

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
18th September, 2013**

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Ali, Astbury, Buckley, Burton, Clark, Dodson, J. Hamilton, Kaye, Lelliott, Pitchley and Read and co-opted member Mrs. A. Clough.

An apology for absence had been received from co-opted member Mr. M. Smith.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest to record.

19. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no members of the public or the press in attendance.

20. COMMUNICATIONS

There was nothing to report under this item.

21. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 10TH JULY, 2013.

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 10th July, 2013, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes be agreed as an accurate record for signature by the Chairperson.

22. ROTHERHAM LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013.

Councillor G. A. Russell, Chairperson of the Improving Lives Select Commission, welcomed Steve Ashley, Chair of the Rotherham Independent Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Phil Morris, Business Manager, Rotherham Independent LSCB. Steve and Phil had been invited to attend this meeting so that the annual report of the LSCB could be considered.

Also in attendance for this item were Joyce Thacker, Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Services, and Rotherham's Lead Member for Children, Councillor Paul Lakin, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services.

Councillor Russell especially welcomed Steve Ashley to the meeting. Steve had started his new job at the beginning of September, and this was the first meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission that he had attended. Councillor Russell looked forward to working with him and the LSCB in the future.

Steve presented the annual report of the Rotherham Independent LSCB. The Annual Report covered all areas of the Board's activity during 2012/2013, including: -

- LSCB governance and partnership arrangements;
- Progress against the Board's priority areas and business plan;
- Activities of the Sub-groups;
- Information about the Child Death Overview Panel;
- Contribution of Lay Members;
- Challenges and Priorities for 2013-2016.

The Children Act (2004) required LSCBs to produce annual reports that provided a 'rigorous and transparent assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services', 'published in relation to the preceding financial year' and 'fit with local agencies' planning, commissioning and budget cycles' and 'list the contributions made to the LSCB by partner agencies and list what the LSCB has spent'.

Reference was made to Rotherham's LSCB's priorities for 2012/2013 and how these were reflected in the business plan for 2013-2016 and the work of the Board's Sub-groups.

The Rotherham LSCB had its own budget; the main contributors were Children's Social Care Services, Children's Health Services and the Police. The 2012/2013 outturn for the budget was a £6,940 under-spend. £841 of this had been earmarked for learning and development activity and the remaining £6,099 would part-fund the 2013/2014 budget.

The main risks and uncertainties surrounding Children and Young People's Services was the revised Ofsted inspection framework for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers due to be implemented nationally in November, 2013. The Rotherham LSCB was working with partner agencies to assess performance and ready evidence of the positive outcomes of children and young people.

The Independent Chair referred to a separate piece of work that he was undertaking in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation to determine how effective Children and Young People's Services was in protecting children and young people at the present time. This was a separate piece of work to the Inquiry that had been commissioned by Rotherham's Chief Executive.

Discussion ensued and the following items were raised by member of the Improving Lives Select Commission: -

- Impact of Welfare Reforms: – were referrals to social care services increasing as a result of the welfare reforms?

- An increase in contacts/referrals had not been identified at the present time;
 - The recommendations from the Serious Case Review into Daniel Pelka's tragic death were being reviewed by Rotherham's Safeguarding Children and Families Service;
 - Rotherham's Safeguarding Children and Families Service was also responsible for the Early Help Panel, which aimed to provide help to families before they reached crisis point. The Service had also provided robust training for all schools on identifying signs of neglect and the appropriate response.
- Social care thresholds: - were the thresholds correct?
 - The Independent Chair was confident that social care thresholds governing which intervention children and families would be subject to were correct;
 - Further work was on-going on whether all agencies knew the thresholds and understood whether it was their role to refer and how to do this.
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board and its associated Sub-groups: - were these groups working well together?
 - The Independent Chair was the chairperson of the full Local Safeguarding Children Board, and also of the Performance Sub-group;
 - Due to the time-limited nature of the full Board meeting, the Independent Chair would be working to ensure that the focus of the Board meetings would be performance and how the agencies were working together;
 - Board meetings would also be a forum for professional challenge between the agencies that were represented.
- What were the main areas of concern?
 - It was right and proper that huge amounts of local and national attention were being paid to the issues of Child Sexual Exploitation. However, it was possible that this could lead to other areas being missed;
 - The levels of neglect of children and young people was also an emerging issue;
 - The Independent Chair had received projections relating to deprivation upon starting his role. He was aware of the Council and partner's work aiming to reverse this, and would keep a watching brief on the issue.
- Safeguarding Children and Families' Services four RED rated performance indicators, as shown the annual report. What was being done to ensure that performance improved?
 - The Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services confirmed that it was a concern to the Service to have RED rated areas. The Service carried out fortnightly performance and analysis reports. There were no cases

