

## **Children's Services Committee**

**Minutes of the Meeting Held on Tuesday 17 June 2014  
2:00pm Edwards Room, County Hall, Norwich**

### **Present:**

Mr J Joyce (Chair)

Mr R Bearman (Vice Chair)

Mr D Collis

Ms E Corlett

Mr D Crawford

Mrs M Dewsbury

Mr C Foulger

Mr T Garrod

Mr P Gilmour

Ms D Gihawi

Mr M Kiddle-Morris

Mrs J Leggett

Mr W Northam

Mr J Perkins

Mr E Seward

Mr R Smith

Miss J Virgo

### **Parent Governor Representatives:**

Dr K Byrne

Ms S Vertigan

### **Non-Voting Co-opted Advisors:**

Ms V Aldous

Ms B Carrington

Mr A Robinson

Primary Education

Norfolk Governor Network

Norfolk Governors Network

### **Also in attendance:**

Mr P Hacon

Dr M Strong

### **1. Apologies and substitutions**

- 1.1 Apologies were received from Mrs Chamberlin (Mr Northam substituting), Mr Mash, Ms Smith and Ms Humber.

### **2. Declarations of Interest**

- 2.1 No declarations made.

### **3. Co-option of Non-Voting Advisers**

- 3.1 The Committee received the report by the Acting Managing Director (agenda item 1) which asked that the non-voting members of the Committee be confirmed for the year 2014-15. All existing members had confirmed that they were happy to remain members of the committee.

It was noted that Post 16 Education representatives would be received in July 2014.

- 3.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** that the Parent Governor Representatives and Advisory Members be formally co-opted onto the committee, as follows:-

**Parent Governor Representatives**

Kirsty Byrne  
Sara Vertigan

**Advisory Members**

Schools Forum – Nomination to be confirmed  
Norfolk Governors Network – Alex Robinson  
Post-16 Education – Nomination to be confirmed  
Primary Education – Vicky Aldous  
Secondary Education – Chrissie Smith  
Special Needs Education – Tina Humber

**4. Items of Urgent Business**

- 4.1 The Chairman advised that a handout had been circulated to Members at the start of the meeting (attached to the minutes as Appendix A) which discussed ways in which the committee would work and how Members and officers would work together, as well as what the main business of the committee would be. A formal committee plan was still being written. Upcoming decisions would be made available to all Members through the committee forward plan.

**5. Local Member Issues/Member Questions**

- 5.1 No Member questions had been received prior to the meeting, however the Chair invited Members to put any questions they may have.
- 5.2 Ms Corlett asked why speech and language therapy in schools had been restricted to four sessions per pupil. Officers advised that a written answer would be provided.
- 5.3 It was noted that the protocol around public and Member questions would be considered in November 2014 as part of the committee system review. In the meantime questions could be asked to the Leader of the Council during full Council meetings and to Committee chairs at committee meetings, as long as the required notice of two working days was given.

**6. Appointments to Internal and External Bodies**

- 6.1 The Committee received the report by the Acting Managing Director (item 6) which proposed some changes to particular existing internal and external body appointments. Most existing arrangements would be maintained until September 2014 when a full review would take place.
- 6.2 The following changes to internal and external bodies were noted:
- Mr Smith would replace Mr Iles on the Capital Priorities Group.
  - A Member of the Conservative Group would join the Small Schools Steering Group.

- Other representations would be forwarded in due course.

6.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** that:-

- Unless otherwise specified above or in Appendix A of the report, existing appointments to external and internal bodies would continue pending a review to the September Committee cycle and that Member Champion appointments would remain in force until the November review.
- Appointments to those particular external and internal bodies where there was a need to review appointments before the September meeting of the Committee be agreed, as set out in Appendix A of the report.
- Where there was a scrutiny working group whose work was not considered by Members to be have been complete, the Chief Officer would bring a report to allow Members to consider how/if they wish to progress these pieces of work.
- Authority to make appointments to internal and external bodies be delegated to the Acting Managing Director, following consultation with the Chairman or Vice Chairman (and Group Spokespersons where appropriate) where there was an urgent need.

7 **Quality Assurance Update**

7.1 The Committee received the report by the Interim Director of Children's Services (item 7) which updated Members on Quality Assurance activity within Children's Social Care over the first six months of 2014.

7.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** that:

- The approach to quality assurance be endorsed.
- Quarterly updates would be received, to ensure that improvement activities continued to achieve improvements to social care practice and that the quality of service for children and families had improved.

