



Rutland County Council

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Minutes of the **MEETING of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held in the via Zoom on Thursday, 18th March, 2021 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Mr P Ainsley (Chairman)
Mr N Begy
Mr K Bool
Mrs J Burrows
Mr I Razzell
Mrs S Webb
Mr P French
Mr A Menzies

OFFICERS PRESENT:	Mrs D Godfrey	Director for Children's Services
	Ms B Caffrey	Head of Early Help, SEND and Inclusion
	Ms H Chester	Interim Service Manager Early Help, SEND and Inclusion
	Mrs L Crookenden-Johnson	SEND Programme Manager
	Mrs J Morley	Governance Officer

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D Wilby Portfolio Holder for Children's Services and Education

1 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor S Harvey.

2 RECORD OF MEETING

The minutes of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 26 November 2020 and the minutes from the joint meetings held with the Adults and Health Scrutiny Committee on the 21 and 27 January, were confirmed as correct.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

4 PETITIONS, DEPUTATIONS AND QUESTIONS

No petitions, deputations or questions had been received.

5 QUESTIONS WITH NOTICE FROM MEMBERS

No questions with notice from Members had been received.

6 NOTICES OF MOTION FROM MEMBERS

No notices of motion had been received from Members.

7 SEND SERVICES AND INCLUSION

Report No. 47/2021 was received from the Director of Children's Services. To introduce the report a presentation (appended to the minutes) was given by Bernadette Caffrey, Head of Service - Early Intervention, SEND and Inclusion and Louise Crookenden-Johnson, SEND Capital Programme Manager.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The Rutland context regarding SEND services and inclusion was outlined in which smart working and effective joint commissioning would be vital.
- There was an increased demand for SEND Services
- The service was dealing with more children with more complex needs
- The impact of the Covid pandemic and the restrictions on families and services would need to be assessed and factored into future service developments and design.
- SEND Case Officers had 'getting to know you' meetings with families, which was unique to Rutland and which supported the assessment process and the relationship with RCC
- Commissioned services included Educational Psychology and ADHD Solutions.
- Families were encouraged to support each other.
- The High Needs allocation for 2021/2022 was £4.65m. 0.5% was transferred from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block.
- The SEND Recovery Plan produced detailed the investment of £375k in a 5-year plan.
- An Education Inclusion Partnership had been established, which worked with primary schools to assess children and identify the appropriate support package for each individual child to prevent cases from escalating.
- An Education Inclusion Partnership would also be established to work with secondary schools.
- The future SEND Services and Inclusion would require a collective change in behaviours by everyone involved.
- Mr French stated that he had visited The Parks at Oakham Primary School and had been very impressed with the provision and the professionalism of the staff.
- Councillor Razzell asked how the service was prepared for the support of children affected by the Covid pandemic. Ms Caffrey stated that the service had received an increase in the number of children experiencing anxiety during the pandemic mainly regarding family issues and the return to school. The DfE's Returning to School Wellbeing Project had been run in schools and training for school staff had been given by the Local Authority's Educational Psychologists team. There was a new initiative of Emotional Health and Wellbeing practitioners going into schools to provide help and support. There had also been an increase in the number of children being electively home educated but there were no safeguarding concerns being identified regarding the children and/or the education provided. Feedback from schools about pupils and their return to school had been positive.

- Mrs Godfrey confirmed that the service had seen increased demand and was anticipating a further increase in demand as the pandemic eased. However, reserves had been included in budgets to cover an increase in demand if required, and costs and budgets would be constantly monitored and reviewed.
- Councillor Begy commented on the current overspend on the high needs spending and queried what impact this would have on the Council's overall budgets. Ms Godfrey stated that the funding for the high needs budget came from central government and that it sat separately from the Council's budget
- Ms Caffrey would send an updated breakdown of the tribunal data to attendees.
- Councillor Razzell queried how outcomes were monitored and quality assured. Mrs Crookenden-Johnson stated that the Co-ordinator produced a breakdown of outcomes for each individual child and for every intervention provided to that child. Quality assurance was built into contracts and feedback was gathered from children, families and partners on a regular basis.
- Mrs Crookenden-Johnson confirmed that the primary Education Inclusion Partnership (EIP) had been paused in January 2021 to help manage priority cases due to increased demand and because the providers could not undertake face-to-face counselling with children due to the pandemic. She stated that work with SENCOs and secondary schools was ongoing to establish the Secondary EIP by September 2021.

AGREED:

That the Committee:

1. Notes the Rutland offer for children with special educational needs and disability, (SEND), and the performance and progress made by the SEND and Inclusion Service.
2. Endorses the actions planned and/or completed in relation to addressing the priority areas for improvement and development.

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Ms. Caffrey, Mrs. Crookenden-Johnson and Ms. Chester left the meeting

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8 CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE AS AT END OF QUARTER THREE 2020-21

Report No. 48/2021 was received from Dawn Godfrey, Director of Children's Services.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

- The re-referral rate remained higher than expected but a full audit had been done to understand the reason why. Regional colleagues had also investigated Rutland's re-referral rate and both outcomes deemed that the depth of information gathered for the assessments was not sufficient. Work was being done to improve the quality of the assessments and the matter had been added to the service's improvement plan.
- An Advanced Practitioner now tracked every re-referral submitted and ensured that robust assessments were completed.
- The report highlighted a lot of improvement within the service particularly with the council's care leavers. The majority were in employment, education or training and were in appropriate accommodation.

