

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 28 APRIL 2011

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 12.00 noon.

6. Apologies

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:

Cllr A Brown
Mr R Carson

7. Declarations of Interest

No new declarations of interest were recorded.

8. Minutes

The minutes of the Safeguarding Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 February 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9. Safeguarding Scrutiny Stage 2 Work

A copy of the Responses to the Sub-Committee's Stage 1 recommendations, from Essex County Council, the Safeguarding Children Board and the NHS, was tabled and copies would be circulated after the meeting to Members unable to be present. This would be considered in detail at the Sub-Committee's next meeting.

The Governance Officer drew Members' attention to three particular issues: 1, the staff interviews; 2, the Munro Report; and 3, the recent Ofsted inspection.

a) Staff interviews. The Governance Officer suggested a specific protocol for these, with certain requirements. Each interview should involve two members, with no officers present. All comments should be non-attributable, with no specific reference to areas either. The interviewees should be team leaders or equivalent, to get a higher level perspective. They may number one or more per interview. Each interview should address at least a core number of issues. Notes should be taken, but not formal minutes. