

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE
POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD
ON THURSDAY, 2 JULY 2009**

Membership

* J Aldridge	* S Mayzes
* J Baugh	* D Morris
A Brown	* R Pearson
* R Callender (Substitute for C Riley)	* T Sargent
* L Dangerfield	* M Skeels (Substitute for J Schofield)
* J Deakin	* K Twitchen (Chairman)
* Mrs M Hutchon (Vice-Chairman)	J Young
(* present)	

Non-Elected Voting Members

* Mr. O Richards	* Reverend P Trathern
* Mrs. V Sadowsky	* Mr R Carson

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Vivien Door	- Committee Officer
David Moses	- Head of Member Support & Governance
Graham Redgwell	- Governance Officer

Councillors L Barton and R Howard were also present at this meeting.

The meeting opened at 10.15 am.

46. Apologies and Substitution Notices

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:-

Apologies

Cllr C Riley
Cllr J Schofield
Cllr J Young
Cllr A Brown

Substitutes

Cllr R Callender
Cllr M Skeels

47. Membership of the Committee

The membership of the Committee was noted as follows:

J Aldridge	D Morris
J Baugh	R Pearson
A Brown	C Riley (Vice-Chairman)
L Dangerfield	T Sargent
J Deakin	J Schofield
Mrs M Hutchon (Vice-Chairman)	K Twitchen (Chairman)
S Mayzes	J Young

Non-Elected Voting Members

- | | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|---------------------|
| * | Mr. O Richards | * | Reverend P Trathern |
| * | Mrs. V Sadowsky | * | Mr R Carson |

It was noted that there were some changes to the membership as stated on the agenda.

48. Appointment of Chairman

The Committee noted the appointment of Councillor Kay Twitchen as Chairman of the Committee made at Full Council on 16 June 2009.

49. Appointment of Vice-Chairman

The Committee noted the appointment of Councillors Mrs M Hutchon and C Riley as Vice-Chairmen of the Committee.

50. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were recorded:

Councillor J Baugh	Personal interest as a Founder Member and regular volunteer of the Braintree Community Youth Project
Councillor R Callender	Personal interest as a Member of the Licenced Youth Board for Child Transportation and the Youth Justice Board

51. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 May 2009 were received and signed as a correct record.

52. Introduction to Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee

The Committee received and noted report CYP/13/09 which provided an introduction to the Committee and its work to date.

53. Forward Look

The Committee received report CYP/14/09 which provided the current position on the Forward Look.

The Committee **Agreed** that:

- i) David Moses would provide a briefing note updating the Committee on the Essex Youth Scrutiny Committee;
- ii) David Moses would make enquires regarding the Transitions Board to see if this includes consultation with the Children's Trust arrangements. He would report back with findings to the Committee.

54. Safeguarding Children

The Committee received and noted report CYP/15/09 which provided the background and progress to date of this scrutiny work.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- Some families with Young Children in Canvey Island live in Caravans and this accommodation was suggested to be substandard property for the winter months;
- Members asked for a glossary of terms.

The Committee **Agreed** that:

- i) The South Area Forum should look into the health and well being issues in relation to young children living in caravans in the winter months in Canvey Island and report back to this Committee:
- ii) The Committee Officer would provide a glossary list.

The Chairman welcomed the witnesses to this Committee and informed them that the Committee would like to explore the issues previously sent to them, but that Members of the Committee could also ask them extra questions. The Committee received oral evidence from the following witnesses:

Tanya Gillet, Head of Youth Offending Service

Youth Offending was a statutory Service working within a statutory partnership framework. The multi agency partnership with the safeguarding role includes Social Care, Education, Probation, Police and NHS. The service's duty was to support Young Offenders and to enable these young people to access to the appropriate services. Part of the Youth Offending Team work was to provide public protection and link closely with Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) and the Probation Service.

How were you appointed to the ESCB?

As the Youth Service Offending Service is a statutory duty, Tanya was appointed to this board.

What was your remit from the appointing body?

The remit was within the Working Together 2006 statutory guidelines and to ensure that these were adequately met.

How connected was your agency to the ESCB?

It had been a challenge to be effective as there have been historical tensions. Housing had been a key issue in some child protection issues.

How do you report back?

Tanya reports to the Youth Offending Service Management Board, the Chairman is the Director of Schools, Children and Families. Tanya's line manager is situated in Social Care so there was a dual reporting mechanism.

How much support do you get when you report back?

Tanya was supported and could raise any issues.

Were you authorised to act on their behalf, for example, all PCTs, Schools etc)?

Tanya was authorised to act on behalf of Youth Offending and was accountable to the Management Board.

