

**COUNCIL SEMINAR  
15th July, 2015**

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); The Mayor (Councillor M.Clark), Councillors Beaumont, Buckley, Currie, Godfrey, Gosling, Hoddinott, Jepson, Lelliott, Parker, Read, Reynolds, Rushforth, Steele, C. Vines, M. Vines, Whelbourn, Wyatt, Pickering and Elliot.

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE DIRECTORATE.**

Councillor G. Watson welcomed Ian Thomas, Strategic Director of the Children and Young People's Services Directorate, to the seminar. Ian had prepared a presentation that provided an update for Elected Members on Children and Young People's Services.

- 200 statutory duties;
- Single accountable Chief Officer;
- Single accountable Member;
- Academies Act (2010);
- Ofsted findings 2014 – 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2014 – resulted in a finding of inadequate across the Board. Parallel CSE investigation;
- Ten recommendations and 16 areas recommended for improvement;
- CYPS now had an Improvement Plan – a single improvement plan covering CSE, Jay report, Ofsted single inspection framework, Ofsted CSE Thematic Inspection and Quality Assurance findings. Currently active and 56% of actions had been achieved;
- There was very little for early help below the social care threshold;
- Recruitment update.

Councillor Currie asked whether we paid enough and gave enough perks? He referred to Commissioner Ney's report.

Ian described his workforce as talented but not experienced. We can get there with coaching support. Ian saw it as part of his job to get them there. He acknowledged that social work was a grinding and stressful job.

Ian referred to the directorate structure. It now had a permanent top level.

Councillor Currie asked about the governance of the corporate school. He asked if it included Corporate Parents?

Ian was sad about the often dire life outcomes experienced by looked after children. Turning this around required long term planning.

Councillor Hoddinott saw that skills were important in the Devolution Agenda and asked where the capacity within the structure was. Where was the support and focus for 16-25 year olds?

Ian explained that it was in the next tier and was lead with an interest by youth workers. LA retained strategic responsibility for children with additional needs – often vulnerable – to provide from the age of 14. Ian believed we had the capacity there. Adult Community Education and Apprenticeships; Karen Borthwick was linking in with Paul Woodcock.

Commissioning structure was ran jointly with the CCG and it was not good enough. Fieldwork informing the inspection was undertaken in February. We needed to ensure that Health paid their way too.

Councillor Reynolds asked how we were going address skills gap?  
Ian Thomas explained the professional conversation whereby managers would have to address the issue of 'you are not good enough'. It would be easy to leave it but we are addressing this. People don't come to work to do a bad job. Identify what is happening; continuous professional development; capability procedure; due progress.

Councillor Wyatt referred to the inadequate findings regarding health. These had only been given a few paragraphs within Jay. Better Care Fund.

Ian explained funding for transitions. The young carers and disabled facilities grant. These sat mainly within Adult Services as the Lead agency. Health will make a contribution and has a duty to work with us and share information. Critical to share, alongside safeguarding duties.

Fieldwork from February but reported as though it was taking place today. Children's Trust Board, when reconstituted, will report to the Health and Wellbeing Board. Schools also contributing to the Board.

Councillor Parker asked that it people were not fit for purpose, when working with vulnerable children, at what point did you make a decision that what these people aren't doing was impacting on children. How do you prevent the impact on the children?

Ian explained the Misconduct and Gross Misconduct processes. Any proceedings would use due recourse as inappropriate usage would lead to summarial dismissal, which would be incorrect.

Councillor Parker asked how do you ensure that their incompetence is not impacting on the children?

Ian explained the intensive support, mentoring, buddying, management oversight. We would not leave an incompetent person to their own devices.

Councillor Hoddinott felt that councillors needed to look at how the relationship with health was working. For example recent data on the dental checks of LAC who had had a dental check in the past 6 months was shocking.

Ian knew this data and felt that it was wrong and undersold the situation. Not doing anyway near as well as we should be. Integrated joined up action plan. and an intense performance reporting would see the trajectory of improvement.

Ian was drawing up locality plans and would involve elected members and their local knowledge. These would involve 0 – 19 and up to 25 where children had disabilities, breastfeeding, immunisation, speech and language. Health visitors were coming into the LA in October.

Councillor Whelbourn recognised the locality structure. In the pas the intention had been to have them working and reporting into Area Assemblies. This never happened. Could have been unwillingness or instructed not to, etc. Is this a useful system?

Ian stated that it was useful. He had implemented this system in Derbyshire, along with named contacts. Engagement was high on his agenda.

Councillor Parker referred to the prosecution of parents where children were not going to school. Often this was because parents had not got their choice/s and selected to Home Tutor. It appeared to Councillor Parker that the Authority all but abandons the family. One visit per year and no advice. What was the difference between them not attending school and home tutoring?

Ian reiterated the parental right to home educate. Quite often parents pulled their children out of the system because they did not want them in the system. Absence and Home education were clearly different issues.

Safeguarding key statistics as at 31<sup>st</sup> May, 2015, were shared.

Councillor Currie asked whether the total numbers had increased due to the context.

Ian said that Rotherham's average was 72 per 10,000. The national average was 60.

