

BATH AND NORTH EAST SOMERSET

CHILDREN, ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELLBEING POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY PANEL

Tuesday, 3rd November, 2020

Present:- Councillors Vic Pritchard (Chair), Michelle O'Doherty (Vice-Chair), Jess David, Ruth Malloy, Mark Roper, Andy Wait, Paul May, Liz Hardman and Alison Born

Co-opted Members: Kevin Burnett and Chris Batten

Also in attendance: Dr Bryn Bird (Member of CCG), Lesley Hutchinson (Director of Adult Social Care, Complex and Specialist Commissioning), Mary Kearney-Knowles (Director of Children & Young People), Christopher Wilford (Director of Education, Inclusion and Children's Safeguarding) and Sarah Hogan (Deputy Safeguarding Lead CYP & QA)

Cabinet Member for Adult Services: Councillor Rob Appleyard

Cabinet Member for Children's Services: Councillor Kevin Guy

42 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

43 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Councillor Paul May gave his apologies as he said that he would have to leave the meeting at 12.00pm.

44 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

45 TO ANNOUNCE ANY URGENT BUSINESS AGREED BY THE CHAIRMAN

There was none.

46 ITEMS FROM THE PUBLIC OR COUNCILLORS - TO RECEIVE DEPUTATIONS, STATEMENTS, PETITIONS OR QUESTIONS RELATING TO THE BUSINESS OF THIS MEETING

There were none.

47 YOUTH FORUM / IN CARE COUNCIL UPDATE

Lily Blackmore, Off The Record and Jasmin Miller, In Care Council addressed the Panel and gave a presentation, a summary of which is set out below and a copy of it will be attached as an online appendix to these minutes.

Covid-19

- It has changed how we live our lives
- More than ever, it is important to think about new ways to connect
- We have been focusing our efforts on how best to connect and collaborate to support ALL young people.

In Care Council

- A group of young people who are in care in BANES
- This group enables young people to guide development and delivery of services to their peers, get their voice heard and create their own projects to make change. They meet regularly with professionals and decision makers to share their views and experiences.
- Jasmin has been appointed as a Young Ambassador to the Council to help shape Children's Care Services across Bath and North East Somerset, ensuring the voices of children and young people are heard.

Junior In Care Council (JICC)

- This group of 7-11 year olds meets 4 times a year for fun activities and consultation.
- Consultation on the new Looked After Children (LAC) pack from the IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) service
- Halloween bowling & Pizza event held in October

Senior In Care Council (SICC)

Our recent work includes:

- Podcast
- Connecting with the JICC through activity videos
- Training for Foster Carers & ACE Team
- LAC Nurse interviews
- Glossary for LAC information pack
- Foster Carer video – first 48 hours

Care Leavers

- Starting a group of young people who have left care
- Celebrating Care Leaver's week in partnership with Social services
- Consulted with Care Leavers about activities they would like to see and improvements to the info they receive

- Held a Movie Night, Bake Off and Tour of Bath in response to these suggestions and feedback

Youth Forum

Last Year the Forum worked on:

- Make Your Mark
- Night Stop
- Youth Parliament Elections

During Lockdown the Forum has worked on building an Activity Website.

- We have researched and created a website for young people in BANES.
- It will provide activities and support for young people.
- It is currently going into consultation with other young people.

Participating & Representing Young People

Consultation

- Transport Delivery Action Plan
- Survey for the Council about lockdown

Spoken for young people at various events, conferences and webinars:

- UK Youth Parliament: Annual Conference (MYP voted on key issues for YP)
- British Youth Council South West Summit
- IMPACT 20: A roundtable event across the South West from the Cabinet office for the Inclusive Economic Partnership – looking at the economic recovery post Covid-19 and getting young people's views.
- MYP contributed to the Covid-19 19 and Black Lives Matter webinars for BANES.

Moving forward with our Campaigns

Protect the Environment:

- Promote reusable masks in schools
- Educate young people about the ecological emergency and how they can make a change

Respect (Consent & healthy relationships)

- Learning more about respect through training and research
- Encouraging respect through speaking out for causes we care about e.g. BLM

Mental Health

- Planning & creating a video about how Covid-19 has affected young people
- Provide best practice guidance for schools on what young people want and need to help with their mental health in these difficult times
- Developing workshops & training

Councillor Paul May thanked them both for the presentation. He commented that the Council currently has less contact with most schools as a lot of them have become Academies and he asked how could more schools become aware of the work of Off The Record and the groups mentioned in the presentation.

