

Children's Trust Statutory Board

28 April 2009

Present

Cllr John Smith (Chairman) (Lead Member for Children & Young Peoples Services - DCC), Inspector Beety (Devon & Cornwall Constabulary), (Job Centre Plus,)Carolyn Elliot (Adult and Community Services), Sue Parr (Job Centre Plus), Dr Virginia Pearson (Director of Public Health), Mary Nisbett (Independent), Richard Newton-Chance (Devon Education Forum), John Peart (Learning and Skills Council), Jenny Rudge (Connexions Cornwall and Devon)), Dr Kevin Snee (Devon PCT), Anne Whiteley (Executive Director of CYPS - DCC), Alan Wooderson (Devon Local Safeguarding Children Board)and Eelke Zoestbergen (Devon and Cornwall Police Authority)

In Attendance

Brian Grady (Head of Commissioning and Procurement)
Debbie Pritchard (Children's Trust Programme Director)
Gerry Rufolo (Committee Secretariat)

Apologies

Nicola Bulbeck (Devon District Councils)
Karen Chapman (Sue Par)
Penny Mathers (Observer Government Office South West)
Anne Proctor (Probation Service)
Jo Tennant (Devon and Cornwall Police Authority)

8 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2009 were signed as a correct record subject to Minute 3 (e) be amended to indicate that the DSP be requested to include representation from the Children's Trust and that the PCT be requested to appoint a Vice Chairman for the Board of the Children's Trust.

9 Children's Trust Governance and operating arrangements and Draft Terms of Reference

The Board considered a Paper by Brian Grady and Jenny Rudge on an outline of a proposed model of governance. The paper outlined a governance framework with a Memorandum of Understanding and a handbook of operational procedures. Within the proposed membership of the Trust Board it was noted that the Police Authority should also be represented. In respect of the Strategic Health Authority representation Dr Snee indicated that he would seek confirmation from the SHA that he could act as its representative on the CT Board.

AGREED

(a) that the proposed model of governance be approved;

(b) that a Task and Finish Group comprising Brian Grady, Mary Nisbett, Debbie Pritchard and Jenny Rudge be mandated to complete the Memorandum of Understanding and Handbook of Operational Procedures for approval at the next meeting.

10 Draft Terms of Reference - Partnership Council

Debbie Pritchard reported on the draft Terms of reference for the Partnership Council agreed at the last CT Executive, based on national guidance although further clarification from government was required on certain aspects.

Mary Nisbett commended the commitment of the partners involved during this difficult period of transition and in view of the work loads involved. Members also referred to the work loads, noting the role of the local Trusts and the need for clarification of structures and functions of all three bodies involved.

Anne Whiteley suggested that the Council adopt a thematic approach to its deliberations concentrating on key issues and advising the Board accordingly and that clarification of roles and functions would evolve as part of the review of governance arrangements already initiated.

AGREED that subject to ongoing review (minute 9 refers) the Terms of Reference for the CT Partnership Council be adopted.

11 Matters of Interest to the Devon's Trust

The Board received a paper by Anne Whiteley on the preparation for the Building Schools for the Future programme, the national transfer of functions from the Learning and Skills Council to LAs, a review of safeguarding arrangements undertaken by IDeA involving peer group colleagues, preparations and implications in respect of unannounced and announced Ofsted inspections of safeguarding arrangements and children in care services, the inspection process for Children's Centres; and on partnership work to address child poverty and reducing inequalities.

Appended to the report was the Peer review findings - Areas for Consideration with 'Priority Areas'.

The review was seen as a positive and constructive exercise and where it was recognised that the LA with partners was well placed with many strengths in respect of children's services. These strengths recognised by the Review would be circulated to the Board. The results of the review would be included in a CT Bulletin to be published shortly.

In terms of safeguarding arrangements and the new inspection and audit requirements the Board recognised the need for consistent methodology and approach by all the duty to co-operate partners.

AGREED that the Board receive at its next meeting

(a) a draft Programme Plan arising from the IDeA Safeguarding Peer Review and Audit;

(b) a report on Building Schools for the Future setting out the ambitions, expectations and timelines to ensure readiness to deliver;

(c) a report on the progress of preparation for the 14-19 transition and the LSC transfer of functions;

(d) a briefing setting out the requirements and implications for the new Inspection regime;

(e) a report on the post-Beacon work on Strategic Commissioning.

12 Local Safeguarding Children's Board (Update)

The Board considered a paper by Alan Wooderson on the Devon Safeguarding Children Board's governance arrangements and membership of the Board and accountability issues, the outcome of serious Case Reviews, and the findings of a NSPCC study and cases in the SW Peninsula and common themes and re-occurring issues; and planned workshops for multi agency staff involved in safeguarding; the Laming report finding and the Governments initial view to be followed by a formal detailed response by the end of April. Further consideration would also be necessary in terms of the links between adult safeguarding issues and the LSCB, as there were common themes, particularly in respect of the children whose parents were vulnerable adults.

The report also included the summary of findings of a review of Safeguarding arrangements in Independent, Non Maintained Special and Boarding Schools in England undertaken by Sir Roger Singleton. This was a particularly legally complex area on which Mr. Richard Newton Chance offered to assist Mr. Wooderson. This was a particular important area for Devon with the number of students in the non maintained sector. Commissioning arrangements involving placement of children with additional needs in the non maintained sector and related quality assurance was also another area of concern. The legal framework in respect of the numerous language schools for foreign students remained unclear and this would need further consideration.

Advice for all agencies and staff on safeguarding was available on the Every Child Matters web site: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/>

AGREED that this Board receives at future meetings reports on:

(a) the implications for Devon of the Government's response to Lord Laming's report: the Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report;

(b) the implications for Devon of the report by Sir Roger Singleton 'Keeping our School Safe'

(c) the Quality Assurance Framework for safeguarding children that is expected to be in place across all duty to co-operate partners in Devon.

(d) the proposed engagement of Independent Schools be endorsed.

13 Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures: PCT Position

The Board received this paper by the PCT presented by Virginia Pearson. The paper was Devon's response to the Government's vision for partnerships between local authorities, primary care trusts and those working across children's health services to improve quality of support families received to promote the health and well being of their children. A table attached to the report outlined the key issues and recommendations of the strategy and the current position with suggested actions and associated risks and with Red, Amber, and Green ratings.

AGREED that further reports be presented to the next meeting on

(a) Services for Children with Acute Additional Needs with reference to the 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' funding plans based on the Needs Assessment;

(b) on the Strategy for 'Strengthening the Child Health workforce';

(c) the annual Public Health Report.

14 Unintended Injuries Strategy

This matter was deferred to the next meeting.

15 Review of the Children and Young People's Plan

Debbie Pritchard indicated that a report of the revised Children and Young People's Plan would be presented to the next meeting following the self assessment day in May, with reference to resource and capacity issues.

16 Dates of Future meetings

AGREED

23 July 2009

29 September

4 November

at 10 am - 1pm at County Hall, Exeter

The meeting started at 10 am and finished at 1:05 pm