- that had not been allocated to a named worker. The Strategic Director received a weekly report on the allocation of cases;
- Children and Young People's Services participated in a Multi-Agency Support Panel (MASP) that sought to support families, explore all options available and undertake a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) on the family's situation.
- Performance Indicator NI65 (Children becoming subject to a child protection plan for a second or subsequent time) (RED rated) and NI67 (percentage of child protection cases which were reviewed within required timescales (GREEN rated) were discussed to fully understand their direction of travel.
 - The Independent Chair had charged the Strategic Director with benchmarking Rotherham's performance against national outcomes;
 - It was expected that Central Government would shortly be announcing changes to the overall suite of performance indicators;
 - The Independent Chair agreed to produce a critical suite of performance indicators that was user-friendly.
 - Working with Partner Agencies to safeguard children: -
 - The Independent Chair confirmed that all partners were currently participating on the Board, following the outcome of an audit of attendance;
 - The LSCB had worked to ensure that reporting pro-formas were as user-friendly as possible to enable partners to contribute their opinions.
 - Publication of the Serious Case Review into Child S's death had now taken place. What had happened since publication?
 - The Strategic Director confirmed that hundreds of workers had been trained in the lessons learned. This also included each 'generation' of new workers that joined Children and Young People's Services;
 - Training sessions aimed to be 'two-way', and allow front line workers to outline their thoughts and explain job related pressures to facilitators and managers;
 - A robust action plan was implemented following each Serious Case Review.
 - Different agencies working together to safeguard children and young people was a very positive thing, were there any barriers preventing this from being fully realised?
 - IT systems used by different agencies were not always consistent and did not always communicate. A consistent system for reporting and recording concerns would have been implemented with the Contact Point IT system, but

- funding for this had been withdrawn by Central Government whilst the system was being piloted;
- Co-location of area teams was considered important to increase the wealth of multi-agency interface. The Strategic Director was determined to continue supporting the practice of staff being located in their areas with multi-agency colleagues, despite reducing resources bring pressures to centralise teams.
- What was the role for members of the public in reporting their concerns about a potential case/s of Child Sexual Exploitation. What would be the message, for example, to people who were reluctant to report their concerns for fear of being ridiculed/ignored/laughed at?
 - The Independent Chair was clear that no agency would support an attitude of such complacency following a contact from a member of the public;
 - Literature had been circulated within the community informing people how to report their concerns.
 - The Councillor who had raised this question had not seen any of the literature referred to within his local community.
 - The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services referred to the Countering Child Sexual Exploitation training that had been made available for Rotherham's Elected Members. 60 of the Council's 63 Elected Members had participated in this training. The training had also been rolled out to Parish Councils;
 - The Strategic Director spoke about the training that had been offered to all Schools;
 - Age-appropriate training would be designed for children in Years 6 and 7 by the Healthy Schools Team, which informed young people about the risks and what to do if they felt threatened;
 - A training package had been put together for Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Governing Bodies;
 - A communication campaign had been designed, including the Rotherham Advertiser, and the use of social media, leaflets, e-safety training.
 - Other issues discussed included: -
 - Children Missing Education;
 - Domestic Abuse.

The members of the Improving Lives Select Commission thanked the Independent Chair and his colleagues for the annual report. The Commission's feedback was that the report was very specific and that it would be useful to have general statistics included within the report to provide a balanced view of the numbers of children, young people and families that interacted with Safeguarding Children and Families' Services.

Resolved: - (1) That the 2012/2013 Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual report be received and its content be noted.

(2) That the Independent Chair develop a critical suite of indicators for use by Elected Members, Select Committees and so on, to scrutinise the performance of Safeguarding Children and Families' Services.

(3) That future annual reports of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board include general statistics that could be used to contextualise the information within the report.

23. WORKING TOGETHER - LINKS BETWEEN SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE.

Consideration was given to the report presented by Phil Morris, Business Manager (Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board), and Sam Newton, Safeguarding Manager (Health and Wellbeing, Neighbourhood and Adult Services) that outlined the legal and policy similarities between children and adult safeguarding, outlined the services provided by all organisations across the Borough and the potential for future joint working across Children's and Adult's Services.

The report outlined a number of issues of difference between Children's and Adult's Services: -

- The Council had a responsibility to safeguard all children and a responsibility to safeguard all vulnerable adults;
- Where families had adults with social care needs (such as substance misuse or mental health needs) and the family also had children, there was a need for both sets of services to work together to ensure continuity and consistency of support;
- Where there were adults in the family that were unable to protect themselves from abuse, it would be unlikely that they had the capacity to provide effective and safe parenting.

The report set-out the frameworks both Services were governed by: -

Children's Safeguarding: -

- Working Together, 2013, was national statutory guidance for safeguarding children;
- Every local authority had to have an independent local safeguarding children board;
- Rotherham's Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) was established as a statutory body following the Children Act, 2004;
- Rotherham's LSCB was chaired by an independent person and had senior representatives from all agencies that operated across the Borough, including the services that worked with adults.

Adults' Safeguarding: -

- There was a range of pieces of legislation and guidance supporting social care for adults. These included 'No Secrets' and guidance provided by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Care (ADASS);
- A policy framework from the ADASS had been implemented through the South Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Procedures. All relevant partners, including the police and NHS, had signed up to this in order to work together to safeguard adults from abuse;
- Rotherham's Safeguarding Adult Board had been established in 2003.

Links between the two Services on their formal frameworks: -

- The Rotherham LSCB had representatives from services working with both children and their parents;
- The Adult Safeguarding Board had representation from the Director for Health and Wellbeing, representing Adult Services, and the Director for Safeguarding Children and Families' Services, representing Children's Service;
- The specific links between the two Services occurred mainly when adults who were parents or carers were: -
 - **Adults with substance abuse;**
 - **Adults involved in domestic abuse;**
 - **Adults with mental health problems;**
 - Adults who were involved in criminal activity;
 - Adults with disabilities or learning difficulties.
- The text in bold indicated the main areas of concern for both Services within Rotherham, including working with parents who had learning difficulties;
- Joint work was undertaken between Children's and Adults' Services in the transition of young people with significant learning difficulties and disabilities as they became adults;
- The Children and Young People and Families Strategic Partnership Board was the overall strategic planning group for agencies working with children and families;
- This Board linked to the Health and Wellbeing Board and also the overall priorities for communities within the Borough;
- The overall strategic group for children's safeguarding was the Rotherham LSBC;
 - The LSCB had a Sub-group with responsibility for Child Sexual Exploitation ('CSE Gold Group'), which oversaw the implementation of the CSE Strategy and Action Plan and the work of the 'Silver Group' that had operational responsibilities for CSE.

- The strategies for joint working across Adults' and Children's Services was the Think Family Group, which consisted of partner agencies including the Local Authority, Health, Probation, Police and voluntary sector organisations;
- The Domestic Abuse Priority Group oversaw the strategic work to reduce domestic abuse and support victims, including children living with families where this was an issue.

