

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SAFEGUARDING SUB-COMMITTEE (A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE), HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON THURSDAY 11 NOVEMBER 2010

Membership

Councillors

- * Mrs T Sargent (Chairman)
- * Mrs A Brown
- * Mrs T Higgins
- * J Knapman
- C Riley
- * Cllr John Aldridge (*ex officio*)

Non-Elected Voting Members

Mr R Carson

(* present)

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Graham Redgwell	Governance Officer
Matthew Waldie	Committee Officer

The meeting opened at 1.00 pm.

30. Apologies

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:

Cllr C Riley
Mr R Carson

31. Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were recorded.

32. CQC/Ofsted Report Outcomes in respect of Safeguarding/Looked after Children – Areas for improvement – Essex Primary Care Trusts

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Sheila Bremner, Chief Executive, Three North Essex PCTs, and Stewart McArthur, Director Joint Child Health & Wellbeing Commissioning Unit, Essex.

Ms Bremner pointed out that the trusts had increased their focus on children's matters since the CQC/Ofsted Report. In practice, she represents all 5 PCTs in respect of safeguarding. However, each PCT Board has responsibility for this and reports to the Children's Trust Board. Ms Bremner chairs a quarterly forum of representatives of each PCT Board, and also sits on both the

Safeguarding Board and the Children's Trust Board. Each PCT has its own plan, which has been signed off by her and sits under the Implementation Plan. And Board members undergo development sessions in respect of safeguarding.

Although the Shadow Health & Wellbeing Board will only come into being in April 2011, there is already a provisional Board in place. Ms Bremner confirmed that she will not abandon present arrangements until she is certain that the new arrangements will cover safeguarding.

Several issues were raised:

- Reducing the number of Boards within Essex to one Safeguarding Board, by bringing together children's with adults', across Essex, Southend and Thurrock. This may be given consideration in time – the Sub-Committee could monitor this
- There is an emphasis on early intervention, and the Trust is working hard to engage GPs in the MAAG agenda. However, it has not been running long and is still patchy
- Identifying the most vulnerable families. Essex is one of the Councils piloting Community Budgets, starting in 2011. these will allow local control of funding to deal with those most in need
- Dealing effectively with families of disabled children, with adopting families, single-parent families, etc. It was hoped that new child health provisions should enable practitioners to identify potential problems earlier and so be better placed to help
- Health visiting. There seem to be very few people undergoing training to become health visitors or school nurses. The health authority is looking into the situation. One option being explored is to see if those with other skills could do the job; and discussions are underway with APU, about potential courses to train public health professionals that are different from traditional courses. It was acknowledged that, although there could be some common initial ground between health visitors and social workers, for example, they had to diverge at later stages
- Looking at financial matters, joint commissioning allows funding to be brought together, and in certain areas (eg speech and language) the 5 PCTs are working towards having common criteria
- Two particular developments should bring results and make a difference to the lives of those in their care. The first is the consistent use of the Common Assessment Framework. This brings all children in Essex into the system in a consistent way. The second development is the introduction of the Joint Agency Panel, which brings together assessment and allocation, in a consistent and targeted way.

In response to the suggestion that a way of measuring productive outcomes had to be found, Ms Bremner pointed out that the Board considered this to be a real need and it intended to develop meaningful performance indicators. One crucial element in achieving this would be to have greater engagement with the parents of children.

The Chairman thanked Ms Bremner and Mr McArthur for their helpful contribution to the work of the Sub-Committee. She acknowledged that the relationship between Essex and the NHS had improved over the past few months and that this had to be of benefit to those they were all aiming to help.

33. Date of Next Meeting

Thursday 2 December 2010, at 11.30 am (following the main CYP meeting).
Venue: County Hall.

The meeting closed at 2.15 pm.

Chairman