Lily Blackmore replied that participation was encouraged through the Youth Forum and that she would like small groups to develop in schools. She added that it was possible to refer to Mental Health services through Off The Record.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that it was great to see Jasmin carry on her work by becoming a Young Ambassador. She asked if the Looked After Children (LAC) pack from the IRO (Independent Reviewing Officer) service was a new piece of work and when was it likely to be available.

Jasmin Miller replied that a pack does already exist, but it was felt that it needed updating to be more holistic and young person friendly.

The Director for Children & Young People said that the review of the pack had been most welcome.

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead added that having the pack informed by young people will help to ensure that it provides relevant information.

Councillor Jess David commented that their work was inspiring and asked how the Panel could help or engage with the three campaigns mentioned. She added that she would welcome the Panel being updated on their work at a future meeting.

Jasmin Miller replied that any promotion of their workshops or providing information to schools would be welcome.

Councillor Andy Wait asked regarding the Make Your Mark work, how easy was it to spread the word due to Covid-19.

Lily Blackmore replied that it had been quite tricky and that a lot of work was carried out online, through email communications with schools and a social media campaign. She added that promotion had also been provided within tutor groups.

The Chairman commented that it was great to see such enthusiasm and thanked them for the presentation on behalf of the Panel. He added that he looked forward to hearing from them in the future.

48 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Councillor Rob Appleyard, Cabinet Member for Adult Services addressed the Panel, a summary of his update is set out below and will be attached as an online appendix to these minutes.

He commented that he recognised the growing need for further resources regarding Mental Health services.

He said that the Community Resource Centre and Extra Care facilities successfully transferred to the Council on the 1st October and that this had gone smoothly. He added that since transfer, Council teams have been working closely with the Services to support transition into the different ways of working and building key operational relationships. He said that the transition period was likely to continue throughout November in parallel with planning for and implementation of next phase of the project. He added that work is now in progress to look at the configuration of the Service in relation to local need.

He stated the new round of infection prevention and control funding is being managed by Council officers to ensure providers, including those in the voluntary and community sector have access. He added that the Council welcomes the second wave of this funding and the expansion of the scheme to support local provider.

He informed the Panel that a new Advocacy Provider had now started to operate in B&NES. PoHWER (People of Hertfordshire Want Equal Rights) is a renowned national group. He explained that they started out as two people with lived experience and have grown to be one the most respected advocacy providers in the country. He added that the Council would like to extend our gratitude to the advocacy providers such as SWAN, YourSay and The Care Forum who provided the people of Bath and North East Somerset with an excellent service over the last 5 years or so.

Councillor Andy Wait asked if the funding received for infection control was enough.

Councillor Appleyard replied that they would always welcome more and that the funding would be targeted to where it is needed most.

Councillor Ruth Malloy asked if the funding would help to enable family members to visit relatives in Care Homes.

Councillor Appleyard replied that whilst mindful of the emotional effects, the care of individuals, staff and visitors was paramount. He said that in a recent video call with a resident that they were happy that measures were in place to keep everyone safe.

Councillor Kevin Guy, Cabinet Member for Children's Services addressed the Panel, a summary of his update is set out below and will be attached as an online appendix to these minutes.

Covid-19 Update:

He informed the Panel that we have had cases in 12 individual schools in B&NES so far and that this number remains relatively low in comparison with national data. He added that the Local Authority Public Health team and LA Education staff have worked effectively to support schools when a case of CV19 has been confirmed in one of our schools.

He explained that whilst schools initially access support from a DFE helpline and Public Health England; all our schools are offered follow up support that provides detailed advice and help with communications. He said that feedback from schools indicates that they have appreciated this support.

He added that in addition to this, the LA is providing training to schools to help support pupil wellbeing. This support has started with virtual sessions from our CAMHS service and will continue with the rollout of the Education Wellbeing programme that will offer training and on-going support to all schools.

He said that following the Government's decision to not fund Free School Meals during school holidays a crowdfunding project had raised £56,000 and work was ongoing with the St. John's Trust to enable a scheme locally. He added that in addition to this the Council has decided to implement a voucher scheme from the holidays of Christmas 2020 to Easter 2021.

Councillor Paul May suggested that the Panel passes its view on their decision back to the Government.

Councillor Guy said that he welcomed the support of the Panel.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that the Labour Group has put a motion to Council on 12th November 2020 regarding Free School Meals. She asked if any liaison had taken place with schools yet.

Councillor Guy replied that officers were currently working on this matter and that details of the scheme were being drawn up.

The Chair asked that the Panel's support of continuing Free School Meals within the holiday periods be passed back to the Government.

He also thanked the Cabinet Members for their updates on behalf of the Panel.

49 BSW CCG UPDATE

Dr Bryn Bird, B&NES Locality Clinical Chair addressed the Panel. A copy of the update can be found as an online appendix to these minutes, a summary of the update is set out below.

Health and Wellbeing Board development

Members of the Council's Cabinet and senior officers, together with senior executives and clinical leaders of the BSW CCG, met recently to discuss a number of issues including current operational and financial challenges. Attendees at the meeting discussed an agreement to develop the children and young person's report and safeguarding report to ensure that all stakeholders are aware of matters included in the reports and engaged at an early point. The group is keen to address issues related to health inequalities and resolved make better use of existing health data about our local populations to do this.

Advice and guidance for outpatient development.

BSW CCG's professional leadership network is continuing to manage the challenges around waiting times and referrals in our local hospitals caused by the ongoing restrictions in place because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

There is a particular focus on better management across advice and guidance lines and how they can be used more effectively.

We also have a particular focus on diagnostic, how capacity is being developed and how we can better manage with the current restrictions placed on services.

This extends to managing waiting lists and using an analytics approach to assist with risk stratification.

Covid remote monitoring

We are developing a working group for local implementation of a Covid remote monitoring system which would allow clinicians to track the progress and recovery of Covid patients remotely, without having to see them face to face.

This would help with infection control measures, but also significantly allow patients with potentially debilitating symptoms of Covid access to health services sooner and therefore have much better health outcomes.

Funding to upgrade specialist dementia mental health units

Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership (AWP) NHS Trust has secured almost £3m worth of new funding to upgrade facilities at Hill View Lodge, the mental health inpatient unit based at the Royal United Hospital.

The update to existing facilities will enable AWP to relocate Ward 4, its 12-bedded specialist dementia unit, which is currently located at nearby St Martin's Hospital.

Ward 4 is the Trust's only remaining dormitory-style ward and due to the age of the building and its existing layout is not suitable to be reconfigured to comply with the 'Delivering Single Sex Accommodation' regulatory requirements.

The funding will ensure patients can be cared for in high quality accommodation more suited to the needs of those with dementia.

The funding has been announced as part of the Government's £400 million commitment over the next four years to eradicate dormitory style accommodation from mental health facilities across the country to improve the safety, privacy and dignity of patients with mental health difficulties.

Work to transform part of the Hill View Lodge site and the relocation of Ward 4 is expected to get underway in January 2021, with the relocation of patients planned for June 2021.

Councillor Jess David asked if the Panel could be informed of the uptake of the seasonal flu vaccine across different age groups, including infant schools.

Dr Bird replied that he would be able to report back on this in January. He said that he recalls that B&NES is normally above the average figure for those patients aged 65+ and between 50-64.

Councillor Alison Born commented that it was good to see the relocation plans for Ward 4 and asked to what standard / design the units would be built.

Alexandra Luke, Associate Director for BSW at Avon and Wiltshire Mental Health Partnership replied that there were constraints to the building, but the units will be an improvement and built to a high quality standard.

The Chair thanked Dr Bird and Alexandra Luke for the update on behalf the Panel.

50 EDUCATION UPDATES - SCHOOL PERFORMANCE / NARROWING THE GAP / SACRE

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding introduced this report to the Panel, a summary is set out below.

Primary School performance

Due to the CV19 pandemic and the lockdown, no formal tests were sat within primary schools and as a result neither the DFE nor the LA requested data from any primary setting. During lockdown all primary schools in B&NES were asked to facilitate home learning for all pupils. This was often delivered via information sent directly from class teachers and tutors to family homes, or in some cases via online lessons. To ensure that all families were able to access education, schools prepared and delivered home learning packs.

All primary schools in B&NES remained open during lockdown to provide face to face educational support to children of keyworkers and vulnerable children. The local authority monitored the school offer to these children and offered additional support to vulnerable families to ensure that children were able to access education. The

attendance rates of vulnerable children in B&NES schools was good and in line with the south-west average and above the national average.

This school term all primary schools in B&NES are assessing children to see if the lockdown has impacted upon the educational progress that children could have been expected to make. This information will be used as a baseline and justification for any curriculum adaptations and planned expenditure of the Covid Catch-Up money provided to all schools via the DFE.

Secondary School Performance

Formal examinations for Key stage 4 and 5 were cancelled during the lockdown. Instead, secondary schools were asked to allocate grades at KS4 and KS5. The methodology for doing this was a challenging process with changes to the system used. These challenges were widely reported in the national media and did cause disruption. However, all children, due to finish their education in KS4 & KS5, were allocated school assessed grades to enable them to go on to the next stages of their education, training or employment.

In the spring of 2020, the DFE formally announced that it would not be collecting any educational performance data from schools and has stated that it does not expect any school to be judged or compared in any way by this year's formal examination results. Schools were advised that if they wished to publish their results, they could do, but that this was a decision for each school.

The LA did ask for some basic results information from each school; in particular, the LA was keen to understand any implications for vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils. However, the information we received was limited and not submitted by all schools. In line with the DFE request, we have not pursued this any further. In BANES outcomes for pupils were amongst the best in the region in 2019 and there is no reason to believe that this would not continue to be the case in 2020.

Virtual School

The virtual school operated very effectively during lockdown to support carers and young people. Where advisable, the virtual school supported eligible children in care to take up place in a school environment. Where a return to school during lockdown was not felt to be in the best interests of a child, the virtual school offered additional support to families, which included setting timetables and offering 1-1 virtual tuition. However, during the final term of the last academic year, the Virtual School supported 69% of B&NES children in care return to their educational placements, one of the highest return rates in the South West.

Whilst we have not requested across the board educational data, we have followed up the outcomes for our children in care in KS4 and are pleased to report that in the key subjects areas of Maths and English, our children have performed better than expected. Whilst this year's data cannot be compared fairly to previous years; it does look as though our children have performed well. One student has also applied and will be joining their preferred university course this year.

Narrowing the Gap

Whilst the LA does not have data this year that is valid or reliable to judge any change in the performance of disadvantaged pupils, it is aware that the lockdown can only have had a detrimental effect on the education of these children. Narrowing the Gap for disadvantage pupils was a priority for the LA and the local education landscape before the Covid-19 pandemic and will be more so during the forthcoming academic year.

Schools Standard Board (SSB)

Improving the performance of disadvantaged pupils is a priority for our local SSB. The Board met this September and alongside a presentation on equalities in schools, the Board again re-iterated its commitment to improving outcomes for disadvantaged learners. Members of the Board reported that schools were in the process of carrying out indicative assessments to understand if the educational progress for this cohort of children had been affected by lockdown.

The SSB has tasked a subgroup of education leaders, with representation from the RSC office, to oversee the collection of this information and to enquire how board members will be deploying strategies and resources across schools to support the most disadvantaged.

St Johns Foundation & Inclusion Expert

During the lockdown, the LA worked with the St Johns Foundation to start to develop ideas and strategies to tackle the disadvantage gap in B&NES. These discussions have resulted in the St Johns Foundation developing a pilot programme that will work with seven primary schools in B&NES with the highest levels of disadvantage.

The St Johns Foundation will look to target support into five key areas in each school. These areas are; mental health, nurture, family support, speech & language and literacy and numeracy. This pilot has been named the Primary Empowerment programme and was presented to the Schools Standards Board in September 2020. The support it delivers to schools will be commissioned by the St Johns Foundation and its outcomes tracked and evaluated by an external organisation.

This programme is in early development, however, it is hoped that the pilot should be up and running by the start of the 2021 academic year. The St Johns Foundation has indicated that this will be a long-term commitment with wider support to follow once the pilot is underway.

Additionally, in 2019, the local authority commissioned additional educational support for several schools from an organisation called Inclusion Expert. This organisation has been providing additional strategies for schools to improve the educational attainment of disadvantaged children. This work continued throughout 2019/20.

The CV19 pandemic has delayed the completion of this work and a decision was taken to extend the time period for this work to be completed. Schools involved in the project will be contacted after the October half term to discuss how final parts of the offer can be put to best use and evaluated.

SACRE

Local Authorities are legally obliged to maintain a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) whose function is to meet on a regular basis to discuss relevant matters and to produce an agreed local syllabus. This syllabus should be updated every 5 years.

B&NES employs Dave Francis, as an Associate Advisor, (through a system called Bloom) to clerk the meetings, manage communications, monitor RE provision, provide some support to schools, produce the syllabus and any associated resources and write an annual report that has to be published and sent to the DfE.

The significant additional piece of work this year is the five yearly review of the RE Curriculum. The Associate Adviser is leading SACRE members and a small team of teachers in this process, which will fill any gaps in the existing schemes of learning and provide additional materials on religious and moral perspectives on current issues. This is being funded by B&NES Council and is supported by an Award from the Westhill Foundation and the National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on RE (NASACRE). Training for teachers on the revised curriculum is being planned for the Autumn 2021 and Spring 2022 Terms.

Councillor Paul May commented that he would welcome seeing any school data if and when it becomes available.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding replied that some basic information had been received from some of the Secondary Schools.

The Senior School & Improvement Achievement Adviser added that six out of seven Secondary Schools had supplied data to the Council.

Councillor Liz Hardman commented that she welcomed the work of the Schools Standard Board and would like to see an update on this in six months' time. She asked if the St Johns Foundation and Inclusion Expert were working with the same schools.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding replied that there was some crossover. He added that St Johns provide additional support and engage with parents.

Kevin Burnett asked how the Covid-19 catchup funding was to be distributed.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding replied that the funding was being given direct to schools.

Kevin Burnett asked if there was an agreed list of outcomes to be achieved from the work with St Johns.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding replied that the framework was still being developed.

Kevin Burnett asked if any feedback had been received from schools regarding the Inclusion Expert project.

The Senior School & Improvement Achievement Adviser replied that feedback had been mixed so far. He added that five schools were working with both projects.

Kevin Burnett asked if training will be provided on the new SACRE curriculum.

The Director for Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding replied that training will be provided. He added academies do not need to follow the syllabus.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note:

- i) They are assured that whilst education results are not available this year to be analysed, that the Local Authority remains proactive and is working strategically to improve the educational outcomes of its most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents.
- ii) The good progress the Virtual School for Children in Care continues to make and that it has been awarded additional funding, alongside only two other LA's in the country, to expand its offer to more children with a social worker.
- iii) That during lockdown the LA worked proactively alongside all schools to ensure that education provision was available for children of keyworkers and vulnerable children.

51 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (Children and Young People) introduced this report to the Panel, a summary is set out below.

The report is produced in order to provide the Director for Children's Services, the Lead Member for Children and the Corporate Parenting Board with information pertaining to the work of the Independent Reviewing Service (IRS) which is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the care provided to children and young people for whom the Local Authority are corporate parents.

Following a re-structure at Director Level, the IRO service now sits under the Director for Education, Inclusion and Children's Safeguarding. The change in Directorate has not caused any disruption to the work of the IRO's and has preserved the high level of independence that IRO's in Bath and North East Somerset have.

The IRO service has been fortunate to gain some additional administrative support this year, this has enabled the service to review some of its processes, consider alternative ways of communicating with carers of children in care and provides much needed support to the IRO's in terms of their work.

All full-time members of the team receive monthly supervision with part-time staff receiving supervision on a six-weekly rotation. Supervision allows opportunity for reflection, consideration of the needs of the children placed in the care of the Local Authority, review of performance, statutory compliance and areas for development / learning.

The numbers of children and young people in care in this reporting period is fairly static from the previous year, with more children leaving care in the last 12 months than entering which is the first instance in which this has occurred for the last five years.

The appointment of an IRO when a child or young person comes into care is the responsibility of the IRO Service Manager. Allocation will be determined by the existing workload of the IRO, whether the child is already known to an IRO or Independent Chair, the number of children in the family, the location of the child's placement and the complexity of the child's needs and level of care planning required. It is important that IRO's have a workload that is reflective of their capacity and expertise.

The IRO Service chaired a total of 528 child in care review meetings in 2019-2020, an increase of 74 from the previous year when the number of children and young people in care was higher. An increase in the number of child in care reviews can raise question as to placement stability, however the stability rate for children in Bath and North East Somerset remains fairly static.

Between the 1st April 2019 and the 31st March 2020 there were only 19 reviews that could not be held in timescale and as such this means that on average across the year 96% of the reviews held were within the appropriate timeframe. This is a significant improvement and is beyond the 87% target set for the service.

In Bath and North East Somerset, the gender breakdown has again remained stable and is line with the national picture, with males accounting for 54% of the children and young people placed in the care of the local authority and 46% female.

As of the 31/03/2020 the largest cohort of looked after children were 10-15 year olds who accounted for 44% of the entire number of children and young people in care of the Local Authority. Young people aged between 16-18 were the second largest group accounting for 22%, with children under 12 months old being the smallest at 5%. The ages of children in care has therefore remained on par with last year and mirrors what was seen nationally across England as of 31/03/2019.

Of the 181 children and young people in the care of the Local Authority as of the 31/03/2020, 99 (55%) were subject to a full Care Order, meaning final decisions about their long-term care had been made. 21 (12%) children were subject to an

Interim Care Order, meaning these children are yet to know their permanence plan and 25 (14%) children were subject to a Placement Order with the Local Authority therefore having permission to undertake family finding with the view to these children being adopted. The remaining 35 (19%) children were in the care of the Local Authority with the agreement of the child's parents.

Due to the geographical size of Bath and North East Somerset and the small communities found across the authority it is not always possible for a child to be placed within their local area, in this reporting period 124 (69%) children and young people in care were placed outside the boundary of the local authority or 20 miles away from their family home.

The number of young people in the care of Bath and North East Somerset who are unaccompanied and seeking asylum remains very low accounting for 4% of the entire child in care population. As of the 31st March 2020 there were seven young people in the care of the Local Authority who were seeking Asylum, with three of these young people having arrived over the preceding 12 months.

Feedback from children and young people continues to be a challenge for the service. Following the poor response rate last year from children and young people the manager of the IRS wrote directly to all children and young people aged 11 - 17 years (124), their carers and where appropriate their parents in order to obtain their thoughts on the child in care review meetings and the work of the IRO.

Out of the 124 letters sent, only 19 children and young people responded. Whilst this small number of children and young people are not representative of the entire children and young people in care, their feedback is important and has been discussed in supervision with every IRO and will be considered in terms of service development.

The Chair asked if all of the IRO's within B&NES were female.

The Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (Children and Young People) replied that they were and that nationally it appeared to be a female role. She added that she could not recall any recent applications from male candidates.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that the report was very thorough and that she fully appreciated the work of the IROs. She added that she also welcomed the attempts made to gain feedback from young people. She said that she would support further work to increase the number of local Foster Carers.

The Director of Children & Young People replied that they continued to recruit Foster Carers through the period of lockdown and were due to have a further 11 households available.

Councillor Andy Wait asked if there were any specific arrangements in place with other Local Authorities given that a large number of children are placed outside of B&NES.

The Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (Children and Young People) replied that there is no criticism from the IRO on Foster provision and that it is the quality of carers that is important alongside taking into account the sometimes complex needs of the children concerned.

Kevin Burnett asked if there was role for the IRO following a final review having taken place.

The Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (Children and Young People) replied that there was no statutory requirement for involvement after the age of 18, but support can be offered and discussions would take place in the build up to the final review.

Kevin Burnett asked for further comment on a young person's entitlement to advocacy.

The Deputy Lead for Safeguarding and Quality Assurance (Children and Young People) replied that all young people have access to an advocacy service. She said that a review question would be added to ask 'Was an advocate offered?' and that data on this would be provided in the report next year. She added that the work of Off The Record and the involvement of Jasmin Miller in her Young Ambassador role was so welcome.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to;

- i) Note the consistently high number of children in care reviews that are held within statutory timescale thus ensuring the needs of children and young people in care are being appropriately reviewed and care plans effectively scrutinised. The IRO manager has ensured that IRO's have a workload that allows them to have the capacity needed to maintain good oversight of care planning for children and young people in care.
- ii) Note the number of children and young people in care that are placed over 20 miles from their family home / community and consider what additional support can be provided to children's social care to increase the number of foster carers available within Bath and North East Somerset. Children need to feel that they can maintain connections with the important people in their life even if they are unable to live within their families.
- iii) Consider the positive feedback that was received directly from children, young people and their carers about their experiences of the Independent Reviewing Officers within Bath and North East Somerset. Feedback from children, young people, their carers, parents and other family members is an area that requires greater resources and focus.

Recognise the quality assurance mechanisms in place within the Independent Reviewing Service and the use of quarterly reports to highlight to senior managers within children's social care the delivery of child in care reviews, themes identified by Independent Reviewing

Officers, recommendations being made at child in care reviews and an understanding of the escalations and challenges made by IRO's.

52 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2020-21

The Director for Children & Young People introduced this report to the Panel.

She informed them that the Local Authority has a statutory duty, in consultation with named legal partners Health, Police and Probation, to publish an annual Youth Justice Plan. She added that the Plan sets out agreed actions to help prevent youth offending and reoffending across Bath and North East Somerset.

She explained that due to the current pandemic, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales has advised there is no requirement to submit the Plan to them this year and therefore no national framework for completion. She stated that the Youth Offending Service Management Board has agreed to preparation of a shorter Plan in light of this.

She stated that the Council is the lead partner in the multi-agency arrangements to prevent youth offending, working closely with Police, Probation and Health Services and that all partners have statutory responsibilities to participate in the resourcing of the Youth Offending Service and are maintaining their current level of support.

She said that as the implications of the pandemic became clear the key challenge was to maintain a statutory service whilst ensuring that young people and staff were kept safe from Covid-19.

She said that the Service took early steps to 'RAG'-rate its statutory and voluntary caseloads in order to identify young people with the greatest likelihood of offending and/or with welfare or safeguarding need. She added that in practice, the most vulnerable young people known have continued to receive a consistent and responsive service.

She added that for most in this vulnerable group, weekly face to face appointments continued, supplemented by telephone contacts and this has meant practitioners have been able to assess and respond to the emerging needs of young people and their families as lockdown continued.

She said that the offending rate within B&NES was low, but that a number of the young people concerned have complex needs that need to be considered.

The Director for Children & Young People replied to some questions from Councillor Liz Hardman that had been submitted in advance.

Q: Referring to paragraph 7.1 of the report - Would it be possible to talk in more detail about disproportionality so we can have a better understanding of it, please and how it manifests itself within the youth justice system?

A: There is an over-representation of young people from dual/mixed heritage backgrounds and this has been a long-standing issue and our exploration of this is ongoing. Sally Churchyard is a member of the LCJB Lammy Sub-Group which reports in the new year and there will be specific actions recommended for all criminal justice agencies and others, focused on young people's experience and on the staffing as we are not a diverse staff group.

Q: Referring to Page 13 of the Plan, a table at the bottom of the page states that 'Improvement is required in Transitions'. Please could you explain what is meant here by Transitions and how it is going to be improved?

A: This relates to all transitions but most specifically to those of young people from the Youth Offending Service to the National Probation Service (NPS) when they turn 18. We are working closely with the NPS to look at how we support young people from a very child-focused, multi-disciplinary team to a very adult-focused service. We are also planning some follow up on outcomes as we fear that a number of these young people end up receiving custodial sentences within a couple of years which is very regrettable and we want to consider whether there is any more we can do to prevent this.

Q: Referring to Page 14 of the Plan - More serious use offending and exploitation of young people – What is the impact of County Lines?

A: It is not entirely clear what is happening re County Lines under Covid-19 but some of our young people are still being exploited and we are seeing quite a lot of serious offending at present. Through the violence reduction unit, we now have an operational meeting with Police and a number of agencies – NPS is about to join it too – looking at individuals and networks to seek assurance about assessments and interventions and strengthen the support and vigilance.

Q: Referring again to Page 14 of the Plan - Increase in looked after children offending – Is there an issue here that we need to be aware of?

A: We are just completing a protocol focused on preventing unnecessary criminalisation of looked after children. Numbers are very low but these children in the justice system face some of the greatest difficulties and are always our priority.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to endorse the Youth Justice Plan 2020-21 in advance of its consideration by Cabinet and Full Council.

53 DIRECTOR'S BRIEFING

The Director of Adult Social Care, Complex and Specialist Commissioning addressed the Panel, a summary of her briefing is set out below and will be attached as an online appendix to these minutes.

- **New Infection, Prevention and Control Fund** has been allocated to each LA. There are revised conditions with increased monitoring and reporting

requirements. Round 2 funding is made up of 80% Care homes and CQC registered community care providers (ie domiciliary care, extra care and supported living providers) and the other 20% to support non-CQC registered providers and wider workforce resilience. Our aim is to use this to support the 3rd sector and other providers in the community.

Like Round 1, the funding is paid out in two tranches and the first tranche has already been received by the Council and passported to all our providers who have returned their signed IPC contracts.

- The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government issued new guidance for shielding on 13th October 2020, which sets out a framework of support that local authorities are expected to offer to its **Clinically Extremely Vulnerable (CEV)** population, if re-instated.

The guidance has been updated to support CEVs in protecting themselves from exposure to the virus, based on the level of risk in the local area. The guidance is linked to the Local COVID Alert Levels and provides advice at each Alert Level (Medium, High, Very High and if 'Shielding' were reintroduced). Shielding measures specifically may be introduced in the very highest risk areas, based on clinical advice and only for a limited period of time. Note, if an area is designated at the Very High Local Covid Alert Level this does not automatically mean shielding is reintroduced.

