

AT A MEETING of the Children and Families Advisory Panel of HAMPSHIRE
COUNTY COUNCIL held at the Castle, Winchester
on Monday, 6th February, 2023

Chairman:

* Councillor Arun Mummalaneni

* Councillor Ann Briggs	* Councillor Wayne Irish
* Councillor Prad Bains	Councillor Adam Jackman
Councillor Christopher Donnelly	* Councillor Stephen Parker
* Councillor Juliet Henderson	* Councillor Malcolm Wade

*Present

Also present: Councillor Steve Forster, Executive Member for Education

34. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies were received for the meeting.

35. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in any matter considered at the meeting they must declare that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in Part 3, Paragraph 1.5 of the County Council's Members' Code of Conduct, leave the meeting while the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with Paragraph 1.6 of the Code. Furthermore, Members were mindful that where they believed they had a Personal interest in a matter being considered at the meeting they considered whether such interest should be declared, and having regard to Part 5, Paragraph 5 of the Code, considered whether it was appropriate to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with the Code.

No declarations were made.

36. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 2022 were reviewed and agreed as a correct record.

37. DEPUTATIONS

There were no deputations.

38. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no formal Chairman's announcements.

Cllr Henderson reported that she had visited a children's home and had been struck by the high level of care provided by the staff. She summarised her experience by saying that early intervention is the way forward.

She had also attended a Looked After Child Review in Eastleigh and was impressed by how good the social worker was and noted how skilled these staff have to be.

Cllr Wade had also attended a Looked After Child Review.

39. TRANSFORMING FAMILY HELP

The Panel received a report and presentation from the Director of Children's Services providing an overview of the development of a new Family Help model. (Item number 6 in the minute book). The Area Director introduced the report, explaining that this was part of the significant transformation work being undertaken in Children and Families, driven by the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

She explained that:

- The aim is to bring together targeted early help and Children in Need services to create a Family Help model that operates at a local community-based level.
- Hampshire has applied to become a Pathfinder.
- A focus has been on the development and implementation of a new case holding role within the Children's Assessment and safeguarding Team, employing skills of a differently qualified social worker, known as a Family Practitioner, which is different and separate to a social worker role.
- 36 Family Practitioners have been recruited.

The Panel heard that the aim was to deliver the right support at the right time, with early intervention where possible. A new profile has been developed for the Family Practitioner to work on specific case types where there is a lower level of risk. Some of these case types were illustrated in the presentation (page 23 of the reports pack) and it was explained that:

- The next step is to take an iterative approach to Family Help.

- The Family Support Service and the Childrens Assessment and Safeguarding Teams will be combined, allowing children to be at the centre of care, with services being ‘wrapped around the child.’
- Thresholds have been tested to ensure confidence that they are correct.
- Family Help will be piloted in all eight districts with six family help teams.
- There is an aim to see other partners within the teams and to be more joined up.

In response to questions from Members, the Panel heard that the locations for the hubs would be where the greatest need is, with spaces within the community to offer services, using facilities that families already access so that these do not feel different to those they already use.

Members of the Panel advised officers to contact them should they need access and signposting to community spaces.

Resolved

The contents of this report were noted by the Children and Families Advisory Panel.

40. **NATIONAL REVIEW - CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES AND COMPLEX HEALTH NEEDS PLACED IN RESIDENTIAL SETTINGS - SUMMARY REPORT**

The Panel received a report from the Director of Children’s Services to provide oversight of the Hampshire response to a request from the Child Safeguarding Review Panel. (Item number 7 in the minute book). The Area Director explained that as a result of an abuse scandal in Doncaster, all Directors of Children’s Services had been asked to undertake two urgent actions arising from the National Review.

He reported that Hampshire had completed the actions and was presenting the outcomes to the Panel due to its scrutiny role.

