written statement of action following the joint Ofsted/CQC inspection of services for children with a special education need or disability (SEND). They also provided the committee with an update on preparations for a further inspection of the local authority and its partners.

It was questioned as to why the CQC were not present at the meeting as it was important that they were engaged. It was felt that a joint presentation would be useful.

Following the inspection in January 2020, Members noted that the CQC and Ofsted had raised concerns around the following:

- Inconsistent strategic leadership and weak strategic planning across the area, most notably in the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), including the ineffective use of data to accurately commission and plan services
- The lack of inclusion of health services' input into the area's SEND action plan.
- Significant waiting times for large numbers of children and young people on the autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) diagnostic pathways.
- Significant waiting times for those needing assessment and treatment from the speech and language therapy service.
- Inconsistency in the quality of input from education, health and care into education, health and care (EHC) assessment and planning.
- The high rate of exclusions for children and young people with an EHC plan and the high rate of repeat fixed-term exclusions for those receiving SEND support.

A written statement of action (WSOA) was submitted to explain how the team would tackle these areas of weakness and an action plan put in place to deliver the required improvements.

Members stated that they would welcome a further presentation from the CQC and Parent and Carer Council in the near future. Members also requested email addresses for relevant officers.

Members voiced their frustrations with the delay in child assessments and the lack of trust in those closest to children with additional needs. The committee asked that the team report back if there was anything they could do to assist and expedite the process for the sake of the children.

It was questioned whether Shropshire Council works with neighbouring councils to use their framework. It was confirmed that this is shared from a strategic perspective and would be part of the place planning taking place in the autumn term.

Members also questioned how SEN hubs are working. It was noted that this would be on a future agenda.

Karen and David were thanked for their report.

50 Work Programme

Members noted that a Members' work programme setting meeting would be taking place remotely on Tuesday 28th June. Details could be found in Members' diaries.

51 Date of Next Meeting

Members noted that the next meeting will take place on Wednesday 29th June 2022 at 1.30pm.

Signed (Chairman)

Date: