

CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD** held at Room 14, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Wednesday, 16 September 2015

PRESENT

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| Mrs S Harrison (Chairman) | Director of Children's Services, Central Bedfordshire Council |
| Cllr C Hegley (Vice-Chairman) | Executive Member for Social Care and Housing, Central Bedfordshire Council |
| Mr S Barker | Area Commander, Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue |
| Dr J Baxter | Clinical Director, Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group |
| Ms L Bulled | VOCypf Officer, Voluntary Organisations for Children, young people and families |
| Miss E Burke | Member of Youth Parliament |
| Mr O Button | Principal, Queensbury Academy |
| Mr R Carr | Chief Executive, Central Bedfordshire Council |
| Mr A Caton | Chair, Central Bedfordshire Local Safeguarding Board |
| Ms S Crosbie OBE | Headteacher, The Chiltern School |
| Mr S Dawkins | Member of Youth Parliament |
| Mr P Haddon | Headteacher, Holywell School |
| Mrs F Image | Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative |
| Mrs M Mercer | Headteacher, Aspley Guise Lower School |
| Mrs A Murray | Director of Nursing and Quality, Bedfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group |
| Mr L Simkins | Chair, Voluntary Organisations for Children, young people and families |
| Cllr M A G Versallion | Executive Member for Education and Skills |

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| Others Attendees: | Mr P Fraser | – Head of Partnerships & Community Engagement |
| | Mrs J Keyte | – Head of Community Safety |
| | Mr G Lamb | – East London Foundation Trust |
| | Mr L Manning | – Committee Services Officer |
| | Ms K Oellermann | – Assistant Director, Commissioning and Partnerships |
| | Mrs M Scott | – Director of Public Health |
| | Mr B Weatherall | – Bedfordshire Youth Offending Service |

CTB/15/11. **Welcome, Introductions and Apologies**

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from:

David Boyle, Bedfordshire Police
Alison Harding, Assistant Chief Officer, Bedfordshire Probation
David Morton, Diocese of St Albans

CTB/15/12. **Procedural Business**

(a) Declaration of substitutes

Inspector Annita Clarke, Bedfordshire Police was in attendance substituting for David Boyle.

(b) Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

(c) Exclusion of the press and public

AGREED

that in accordance with section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the Press and Public be excluded from the meeting when considering the following on the grounds that consideration of the item is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act:

Children and Young People's Plan – Quarter One Performance (Item 8).

(d) Order of business

The Chairman advised the meeting of a change in the running order for the agenda items. Item 8 (Children and Young People's Plan – Quarter One Performance) would now be considered immediately following item 10 (Forward Plan).

CTB/15/13. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising**

AGREED

that the minutes of the meeting of the Children's Trust Board held on 8 June 2015 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CTB/15/14. **Emotional Resilience of Young People - Future in Mind**

The Board received a report which briefed Members on the current issues with regard to young people's mental health with a particular focus on self harm and emotional resilience. The report also set out the current response at both the national and local level and the proposals for future action to improve young people's emotional well being within Central Bedfordshire.

The Board expressed concern at the lower levels of self esteem amongst pupils in Central Bedfordshire when compared to the wider sample. Further, and whilst recognising the value of the measures that had been implemented and proposed in response, concern was also expressed as to whether sufficient resources could be made available to ensure a positive outcome. Particular reference was made to the expected role of school nurses in this context given their limited numbers. The need to improve pupil awareness of school nurse availability and the service they could provide was also raised.

During discussion the importance of establishing the reasons why levels of self esteem amongst young people were lower within Central Bedfordshire was emphasised. The Board was reminded that knowledge of this would help ensure that any services provided in response were suitable. It was also queried whether the Board was expected to undertake an active role in relation to assessing the impact of the measures or merely monitor outcomes.

It was noted that a follow up survey to determine the reasons for the low emotional well being was to be circulated to schools in the Autumn and that the results were due to be available in April 2016. The need to ensure the survey was accessible by all young people was noted. The Chairman urged all schools to complete the survey.

AGREED

- 1. That the Assistant Director Public Health submit an update report on the issues relating to the emotional resilience of young people to a future meeting of the Children's Trust Board.**
- 2. That the Board be provided with an update on the promotion of the school nurse service.**

CTB/15/15. Domestic Abuse

The Board received a report which provided an update on the progress made in developing Central Bedfordshire Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy. Members noted the context in which the Strategy and its accompanying action plan were being developed and the need to adopt a multi-agency approach to ensure the right outcomes were delivered.

The Board noted that the Council had engaged SafeLives, a national charity which had led on transforming the response to domestic violence and abuse by providing practical risk led solutions, to help develop the Strategy and action plan.

Members were advised that the Strategy was being developed in two stages. The first, which had been completed at the end of July, had an internal focus working across Council directorates to establish how best to develop a robust co-ordinated strategy, identify key themes for development and provide proposals for the work needed to develop the themes.

Stage two would see the draft Strategy and plan finalised and a multi agency partnership workshop delivered to consult and test the Council's draft strategic objectives.

A Domestic Abuse Board, chaired by the Director of Children's Services, had met to review and refine the stage one work and work with SafeLives on planning and completing the stage two work which was scheduled to be completed by early November 2015.

Following a query the Head of Community Safety undertook to investigate the status of children present during an incident of domestic abuse and whether, in such circumstances, such children would be classified as victims.

NOTED

- 1 the progress made in preparing Central Bedfordshire Council's Domestic Abuse Strategy and the accompanying action plan;**
- 2 that a further update report would be provided to the Children's Trust Board at a future meeting.**

CTB/15/16. Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report

The Trust Board received the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (CBSCB) Annual Report for 2014-15. The Annual Report provided detail as to how CBSCB partners had worked both together, and as individual bodies, to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Central Bedfordshire. The Annual Report also provided information on Local Safeguarding Children Board statutory functions and the progress made against the four CBSCB Business Plan priorities for 2014-15.