What was your agency's role under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004?

The Service's role was to ensure that Young People were safeguarded and received adequate assessment for their needs by working with the multi agencies by providing access to external services. There was an issue with a lack of accommodation to suit teenagers' needs.

What was the interaction of your agency with Essex County Council, Schools, Children and Families Directorate?

The Youth Offending Service worked closely with the Directorate and external agencies, police, probation and NHS. The service worked hard to prevent the young people who offend from moving into the adult Probation Services by preventative work.

How do you feel that the ESCB was working?

The Board was improving towards becoming effective although there was acknowledgement that the Board needed to change.

Was there any agency not represented on the ESCB that you feel should be represented?

No

Had your agency any concerns?

The Youth Justice Board was separate from the Serious Case Reviews and had a wider remit looking not just at deaths but at near misses and young people who have committed a serious offence. The media report deaths of children and young people but a large number of young people self harm which goes unreported.

Due to the nature of the work, the clientele could be unpopular due to their offending behaviour but other services need to be aware that these young people are also vulnerable. Young people needed to be given access to education, training and accommodation.

What was the access to Mental Health Services for Young People with undiagnosed issues?

The Youth Offending Service has its own Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service. Nationally there was a specific shortage of Forensic Mental Health Professionals who helped young people working with the Criminal Justice Service. There was a system in place for young people and adults to protect the individuals and the community. The young people were frequently chaotic and missed appointments and misused drugs and alcohol so the Youth Offending Team worked with young people from 4.00 pm each day.

Do you have sufficient resources?

No, Youth Offending resources were not adequate. In the past large case loads had been the key issue. The Youth Offending Service concentrated by pushing target measures through, and therefore did not manage to get under the assessment to produce a thorough work plan.

How do the young people you work with fair with education and training?

Young people self select to either take up education and / or training. This brings problems if they have Mental Health or emotional need as sometimes their families lack education. Early intervention would be very useful.

Some Young People were not in schools and have between 1 to 5 hours education per week. There needed to be more flexibility in the support service for these young people to meet their needs as some young people were disruptive. These young people then impact on other young people.

Mary Archer, Chief Officer, Probation Service

The Committee received DVD evidence from Mary Archer, Head of Probation who had been interviewed on the Committee's behalf by David Moses.

How were you appointed to the ESCB?

Probation service was required to be a member of the ESCB. There is one probation service in Essex County, covering Essex County Council, Southend – on-Sea Borough Council and Thurrock Unitary Council and therefore three Safeguarding Children's Boards. One of her Directors covers the unitary Boards whilst Mary sits on the ESCB.

How connected was your agency to the ESCB?

Well connected: her other Directors were involved in subgroups, staff development training and standing members of the Serious Case Reviews. Essex Probation is committed to ensuring there is a link to work with children's services as their work involves a responsibility to protect children and to contribute to their welfare.

The Probation Service brings to the Board the work with offenders and she takes back to probation staff the links to the children's agencies. Offenders are also sometimes parents so there can be clear crossover.

How do you report back?

The information was disseminated throughout the Probation Service at all levels and staff reminded about the welfare of the child and the need to be mindful of this.

Attendance at Meetings?

Mary had attended all meetings this year. Last year there was a clash of meetings so she was unable to attend all the ESCB meetings. Her Director would attend the meetings if she was unable to attend.

What was your agency's role under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004?

It was clearly laid out that the Probation Service role was the assessment and management of adult offenders and to protect the public. In carrying out their work they contribute to the protection of children and to their welfare. The Service works with staff in the Youth Justice Team with young offenders and provides a service to child victims of serious offences. The Probation Service ensures that other agencies working with children have an understanding of the work of the Probation Service. The Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements

(MAPPA) was good in Essex and this service links well with other agencies. It is important that all Probation staff know about the risks, not just the high risk offenders but also low level risks.

What was the interaction of your agency with Essex County Council, Schools, Children and Families Directorate?

Mary personally had limited contact but one of her Directors for partnership works with all agencies.

How do you feel that the ESCB was working?

The Board was developing. The Independent Chair had improved it. Monitoring and challenging delivery of actions would be a key part of ongoing development and effectiveness.

One wish to improve the ESCB?

All agencies should be open and transparent with information with each other. Partnerships work well when all agencies share information and understand each others roles and could then utilise the different agencies. The Board was improving and needed to avoid duplication but processes were in place to consider this.

Liz Hall and Michelle Leader, Salvation Army

The Chairman advised Liz and Michelle that they had been invited to the Committee as the voluntary sector were not represented on the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board and it would be useful to have their perspective on Safeguarding Children.