They will be less restrictive than the original shielding guidance. No areas in the South West have yet been asked to reintroduce shielding and Directors of Public Health would be involved before such a decision is taken. It has been made clear that the reintroduction of shielding is regarded as a 'last resort option' and it is currently not being viewed as an option at this time in the South West.

- There are amendments to the Mental Health Act (MHA) Treatment Regulations which have been prompted by the pandemic. The new arrangements make provision for the electronic signing and receiving of detention papers which will bring the MHA into the electronic era and hopefully reduce the issues with ensuring that hospitals receive the paperwork in a proper and timely manner.
- Winter Plan – the Council have been drafting its response to the Governments Adult Social Care Winter Plan which it published on the 18th September. We are in the process of discussing the draft plan with local provider forums and people with lived experience.
- Local services are seeing a rise in the number of both young people and adults presenting to secondary mental health services (AWP and CAMHS) with more complex needs such as eating disorders along with an unusually high numbers of young people waiting for in-patient beds. Increasing levels of need are also been reported by commissioned community services albeit anecdotally. Discussions are taking place at

BSW and locally level to proactive look at what actions we can take with partners to strengthen community preventive approaches and identify issues earlier. Winter pressures and alternative to crisis pathways funding has been made available to CCGs including BSW and proposals are being worked up jointly between BSW and localities partners to help reduce the impact of these issues.

- There is a lot of activity currently both at BSW level and locally between health and social commissioners, providers and partners (including the 3rd sector) to develop high level proposals for the implementation of new Community Services Framework for adults and older adults with mental health problems. The aim is transformation of the way local health, social care and provider services work together and develop a new place-based community mental health model of delivery. This will build on the all mental health pathway review which took place in place in B&NES.

Councillor Alison Born commented that the increased pressure on Mental Health Services was a worry and not likely to be a short-term issue. She asked if there was any investment forthcoming.

The Director of Adult Social Care, Complex and Specialist Commissioning replied that funding had been allocated and that the CCG were looking across the BSW area to identify specific priorities.

The Chair thanked her for the briefing on behalf of the Panel.

The Director of Children & Young People addressed the Panel, a summary of her briefing is set out below and will be attached as an online appendix to these minutes.

She informed the Panel that a three-week Ofsted inspection had to be paused this week due to the announcement of the second national lockdown in relation to Covid-19. The Local Authority had met all requirements for week one submission. She wished to thank all the schools and services that had carried out preparation work and had made themselves available for interview in week 2.

She stated that all Children's Services continue to work diligently to ensure that all vulnerable children and their families are well supported in this ongoing Covid 19 period. She said that staff across Children Social Care, Children Centres, Connecting Families and our Youth Offending Services have continued to work really hard to ensure that the Local Authority discharges all of their statutory duties and early help support. Children Social Care established a dedicated phone line to increase its offer to school colleagues.

She explained that during the first lockdown, the Virtual School expanded to offer additional support to children in need and children on a child protection plan. This expansion proved a successful way of providing additional educational support to these children and supported the role of the social worker during a difficult time. She added that on the back of this, the Virtual School bid for additional funding to continue this expansion throughout the new academic year, from the What Works Foundation. The School was successful in this bid and has been awarded £130,000

to continue this work as a pilot. This is fantastic news and work is currently underway to deliver this expansion to our most 70 vulnerable children. These children will benefit from extra planning for their education, and resources to support their educational needs, tutoring etc.

She informed the Panel that Care Leavers' Week (26 October – 1 November) had recently taken place and that notably 4 young people had graduated from university this year and a further 10 had enrolled in university courses.

The Chair thanked her for the briefing on behalf of the Panel.

54 PANEL WORKPLAN

The Chair introduced this item to the Panel.

Kevin Burnett suggested whether as part of the Mental Health Strategy report scheduled for January 2021 the Youth Forum could add any comment on the mental health guidance that is given to schools.

He also proposed that as part of the Corporate Parenting report scheduled for March 2021 that the challenges of recruiting Foster Carers are addressed alongside feedback on the Looked After Children (LAC) pack and post-18 support.

He commented that it would be good to receive updates on the work of the St Johns Foundation and Schools Standards Board through the updates provided by the Directors / Cabinet Members.

Councillor Liz Hardman said that she felt the Panel should receive a review of the issues raised in education performance report in May 2021 and would also welcome feedback on the Youth Justice Plan from the Directors / Cabinet Members.

The Chair thanked them both for their comments and said they would be discussed at the next agenda planning meeting.

The meeting ended at 12.58 pm

Chair(person)

Date Confirmed and Signed

Prepared by Democratic Services