8. **Update on Norfolk Family Focus**

8.1 The Committee received the report (item 8) by the Interim Director of Children's Services, which provided an update to a report on Norfolk Family Focus, first presented to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Panel in January 2014.

8.2 An improvement plan was circulated for the report, attached to the minutes as Appendix B.

8.3 The Committee **RESOLVED** that:-

- A written response would be provided to Members demonstrating progress against outcomes to date.
- The report be noted and that a further written report be provided to the

Committee in Autumn 2014, demonstrating where progress had been made.

## **9. Free School Meals Update**

9.1 The Committee received the report (item 9) by the Interim Director of Children's Services. The report updated Members of eligibility for free school meals, provided progress report on preparations for the introduction of universal Infant free school meals and updated on pupil premium funding for schools.

9.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** that:-

- The report be noted.
- An updated report should be brought to the Committee within six months.
- The Government should be lobbied by the Committee regarding eligibility for free school meals, in order to ensure that all children who were entitled to free meals receive them, rather than the onus being on parents to apply.

## **10. Sustaining High Quality Leadership in Norfolk Schools – Progress Report**

10.1 The Committee received the report (item 10) by the Interim Director of Children's Services which gave a progress report on sustaining high quality leadership in Norfolk schools. The report summarised the original report and contained two appendices giving critical detail around sustainable leadership and structural solutions and why a structural solution should be considered.

10.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** that:-

- The contents of the progress report be noted
- The model outlined in 2.1 of the report be supported, with its focus on risk assessment of schools, executive leadership of more than one school, strong governance and effective deployment of Local Authority capital funding.
- The Small Schools Steering Group be reconvened to evaluate the impact of the autumn term 2013 review of small schools and make recommendations for further activity, with the Group being chaired by the vice-Chair of the Children's Services Committee.

## **11. Children's Services Integrated Performance and Finance Monitoring Draft Report for 2013-14.**

11.1 The Committee received the report (item 11) by the Interim Director of Children's Services. The report set out the latest performance information under the revised framework for monitoring performance within Children's Services which was implemented in January 2014. It also provided outcome based evidence of improvements and trends for a range of measures and indicators within children's social care services and support for school improvement.

11.2 The Committee **RESOLVED** that:-

- The following information be noted:
  - The predicted improvement in outcomes in early years.
  - Changes to predictions at Key Stage 2 and the explanation for this.
  - Predictions at Key Stage 4 which indicate we are on track to achieve the 2014 target (within tolerances).
  - Improvements in Ofsted ratings of 10% for primary schools and 18% for secondary schools.
  - Performance in LAC teams is not improving and urgent attention is being given to this.
  - Performance for teams dealing with child protection and children in need cases is continuing to improve with some markedly improved performance shown overall.
  - The pressures within the looked after children costs (specifically agency placements, Ofsted unregulated accommodation, and special guardianship orders) and special educational needs transport costs that significantly contributed to the overspend.
  - The overall reduction in school balances and the increase in balances held by clusters.
- A detailed report on case outcomes should be made available at the July 2014 Committee meeting.

The meeting closed at 16:45pm.

**CHAIRMAN**



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## Title: Ways of working for the new committee

Key points .

- This is a new set of arrangements and presents a real opportunity to add something to the improvement work
- It creates an opportunity to improve the way of working and the involvement of elected members in the frontline practice
- It enhances the opportunities to get members out and about , to see front line practice , to interact with staff and service users.
- However - in order to do these things , we have to build on the work done so far , we have to demonstrate a managed transition and we must continue to give good evidence that children's services is a priority for the council and it's partners . This means demonstrating the political and officer leadership that illustrates that we understand the issues well and that we can work through differences in order to deliver sustainable change .
  - **We must remember that children's services remains under the spotlight of improvement.**

How will we handle agenda setting and preparation of papers ?

- We have a forward plan - this will largely set the programme of work for our committee, there will though , be opportunities to take other kinds of information and reports. These will be informed by new ways of getting members involved , in front line visits and in task and finish activity .
- The agenda setting will go through a number of stages , from discussion with Chair and Vice Chair with the Director , to discussion with spokespeople .
- The regular spokesperson briefings will include prior to the committee , discussion on the key papers , there formulation , the issues and challenges . In addition there will be an opportunity for regular briefings outside of committee on issues that are particularly sensitive or difficult .
- The reports will look very different , with a focus on ' what difference will this make for Norfolk's children' being right at the forefront . It is intended to make the reports simpler and shorter , with a greater focus on supporting documentation being available through hyperlinks.
- It is intended that staff other than the senior team will come along to committee , giving a much greater input from front line managers . This is an area that staff are receiving training on over the next month.

**How will the committee work ?**

- These new arrangements provide a chance to work differently with some of the work happening outside of the committee room .
- It is proposed that given the size of the children's portfolio , we create opportunities for two working groups ,  
     The first focused on Children and Young people in the social care system  
     The second focused on Learning , Inclusion and development
- These groups will undertake timetabled visits , will create the pool of members from which Task and Finish work will be completed and will have an opportunity to report back to committee on their work programme .
- To undertake the work they will have support from a senior officer .

#### **What will task and finish look like for this first cycle ?**

- The creation of two groupings of members allows us to improve our response to scrutiny across ALL aspects of children's services
- It also allows us to begin scrutiny activity that will support the improvement work underway already
- It is suggested that on this first round we take some themes from discussion with the Director as to a focus for both groups :

#### **Social care :**

**Do we plan effectively for children in need , with a particular emphasis on the role of multi agency partners .?**

**Or :**

**How effective has the social work pilot in schools in terms of reducing social care referral rates ?**

#### **Learning , Inclusion , Development :**

**Do children's Centres enhance the preparedness of children's readiness for school under the current contract arrangements ?**

**How well does Norfolk respond to children missing education ?**

## IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

Plan Title	Priority Activity	Progress
<b>Children's Services Plan (2013-16)</b>	Develop a Participation Strategy to put children and young people central to the evaluation and assessment of service performance and to assist in service redesign	Project team in place and strategy being prepared by steering group which includes good representation from young people. Strategy to be presented to Committee in September and when approved implementation to follow immediately
	Develop a consultation document for a reorganisation of the children's workforce Reorganisation	Informal staff and partner consultation has begun. Business case will be completed by the end of June 2014
	Develop a framework for aligning our commissioning with health and joint commissioning where this will improve outcomes	CCGs and Children's Services/NCC staff are meeting regularly to progress this.
<b>Strategic Improvement Plan</b>	<b><u>Performance and Quality</u></b>	
	<b>A rigorous and robust culture of performance and quality assurance focussed on the quality of experience for Norfolk's children and families</b>	
	Voice of the child evidenced by all social workers in all case records as a consistent way of working	Data from the Peer review March 2014 suggested that the Voice of the Child was evident in 29/30 cases audited (96%). This has continued to be evident as shown in recent worker audit and case audit
	Senior manager audits of supervision records routinely challenge where the voice of the child cannot be evidenced in case files	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	Divisional teams routinely share good practice on the 'voice of the child'	The sharing of good practice is a standing item on the agenda at the divisional meetings
	Monthly Divisional Performance and Quality meetings consider this element of practice on a regular basis, sharing good practice	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings include consideration of case studies showing good social work practice that is leading to good/excellent outcomes for children and families
	<b>Managers and teams who are confident in talking about their teams and individual performance</b>	
	Managers routinely challenge individuals on their performance using current performance data and quality assurance evidence	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board. Dates set for senior managers to carry these out



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	Divisional teams routinely (weekly and monthly) consider their team and individual performance using current performance data and quality assurance evidence	Team meetings at all levels show that this is routinely happening. The Peer Safeguarding Health check confirmed that embedding of a performance culture is evidenced
	Monthly Divisional Performance and Quality meetings consider individual, team , divisional and whole service data on a monthly basis	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings demonstrate that this is the case
	Three weekly Performance and Challenge Board considers individual, team , divisional, whole service and partnership data on a monthly basis	Notes of monthly P and Challenge Board demonstrate that this is the case
	<b>Rigorously and robustly quality assure Social Care Practice via a cohesive, well managed and consistently delivered suite of quality checks and audits</b>	
	Routine audit schedule in place that regularly raises quality of practice issues with individual workers	Evidence that this is on track and is improving standards of practice. Peer Safeguarding Health check confirmed that this is happening
	Routine audit schedule in place that regularly raises quality of practice issues with individual workers that are addressed by managers	Evidence that this is on track and is improving standards of practice. Peer Safeguarding Health check confirmed that this is happening
	Specialist audits are commissioned by Audit and QA team where specific issues are raised	More work to do on this - i.e. thematic audits commissioned by the Performance and Challenge Board. PSHC confirmed that this is an area for further development. Core Assessment audit commissioned by Performance and Challenge Board and will build on review completed by Ingson's.
	Three weekly Performance and Challenge Board commissions specialist audits and 'deep dives' where specific issues are raised	More work to do on this - i.e. thematic audits commissioned by the Performance and Challenge Board. PSHC confirmed that this is an area for further development. Specialist / thematic audit commissioned by the Performance and Challenge Board to be concluded and reported on by July 2014
	Practice Standards Improvement project implemented in full	Carefirst reform has been completed. The 3 month review is currently taking place to ensure any outstanding issues with performance data are resolved. All teams are working to the correct process frameworks to ensure timeliness for children and families. Practice standards guidance and training has been undertaken and multi-agency practice standards are in the process of being published by the