The report detailed the other forums whereby Children's and Adults' Services co-ordinated support and actions: -

These groups included: -

- The Early Help Support Panel;
- Multi-Agency Support Panel;
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements;
- Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference;
- Proposals were in place for a Vulnerable Adults Risk Management approach to bring all agencies working with adults together to address concerns;
- Common Assessment Framework was the key part of delivering frontline services that were integrated and focused around the needs of children and young people;
- Universal services that supported parents and carers;
- Services that supported adults in overcoming problems that affected children.

Main tensions and obstacles of working together: -

- The impact of public sector savings and the resulting reduction in members of staff and resources available;
- Changes in personnel working with children and families and adults, which could lead to discontinuity in service delivery;
- Changes in legislation and guidance for each area that could result in changes to information sharing protocols;
- High demand on one or more public sector services that diverted staff to focus on specific projects.

Future developments: -

The report had outlined that there was already established links between the two Services and also communications with partner agencies, spanning operational delivery and strategic planning. National legislation and local changes were being incorporated.

Current and future work included: -

- Ensure that agencies working with adults who were parents fully understood the impacts their interventions would have on the children in the family;
- This included workers identifying children who may be affected by their parent/carer's issues;
- The Rotherham LSCB agreed in June, 2013, to examine the interface between the two Services across the Borough. This piece of work was being undertaken by the LSCB's Quality Assurance Sub-group and would be reported back to both the Adult and Children's Safeguarding Boards;
- The Rotherham LSCB was also planning to use developing performance information about Early Help Services and their impact on outcomes for children to examine the effectiveness of services.

The representatives of Children's and Adults' Services shared case studies with the Improving Lives Select Commission to illustrate the different types of social care interventions and legal frameworks available to each Service.

Discussion ensued between members of the Select Commission and the representatives of the Services. Issues raised included: -

- How easy was it for people to get access to the services/support they wanted/needed?;
- Thresholds within Social Care;
- Members of the Select Commission recognised how difficult the job of front line workers could be;
- Were there areas where young people who had less significant learning disabilities could fall through the gaps and not receive a suitable transition?;
- Co-location of workers and multi-agency teams.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content relating to the benefits, challenges and obstacles of multi-agency working to improve family's lives be noted.

(2) That the Improving Lives Select Commission receive a further report relating to the transition for young people from Children's to Adults' Services.

24. DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICES: SCRUTINY REVIEW.

Consideration was given to the report that outlined the main findings and the recommendations of the scrutiny review of domestic abuse services in Rotherham.

Minute No. 48 (Work Programme Update) of the Improving Lives Select Commission meeting held on 23rd January, 2013, agreed to undertake a scrutiny review of domestic abuse services as part of the 2013/2014 work programme.

The submitted report outlined the information presented to the Select Commission at this meeting and the scope of the review subsequently undertaken.

The review had been concluded and it was found that there was excellent local work taking place driven by the Domestic Abuse Priority Group on behalf of the Safer Rotherham Partnership. This had brought about positive changes to local practice in the last few years.

Areas for further improvements included: -

- There was less consistency and integrated working by partners for standard and medium risk cases;
- The Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service represented the voice of the victim and co-ordinated measures to reduce the risk to victims and their families. However, it was only funded on a year-by-year basis, something which was inconsistent with the level of priority afforded to domestic abuse within the Safer Rotherham Partnership. The short-term approach inhibited service planning for the essential and effective service;
- Funding allocation for target hardening and early intervention and prevention had reduced in recent years and required further review as the effectiveness of easy and low-cost intervention had the potential to prevent escalation.

The submitted scrutiny review report outlined the twenty recommendations of the review. The twenty recommendations were grouped into the following categories: -

- Commissioning and funding;
- Strategy;
- Roles and responsibilities;
- Protocol and process;
- Prevention and early intervention;
- Forced marriage and so-called 'honour' based violence.