The meeting noted that the publication of an annual report covering the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promotion of child welfare in the local area was a statutory function under the Children Act 2004.

The Independent Chair of the CBSCB introduced the Annual Report and drew Members' attention to key issues. He referred in particular to when parents made their own arrangements for their children to live away from home or other close family members. Such children were privately fostered and it was a requirement that the local authority be notified of these arrangements. The meeting noted that Central Bedfordshire was aware of only a small number of privately fostered children at the end of March 2015 and the Independent Chair was of the opinion that the numbers were underreported.

The Independent Chair next drew the meeting's attention to the various challenges faced by the Board as it made efforts to improve outcomes for all children and young people and to the priorities and key messages about keeping children safe in Central Bedfordshire. Members considered and commented on aspects of the Report.

AGREED

- 1 that the Central Bedfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 1 April 2014 – 31 March 2015 be noted;**
- 2 that the key messages set out within the Annual Report be reported back to all stakeholders and partners.**

CTB/15/17. Careers Advice and Work Experience Opportunities for Young People in Central Bedfordshire

The Board received a report setting out the progress made in meeting the local aspiration set out in the Children and Young People's Plan for partners to:

'Provide early high quality independent career advice and work experience opportunities so that young people understand what their career options and choices are'.

The meeting noted that the provision of careers education and work experience opportunities remained a high priority at national level and this was reflected in Ofsted standards. It was also a very high priority at the local level. Members noted the current position in Central Bedfordshire and that the 'Better Work Experience' campaign by the Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament had revealed that the quality of opportunities for young people varied significantly across the area. The 'Better Work Experience' report, a copy of which was attached at Appendix A to the officer's covering report, highlighted key recommendations which, it was felt, could have a significant beneficial difference if adopted – including the role of the local authority in setting an example in this area to other employers.

Turning next to careers guidance and the provision of impartial information, advice and guidance Members noted that progress had been made recently in meeting the Children and Young People's Plan aspiration. This had included schools signing up to minimal standards for careers education and emerging practice around the brokerage of employer engagement in schools.

However, it was also recognised that there were significant financial and resource pressures on secondary/upper schools and academies which could have a detrimental impact on their capacity to offer a high standard of careers education and work experience to young people.

Arising from the disappointment expressed by some young people with regard to work experience and the relevancy, timing and type of jobs that they were expected to carry out, discussion took place on the opportunities that were actually available given that young people would be unable to carry out the more complicated or difficult tasks they would, perhaps, like to.

AGREED

- 1 that the current situation regarding careers advice and work experience for young people in Central Bedfordshire be noted;**

- 2 that Board Members promote the recommendations contained in the 'Better Work Experience' report by Central Bedfordshire Youth Parliament and in particular:
 - To meet with Central Bedfordshire Council's Director of Children's Services and the Executive Member for Education and Skills
 - To actively promote the benefits of undertaking work experience to young people, schools and employers
 - For Central Bedfordshire Council to lead by example and offer work experience placements in all departments.
- 3 that the briefing is shared with the Secondary/Upper Heads' Forum with a request that all schools/academies are signed up to the Central Bedfordshire careers education minimum standards.
- 4 that Board Members receive a further briefing on careers advice and work experience opportunities by April 2016.

CTB/15/18. **Standing Item: Update from other Boards**

No updates were provided by members of other Boards.

CTB/15/19. **Forward Plan**

The Board noted that the following matters would be added to the Board's Forward Plan for consideration:

Child Poverty Strategy – Update (3 December 2015)

Promotion of school nurse service– Update (3 December 2015)

School results data – possible use of Improvement Board report if available (to be agreed)

Careers Advice and Work Experience Opportunities (by April 2016).

(Note: Minute CTB/15/20 below also refers)

CTB/15/20. **Children and Young People's Plan - Quarter One Performance**

The Board considered a report which provided Members with an update on Quarter One progress in delivering the priorities contained within the Children and Young People's Plan. The Plan had been approved and adopted at the Board's meeting on 3 March 2015 and covered the two year period until March 2017. A performance framework had been developed to monitor progress against the new measure set. The performance for Quarter One was set out at Appendix A to the report.

The Board worked through the update. With regard to the priority for 'Improved educational attainment and progress' comment was passed by some Members on the difficulty experienced in recruiting suitable teaching staff. The possible reasons for how this situation had arisen were considered and a comparison was drawn with that of social worker recruitment and the action which had been taken to overcome recruitment difficulties.

A Member queried the absence of recent referrals to the Special Educational Needs Service despite the requirement by some children for this support.

AGREED

- 1 that the new reporting style for the new measure set within the Children and Young People's Plan be noted;**
- 2 that the progress made in delivering the priorities and targets together with the action taken to address issues where performance is not on track to meet targets be noted;**
- 3 that the feedback from the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the Children's Trust Annual Report be noted;**
- 4 that the work of the Partnership Vision for Education to support the delivery of the priority 'Improved Educational Attainment and Progress' within the Children and Young People's Plan be noted;**
- 5 that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board setting out an explanation for the current difficulties in recruiting suitable teaching staff within Central Bedfordshire and the possible means of overcoming this and that this be included on the Board's forward plan.**
- 6 that a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Board setting out an explanation for the lack of take up of the Special Educational Needs Service despite the known requirement by some children for this and that this item be included on the Board's Forward Plan.**

(Note: The meeting commenced at 4.00 p.m. and concluded at 5.55 p.m.)

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