Commissioner Newsam wanted a MASH in place and it has strengthened the front door no end. Police, LA and Health colleagues were working together. Implemented on 1<sup>st</sup> April, 2015, following getting the challenge in January. They usually take 12-18 months to initiate. Decisions taken with 24-hours was at 90%. September, 2014, this was at 37%.

Caseloads were at 48 per social worker, meaning that it was impossible to work at least half of them. Caseload average is 16.5 and there was a maximum of 22 per social worker. There was good management oversight between complexity and numbers.

Councillor Steele asked whether we were fully staffed and what the position was with agency staff? Having 22 cases would mean one hour and a few minutes per client per week.

Ian explained that the range was between 16.5 – 27 per FTE social worker. There are Agency Staff employed, this is something we do not welcome or condone, it is out of necessity. Not good for the longer-term. There would be a recruitment campaign in September. Rotherham was not competitive compared to Barnsley, Sheffield or Wakefield in terms of remuneration. This was being developed, along with training and excellent Social Work Support is being offered.

Councillor Steele asked about the additional increase. Was this down to natural vacancies or long-term sickness? Do we pay professional fees?

Ian explained that we were covering vacancies when we increased the establishment. Covering vacancies, sickness and establishment.

Rotherham used to cover professional fees. Ian agreed to check this information.

Councillor Parker asked whether we kept Agency staff on. Did we employ them? What was the cost compared to employing permanently with agency? Did we ensure that we only employed the best agency staff?

Ian explained that there was a bidding war leading to some social workers leaving. Rotherham tried to retain on a permanent basis using the benefits of the LA pension, security, sick pay. Additional cost is about double for Agency social workers. This was expensive and we do not want it to continue. Working with TMP who did the 'Do it for Daniel' campaign in Coventry following Daniel Pelka's death.

Councillor Reynolds asked for the actual cost for the provision of Agency staff.

Ian Thomas agreed to provide this. When we went out to advert, the majority of applicants were newly qualified social workers. They could not practice alone as they needed supervision for the first year.

We were currently talking about the benefits and benchmarking through the summer and advertising in September. Rotherham did not expect to get experienced social workers for the rates that we currently paid. TMP were doing research on what stopped people coming to work in Rotherham.

Councillor Wyatt felt that it was not all about money. Were we providing the best ICT, parking, annual leave, study leave and so on?

Ian confirmed that a review was being undertaken on social worker facilities, including peer support. We need to ensure they get the right support. Meeting rooms, business support, close proximity to team manager, we are looking at everything.

Councillor Elliot wanted to encourage Social Workers and was aware of the competition with other areas. Salaries had initially been established through a job evaluation scheme – did this mean that you have to look at job descriptions? Impact on other social workers in Rotherham working in other services?

Ian confirmed that yes, the social work jobs are job evaluated. A review is being undertaken with HR as it was important to pay equally. Adult Social Care – will need to talk to SLT. There are differences in working in Childrens' Social Care compared to other areas.

Councillor Currie asked if we could operate as the Sheffield City Region? Are we looking at joint authority working to save money?

Ian confirmed that this happened in relation to adoption. An innovation bid had been submitted to the DfE. We participated in secondments with other LAs. Ian explained that he had written to all 22 Directors in Yorkshire and Humber to suggest a cap on paying agencies and measures to stop staff 'leap frogging'. This was being discussed.

Councillor Jepson asked whether there was a worry that staff who were not capable were going to work for agencies and could come back in to the LA?

Ian confirmed that conversations about sharing information were planned. Malpractice would be referred to the Health Professional Care Council.

Councillor Steele did not believe that it was possible to stop staff working at different local authorities to achieve better pay; directors did this. There were benefits to staff to work for agencies, including that they could pick when to work.

Ian was confident that if local authorities signed up to the initiative the aims could be achieved.

Councillor Elliot asked for the figures and information on a regular basis.

Ian confirmed that this would happen. He also urged Members not to be comforted only by figures. Also ask questions about experience and quality.

Councillor Currie asked if there was going to be a gold standard of supervision?

Ian said that there was a supervision tracker that would go out to talk to workers. If not being supervised they needed to tell Ian about it. Case management would be governed by the 10 standards issued.

Councillor Hoddinott asked that, as councillors, how do we get that line of sight and ensure that the quality is there?

Ian explained the aspiration of Customer Service Excellence and how we captured the experience of the child in our care. This included visiting homes, schools, social workers.

Ian explained the Liquid Logic new IT system. A tender normally takes 18-months, this was achieved in 3 months using work already done.

Councillor Reynolds thanked Ian for delivering quite a difficult presentation. It appeared to be mission impossible to complete with not enough money, not enough capacity, not enough correctly skilled staff. He felt that these issues needed to be on the record. It had been a very interesting presentation.

Councillor Watson explained the additional capacity that the LGA had put in to support Elected Members.

Councillor Wyatt thanked Ian for a really good update and asked for his main concerns.

Ian thanked the Members in attendance for their inquisitive questions. His main areas of focus were the stability of the workforce, interim staff and managers and Ofsted's review of the MASH on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> August.

Councillor Watson thanked Ian for this presentation.

Resolved: - That the information shared be noted.