The focus of the review recommendations was to develop a more integrated domestic abuse service that had clear protocols and pathways for all risk levels and were understood by every partner agency. It was also recommended that domestic abuse should be more integrated at a strategic level so that the other workstreams were addressing the impact it had on victims and families as the long-term effects to individual were harmful on many levels.

Discussion ensued on the scrutiny review report: -

- Domestic abuse was not always reflected in the Council's strategic frameworks;
- Short-term funding of the support agencies was inefficient and was leading them to use a disproportionate amount of their time seeking future funding streams;
- Were all agencies using the same protocols?;
- Did victims feel able to come forward and report these crimes;
- Portrayal of domestic abuse within the media and television programmes;
- Individuals can be both victims and perpetrators of domestic abuse.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and the findings and recommendations of the scrutiny review be endorsed.

(2) That the scrutiny review on domestic abuse report be forwarded to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and then to Cabinet.

(3) That Cabinet be requested to refer the report to the Safer Rotherham Partnership for their consideration.

(4) That Cabinet's response to the recommendations be fed back to the Improving Lives Select Commission.

25. SCRUTINY REVIEW: SUPPORT FOR CARERS (EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST).

The Scrutiny Manager (Scrutiny Services, Legal and Democratic Services, Resources Directorate) presented a report that outlined a joint review that was being undertaken by the Improving Lives and Health Select Commissions on the support available for carers.

A Members' Seminar had recently covered the topic of carers, and one of the comments raised by Elected Members was that sometimes carers were unable to get adequate support and access to services.

Councillor B. Steele, Chair of the Health Select Commission, would be the Chair of the Joint Scrutiny Review.

The submitted report outlined: -

- The accepted definition of a carer;
- The profile of carers in Rotherham, which showed that, compared to national averages, Rotherham had higher numbers of carers caring for higher numbers of hours per week;
- Existing strategies to support carers were the 'Rotherham Carers' Charter' and 'Joint Action Plan for Carers 2013-2016', which included priority areas;

- Neighbourhood and Adult Services had already committed to undertaking an Officer review, it was intended that the Scrutiny Review would add value to this exercise;
- The potential scope of the review: -
 - Looking at available support from the perspective of carers, especially adult carers of adults with long term conditions such as dementia, focusing on access to information;
 - Did all carers identify themselves as a carer?
 - Did they consider that they need support?
 - Who did they go to for initial support when becoming a carer?
 - Where did they go for support?

Discussion ensued on the information presented and the proposed review: -

- Working with and supporting young carers;
- How did carers define their role, and did 'caring' differ from the tasks that extended families would expect to do for one another in the course of life?;
- Caring responsibilities usually built up gradually over time.

Expressions of interest were sought from the members of the Improving Lives Select Commission.

Resolved: - (1) That the report be received and its content noted.

(2) That Councillors J. Hamilton, Lelliott and Pitchley join the Scrutiny Review group.

(3) That all of the co-opted members of the Improving Lives Select Committee be contacted about joining the Scrutiny Review.

26. REPORTING SAFEGUARDING CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD / CHILDREN.

During consideration of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report, a member of the Improving Lives Select Commission asked for clarity on the correct ways to report concerns about a child's welfare.

What to do if you are worried about or have concerns about a child in Rotherham: -

- If it is an emergency ring 999;
- Contact Children's Social Care Services (Contact and Referral Team) – 01709 823987 (Out of Hours – 01709 336080);

- If you would like to share information which might help protect a child – Crimestoppers - 0800 555 111 anonymously, or the Police on 101;
- Or Childline – 0800 1111;
- For advice and information relating to Safeguarding Children Issues – Rotherham Safeguarding Children Unit 01709 823914.

27. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING: -

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Wednesday 6th November, 2013, to start at 1.30 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.