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		NSCB. The launch of the Multi-agency Practice Standards will include a re-launch of the NSCB1 and Threshold Guide, due to take place in September 2014.
	<b>People</b>	
	<b>The children's workforce has the requisite skills and support to contribute to positive outcomes for children</b>	
	All role descriptions are clear about the skills required to successfully undertake a role	Job descriptions for all generic social care roles up to PSW level updated last year and will be reviewed in light of service restructure.
	All staff understand how skills support best practice	Some staff feedback (e.g. at Colloquium) evidences improved satisfaction with and effectiveness of supervision
	All staff receive quality supervision and appraisals that identify strengths and areas for development	Some staff feedback (e.g. at Colloquium) evidences improved satisfaction with and effectiveness of supervision and access to staff development. All CS staff included in NCC Staff Survey planned for June 2014.
	All staff receive the appropriate learning / development opportunities to help them develop their skills	In late 2013, NCC increased SW capacity by 66 fte. This was populated primarily with agency SWs pending the recruitment of SWs on substantive NCC employment contracts. As at w/c 15/04/14, we have filled approximately 30 of the 66 fte with substantively recruited SWs. While our national recruitment campaigns have achieved wide coverage and national recognition, they are unlikely to result in the employment of sufficient SWs to populate the whole of our additional capacity so an alternative resourcing strategy is being adopted in which targeted and reducing use is made of agency teams while increased numbers of NQSWs are recruited and developed through their ASYE. Work is ongoing to understand caseloads which will inform the design of our longer term structure and any re-skilling required.
	Recruitment and retention attracts high quality candidates (internally and externally) that we can retain	See note in above. Rigorous quality standards used to select both agency and employed SWs. Recent review of SW capacity shows turnover at below regional and national averages. Recruitment market for TM and SSWs level experience is more difficult giving localised recruitment and retention issues in some teams.
	All staff in other agencies understand the skills they need to contribute to positive outcomes for children and receive the appropriate learning and development	Work is progressing under the auspices of the regional Social Workforce development strategy

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	<b>The workforce are fully competent and have the confidence to challenge each other appropriately and their partners to ensure the best outcomes for the child</b>	
	All staff understand and model the high performing behaviours we expect of them	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board.
	All staff can identify risks, assess them and appropriately challenge and raise concerns	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	All staff understand how and when to escalate issues	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	All staff understand the accountabilities of other partners to enable them to identify when it is appropriate to challenge	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	<b>There is clear leadership and accountability demonstrated throughout all levels of management</b>	
	All managers understand their accountabilities and decision making responsibilities	Further work to do on this and this is being developed with Ingson's and Dr Alex Chard
	Managers use all the information that is available to them to understand the whole performance of their team and individuals and take corrective actions where necessary	Team meetings at all levels show that this is routinely happening. The Peer Safeguarding Healthcheck confirmed that embedding of a performance culture is evidenced
	Managers have the skills to confidently and competently handle staff related issues in a timely way	Team meetings at all levels show that this is routinely happening. The Peer Safeguarding Healthcheck confirmed that embedding of a performance culture is evidenced.
	Managers identify the development needs of their staff and team (s) and seek the appropriate support to develop them	Team meetings at all levels show that this is routinely happening. The Peer Safeguarding Healthcheck confirmed that embedding of a performance culture is evidenced