The Panel heard that the review had been a significant piece of work and that social workers had made visits, spoken to professionals and scrutinised reports. The main points were that:

- There were no significant concerns for any child reviewed and that the Director could be assured of the safety and wellbeing of the children at these schools.
- There had been one school where there had been a previous ‘inadequate’ Ofsted grading. The Directorate was already working closely with the school and partners to ensure the care the children were receiving was not impaired. The panel were also informed that all Hampshire children had recently been removed from the setting.

- All Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) referrals over the last three years had been reviewed.

In response to Members' questions, the Panel heard that:

- Another future review had not been agreed upon, and actions needed to be proportionate, but that the review had provided assurance that the correct and proper quality assurance processes were already in place.
- Social workers and independent reviewing officers visit all children in these settings as a matter of course.
- The findings in relation to the voice of the child and the impact of their disability related to the LADO recording of the HR investigation rather than the child in a placement in an independent special school.

Members thanked officers for the report.

Resolved

The contents of this report were noted by the Children and Families Advisory Panel.

41. **PRINCIPAL SOCIAL WORKER - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES - ANNUAL REPORT**

The Panel received a report from the Director of Children's Services, providing a high-level briefing on the roles and responsibilities of the Hampshire Children and Families Principal Social Worker and an update on the current and future priorities of this role. (Item number 8 in the minute book).

The Area Director introduced the report and explained that it was centred on the wellbeing of staff and how this results in outcomes for children.

She reported that the role had evolved, particularly in participation in branch management meetings, so that it was possible for the strategic picture to be understood with a clear communication channel between staff and senior leaders.

Concentration had been made on wellbeing over the past year, with more time being made to speak to staff and wellbeing was on everyone's agenda.

Principal Social Worker Buddies meet with the Principal Social Worker, bringing back issues from the districts.

Wellbeing offers are being developed which are specific to the work and challenges of social workers including:

- A targeted pathway for staff for when they come across particularly difficult situations, introducing a TRiM system that is used by the Police.

- Sessions with practitioners for difficult incidents to help with resilience.
- Input for social workers recruited to Hampshire internationally in the form of induction and training.

In response to questions from Members, the Panel heard that:

- This approach to wellbeing was a positive selling point when recruiting social workers.
- Managers work with staff if they need help, for example by providing extended holiday leave, flexible working etc.
- A no blame culture is key.
- The loss of staff is slowing and work on other routes to social work is in place – for example, apprenticeships, step ups and graduate training.

The Panel thanked the officer for the report and noted how much progression had been made.

Resolved

The Panel is aware of and noted the role and work of the Hampshire Children and Families Principal Social Worker.

42. **HOCKLEY HOUSE**

The Panel received a presentation providing an update on Hockley House. (Item number 9 in the minute book). The Service Lead Manager explained that this was to be new residential accommodation, with provision for children with more complex needs to increase placement choice and keep young people close to their families and help them to progress to independent living.

The Panel heard that:

- A multi-agency approach had been taken, jointly funded by the Department for Education, using existing infrastructure, and the accommodation was for three children with complex needs. The facility (three self-contained maisonettes) would provide maximum independence with communal areas and keep the historic look of the building.
- In planning, there had been engagement with young people in care, communities and local residents. The Team had also looked externally to outside Hampshire.
- The expectation is for the facility to go live in the early autumn.

- The aim is to help provide a safe environment for children with complex needs to receive multi-agency support, improve their wellbeing and help them to make sufficient progress to return home, move into independence or to an appropriate alternative care setting.

In response to Members' questions, the Panel heard that:

- It was hoped that the innovative and exciting nature of the project would mean that people would be attracted to join the team at Hockley House. There would be a range of people on site including mental health nurses and other professionals.
- The facility would help with a growing group of children, who in some cases, are in hospital beds which do not meet their needs and to take pressure off other children's homes.
- Children would have their own personal accommodation areas and when ready, have the opportunity to mix with other young people in the communal areas.

The Panel was supportive of the initiative.

Resolved

The Panel noted the contents of the presentation.

Chairman, Children and Families
Advisory Panel