CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 1 March 2011
(6:03 - 8:23 pm)

Present: Councillor L Rice (Chair), Councillor E Kangethe (Deputy Chair), Councillor R Douglas, Councillor G Letchford, Councillor E O Obasohan, Councillor B Poulton and Councillor S Tarry; Reverend Roger Gayler

Also Present: Helen Jenner (Corporate Director of Children's Services), Chris Martin (Assistant Director Complex Needs & Social Care) and Matt Whiddett (Scrutiny Manager)

Apologies: Councillor T Perry

59. Declaration of Members' Interests

None received

60. Minutes

The minutes from 9 February 2011 were **agreed** subject to the following changes:

51. Child protection training for Child Protection Coordinators in schools

"The Corporate Director of Children's Services explained that as physical abuse, male circumcision would always be a level 3 referral and that it was not a common issue in the borough but we should all be aware of it"

replaced with

""The Corporate Director of Children's Services explained that abusive male circumcision would always be a level 3 referral and that it was not a common issue in the borough but we should all be aware of it. Circumcision by an approved practitioner would not be a referral issue."

52. Feedback on schools visits by the Lead Member

"The communication between Child protection Coordinators (CPC's) in schools and Social Workers is an issue that needs to be addressed. There was a difference of views between the opinions expressed to the Lead Member by individual CPC's during school visits and the experience of the Safeguarding Lead for Education during training courses with CPC's. Steps are being taken by the Group Manager to tackle this communication issue by meeting with head teachers and CPC's to discuss any issues."

Replaced with

"The communication between Child protection Coordinators (CPC's) in schools and Social Workers is an issue that needs to be addressed. Steps are being taken by the Group Manager to tackle this communication issue by meeting with head

teachers and CPC's to discuss any issues."

61. Case load management

Members received a presentation from Chris Martin (Assistant Director Complex Needs & Social Care).

He explained how cases are allocated to social work teams and individual social workers and the weighting system used for each case. The weighting system is dependant on the type of case and the experience of the social worker.

He also explained that there are various models for caseload weighting but they are all designed to take into account the complexity of a case and current workloads of social workers.

He outlined the protocols for transferring a case and explained that a case may be transferred up to four times during its history dependant on the needs and circumstances of the child.

The Lead Member asked if there was statutory guidance regarding the case weighting system.

The Assistant Director Complex Needs & Social Care explained that there is no statutory guidance and that it is down to individual Local authorities.

The Corporate Director of Children's services explained that the Monro Report is looking at this issue but that a universal system would not suit all Local Authorities.

62. Training for Child Protection Coordinators in schools

Members received a presentation from the Corporate Director of Children's Services regarding the safeguarding training given to Child Protection Coordinators in schools.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services outlined the two-day training course and explained how the training is delivered.

The Lead Member thanked the Corporate Director of Children's Services for the presentation.

The Scrutiny Manager said he would circulate the presentation and background papers to the Select Committee.

63. Review of the Annual Performance Assessment and the unannounced Ofsted Inspection Report

The Corporate Director of Children's Services explained the inspection process for the Annual Assessment and the unannounced inspection. She explained that

Ofsted had changed the scoring criteria and that explained, in part, why Children's Services has dropped from a performs well result in 2009/10 to a performs adequately result in 2010/11.

She explained that the Annual Assessment focussed on the whole of Children's Services but that the unannounced inspection solely focussed on the Assessment Team.

Members asked what steps had been taken to help schools improve.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services explained that the Schools Improvement Team help schools to implement actions plans for improvement and that help is targeted at the schools in most need. They have also stopped concentrating solely on curriculum issues and now offer support for finance, buildings, capacity and leadership issues.

The Corporate Director of Children's Services explained how the scoring system worked and that to improve to a performs well rating, Barking & Dagenham needed further work in a number of areas.

- Primary Schools rated good or better – need to develop a culture of standards with a passion for learning
- 16-19 standards – improving but behind other Local Authorities
- Obesity levels – more work needed
- Teenage pregnancy rates – reduced slightly with some good work from BAD Forum on sexual health.

Members asked what percentage of Local Authorities were in each scoring category and the Corporate Director of Children's Services said she would provide the figures after the meeting.

Members had a discussion about the type of food young people eat and whether a levy on fast food outlets and the Youth Access Card had done anything to improve standards. They also discussed the changes in lifestyles for young people and their inability to cook basic healthy meals.

64. Call-in

None received

65. Councillor Call for Action

None received

66. Petition Appeals

None received

67. Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Children's Services Select Committee is scheduled to take place on 19 April 2011, at 6pm in Committee Room 2, Town Hall Barking.

68. Final Child Protection Practices and Policies in Schools Review Report

Members agreed the final report.

The Lead Member thanked the Committee and The Corporate Director of Children's Services for their help with the report.