- The targets and the data collected were being reviewed to improve the information given by the analysis of the performance data.
- Mrs Godfrey confirmed that the committee would receive quarterly updates of the performance data but reminded attendees that the data for Rutland dealt with small numbers so that any change in the numbers resulted in a large change in the percentages.
- Mrs Godfrey informed the Committee that she was immensely proud of the staff in Children's Services, particularly those in Children's Social Care who had worked all through the pandemic and the way they all had adapted to new work arrangements. The Committee passed their thanks on to all the staff in Children's Services for all their hard work and support.
- Councillor Ainsley requested that further information regarding the success of the Education Inclusion Partnerships be included in the next quarterly performance data.

AGREED:

That the Committee:

1. Notes the performance information as at the end of quarter three (April – December) 2020.

9 REVIEW OF ANNUAL WORK PLAN

- The annual work plan was approved.
- Mental health was to be added to the plan and the dates confirmed.

10 ANY OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None

11 DATE AND PREVIEW OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Committee would be confirmed at Annual Council on the 10th May 2021

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The Chairman declared the meeting closed at 9.03 pm.

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Rutland County Council

SEND and Inclusion Service

Scrutiny Committee 18th March 2021

Bernadette Caffrey and Louise Crookenden-Johnson

— Rutland Context

- Our **vision** - that children will enjoy independence, and an inclusive education and safe community.
- Our **duties** – Children Act , SEND Code of Practice, Working Together Guidance.
- Our **focus** - early identification and intervention, targeted support.
- Our **priorities** – service integration, sector wide improvement and effective commissioning.
- Our **challenge** - demand on services and provision, budget pressure and high parental expectations, reflecting the regional and national picture.
- Our **achievements** – a high performing service, positive outcomes for children and families and good levels of satisfaction.

Rutland Offer

- Team around the Family, (TAF), Aiming High, Early Years Inclusion and Children's Centre. - Focus on intervening early and avoiding unnecessary assessments and expensive services. Supporting children's access and success in their communities and easing parents' carer role.
- Inclusion service - Supporting children who may become vulnerable during their education, school attendance, missing education, without a place, medical needs, alternative provision, home educated.
- SEND service – Assessment of education health and care needs , EHC plans , annual reviews and provision of education placements, SEN Support
- Child in Need (CWD) – single assessment, CiN plans, respite and residential care.
- Independent Advice (SENDIASS), mediation, educational psychologist, (EP) and ADHD Solutions
- Special School 2 to 5 yrs, Primary Designated Special Provision (DSP) at Oakham C of E school, Secondary DSP at Catmose College and Enhanced Resourced Provision at UCC.
- Emotional health and well being practitioners, Nurture Group at Edith Weston.
- Sunnies and Family Centre, Rutland Parent Carer Voice

— Finances

- High Needs budget set at £4.25 million for 2020/2021. The high needs allocation for 2021/2022 is £4.65m. Total deficit on the DSG reserve for high needs of £978k.
- Schools Forum approved the transfer of 0.5% from the Schools Block to the High Needs Block in 2021/22.
- The high proportion of children with EHCPs and who are placed in out of county special provisions is driving overall expenditure.
- SEND Multiagency Panel - testing decision making, contract compliance and value for money.
- Decisive action to put in place a SEND Recovery Plan and a number of preventative actions.

— SEND Recovery Plan

- Investment of £357k, 5 year plan. Led by Schools Forum with leadership buy in from schools. Panel of Head teachers oversee resources.
- Coordinated independently of RCC, toolkit clarifies what resources are available.
- Principles and approach: Create confidence in inclusionary practice, come alongside school staff and coaches skills at case level, provide a speedy response when children's needs escalate, accurate assessment based on observing child, puts in the right package of support for child and helps schools' staff manage situation.
- Outcomes - reduce escalation of needs through improved practice, build confidence and experience of education staff and leaders in effective inclusion. Slow/halt rise in needs and therefore EHCPs over time.

Special Provision Position

- EHCPs numbers: 252 (Feb '21), 224 (Feb '20). 30 cases in assessment.
- Pressure for places in DSP/ERPs in Rutland
- Current provision:
 - 7.5 places 2 to 5yrs - The Parks, OCE
 - 20 primary DSP places for ASD and MLD - OCE
 - 25 secondary MLD – Catmose College
 - 10 secondary for Communication and Interaction needs - UCC
- Opportunities for greater impact
 - Change culture, develop 'Nurture' behaviours and attachment practice.
 - Reviewing options for early years inclusive context -the Parks and wider EY sector
 - Remaining Capital potential to develop facilities and engage sector.
- Risks:
 - Covid impact not quantified.
 - Requires collective change in behaviours and case by case effort.

Proposed Next Steps

- Profiling needs and creating a project proposal for DSP expansion
- Complete the review of primary pathway with OCE and trial new operating model
- Put in place secondary Education Inclusion Partnership
- Launch SEND Commissioning Strategy and Action Plan across LLR
- Review use of HNF for non EHCP cases and FE provision
- Review Inclusion function as part of Children's Services Offer and partnership engagement in early help



Feedback

- Ambergate School: *“The Annual Review Report form’ format which I know that S has worked hard on developing. They said it flowed very well and was very easy to use and they could see that work had been carried out on developing it”.*
- Parent: *“Just thank you for being there - a supportive network is paramount to not feeling alone. You have helped me realise it’s ok to reach out for support when we’ve coped alone for so long”.*
- School in a neighbouring authority, with a student who is a Rutland resident: *“It is refreshing to speak with a member of RCC and what a difference it is to the authority that the school is based in. The staff member gave positive acknowledgement to the Early Help and Inclusion teams and ask that this feedback be passed on to all in the teams. The staff member said how refreshing and welcoming it is to speak with RCC again.”*
- School : *“this is one of the best EHCP I have worked with and will greatly aid staff in working with X. The Plan is clear, precise and transparent for the reader and I compliment the Case Officer on drafting and presentation”.*