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	Managers are able to keep their teams motivated and engaged in the delivery of positive outcomes for children and young people	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	Managers confidently lead their teams (s) ensuring their staff understand both the strategic and operational needs of Children's Services and Norfolk County Council	All CS staff included in NCC Staff Survey planned for June 2014.
	<b>All staff understand how they contribute to achieving positive outcomes for children and young people</b>	
	Positive outcomes for children evidenced by all social workers in all case records as a consistent way of working	Evidence from the Peer review March 2014 suggested only 1 case audited was inadequate and that the majority of cases showed workers were clearly focused on keeping children safe and knowing children and families well. Current 1 case 1 worker audit demonstrates social workers have sound knowledge of their cases. 18 teams to date have had Impact workshops and the understanding of this is beginning to be evidenced in case files.
	Senior manager audits of supervision records routinely challenge where positive outcomes cannot be evidenced in case files	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	Divisional teams share good practice routinely	The sharing of good practice is a standing item on the agenda at the divisional meetings
	Monthly Divisional Performance and Quality Meetings consider this element of practice on a regular basis, sharing good practice	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings demonstrate that this is the case. Workers are being encouraged to develop portfolios of the different aspects of their work that has attained a good standard.
	<b><u>Practice Standards</u></b>	
	<b>Listening to the views and wishes of the child and acting on their views must be central to all of our work with every child we work with</b>	
	Voice of the child evidenced by all social workers in all case records as a consistent way of working	Data from the Peer review March 2014 suggested that the Voice of the Child was evident in 29/30 cases audited (96%). This has continued to be evident in recent 1 worker 1 case audit. There is an improving picture in the cases that have been audited and the expectation is that workers will be held accountable by their managers if this is not to the expected or required standard

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	Senior manager audits of supervision records routinely challenge where the voice of the child cannot be evidenced in case files	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	Divisional teams routinely share good practice on the 'voice of the child'	The sharing of good practice is a standing item on the agenda at the divisional meetings. All good practice examples start with the child, their voice and their experience.
	Monthly Divisional Performance and Quality meetings consider this element of practice on a regular basis, sharing good practice	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings include consideration of case studies showing good social work practice that is leading to good/excellent outcomes for children and families
	<b>The inclusion, involvement and participation of parents in assessing and meeting the needs of their child must be central to all our work</b>	
	Inclusion, involvement and participation of parents evidenced by all social workers in all case records as a consistent way of working	Evidence from the Peer review is that knowing children and families well is a key strength in the quality of work undertaken. Recent audits demonstrate that workers have a sound knowledge of the children and families that they are working with
	Senior manager audits of supervision records routinely challenge when inclusion of parents cannot be evidenced in case files	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	Divisional teams share good practice routinely	The sharing of good practice is a standing item on the agenda at the divisional meetings. This remains a standing item and every team manager presents a case.
	Monthly Divisional Performance and Quality meetings consider this element of practice on a regular basis, sharing good practice	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings demonstrate that this is the case
	<b>Every child will receive a timely high quality assessment produced by the competent use of a relevant assessment framework</b>	
	Managers routinely challenge individuals on their performance using current performance data and quality assurance evidence	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
	Divisional teams routinely (weekly and monthly) consider their team and individual performance using current performance data and quality assurance evidence	Notes of meetings are sent to AD Performance and Quality on a weekly basis and show that this is the case

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Monthly Divisional Performance and Quality meetings consider individual, team , divisional and whole service data on a monthly basis	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings demonstrate that this is the case
Three weekly Performance and Challenge Board considers individual, team , divisional, whole service and partnership data on a monthly basis	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings demonstrate that this is the case
<b>Every child receiving a service will have a child centred plan based on their assessed needs</b>	
Managers routinely challenge individuals on their performance using current performance data and quality assurance evidence	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
Divisional teams routinely (weekly and monthly) consider their team and individual performance using current performance data and quality assurance evidence	Notes of meetings are sent to AD Performance and Quality on a weekly basis and show that this is the case
Monthly Divisional Performance and Quality meetings consider individual, team , divisional and whole service data on a monthly basis	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings demonstrate that this is the case
Three weekly Performance and Challenge Board considers individual, team , divisional, whole service and partnership data on a monthly basis	Notes of monthly P and Q meetings demonstrate that this is the case
<b>Staff should expect and enable other agencies to work with them to jointly deliver high quality services to every child</b>	
All staff understand and model the high performing behaviours we expect of them	Plans are in place for a random sampling of supervision on a monthly basis and the evaluations will be fed back to staff via monthly Performance and Quality meetings and quarterly to the Performance and Challenge Board
All staff can identify risks, assess them and appropriately challenge and raise concerns	Further work to do on this and this is being developed with Ingson's and Dr Alex Chard
All staff understand how and when to escalate issues	Further work to do on this and this is being developed with Ingson's and Dr Alex Chard
All staff understand the accountabilities of other partners to enable them to identify when it is appropriate to challenge	Further work to do on this and this is being developed with Ingson's and Dr Alex Chard