The Salvation Army works with children from 0 to 18 years old. Liz works with 0 – 12 age group also supporting others that work with them and Michelle works with 12 – 18 age groups in the same way. The Salvation Army provided pastoral care with social activities and teaching. Mrs Beverley Egan was the representative for vulnerable adults. There was recognition that 16 to 18 year olds required a different approach in terms of child protection and Michelle Leeder has been able to input into this. There were 38 Salvation Army Churches in the Eastern Region who supported Kids Clubs, Parent and Toddler groups, preschools, youth clubs, rainbows, brownies and guides, musical events and workshops. The scout movement and the preschools were separate in terms of child protection reporting procedures. Other volunteers/agencies use the churches for social events and licensed activities which require reference to the child protection policy.

The Salvation Army supported the volunteers to work with children and vulnerable adults and these volunteers were trained to deal with issues of child protection. There was a duty of care to children and young people. All volunteers and staff received a CRB check which was renewed every three years. The Salvation Army had a six month induction which includes the application, interviews and CRB checks. All staff and volunteers were empowered to report any disclosures or unusual behaviour and were aware of the procedure to report any issues. There were designated Child Protection Officers and there were posters in the buildings informing the children and young people and adults that the Salvation Army was a child-aware environment and

that staff and volunteers care. There were mentoring sessions to raise any issues with designated people.

The Salvation Army was aware that the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board existed but did not interact with it. The Salvation Army encouraged local centres to have links with local schools as appropriate. Beverley Egan had strong links with the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board and also the Schools, Children and Families Directorate.

If a member of staff or a volunteer was worried about a child or a vulnerable adult then they would inform the designated named person for child protection that then notified Social Care and if appropriate would contact the police. The Salvation Army may only see the child once or twice a week at the most, frequently less often. Staff and volunteers were trained to look for more than one sign if they suspect child abuse and have learnt that if a child discloses information then the child would not be lying but that the issues would have built up over a period of time.

If a child was suspected of self harming then the family would be involved and a member of staff or volunteer would encourage the child/young person to speak to his/her family and would go with the child to speak to the family if required and would attend appointments with the child, if appropriate. The Salvation Army informs other agencies who then become the lead agency for this child's welfare.

The Salvation Army would like volunteer groups to be part of the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board. This would help to encourage child protection issues would be taken more seriously in the voluntary sector. It would also give the Board a more holistic view working with the third sector.

The Salvation Army also trains its entire congregation in child protection issues. The Congregation, staff and volunteers watch a training DVD for an hour and a half on policy and procedures. There was separate residential policy and risk assessments took place before any residential. All Churches and centers received a child audit annually; this was a self assessment with 12 units to complete.

The Salvation Army in the UK is working towards ensuring that all its settings and centres provide and share good practice.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- Members applauded this good practice and felt that it should be shared with other voluntary organisations and should be used as a benchmark;
- Members informed the representatives from the Salvation Army about Contact Point. The Salvation Army would be interested in information but mainly information was gained locally on individual cases but this did not happen regularly.

The Chairman thanked both Liz Hall and Major Michelle Leader for both their time and information, which had been incredibly useful.

The Committee **agreed** that:

- i) A report with recommendations will be produced for the next meeting;

- ii) Peter Martin, Cabinet Member and Graham Toombs, Director of Schools, Children and Families will be invited to the next meeting;
- iii) The Governance Officer should make enquiries on how far the introduction of Contact Point had progressed.

55. Healthy Schools Report

The Committee received the final Healthy Schools Report CYP/16/09.

The Committee **Agreed**:

- i) To endorse the recommendations;
- ii) Hannah Cleary, the Governance Officer would write to the named colleagues in these recommendations asking for a response for the September meeting;
- iii) To look at scoping for a second Task and Finish Group with the specific remit of Healthy Schools in the Secondary Sector in the future;
- iv) That it should receive a copy of the CAHMS interim report for information.

56. Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings as follows:

Thursday 3rd September 2009
Thursday 1st October 2009
Thursday 5th November 2009
Thursday 3rd December 2009
Thursday 7th January 2010
Thursday 4th February 2010
Thursday 4th March 2010
Thursday 1st April 2010

57. Exclusion of the Public

That the public, including the press, be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following agenda item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

58. Children in Care

(Public and Press excluded)

The Chairman informed the Committee that there was an item of urgent business regarding a young person in care. The Cabinet Member and the Director of Schools, Children and Families were investigating this matter. The Safeguarding Children's Board had been asked to investigate this case under the Serious Case Reviews.

The Committee **Agreed** to wait for the Executive Summary Report, and if necessary call for the full report and then scrutinise the issue, to learn from this situation.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

Chairman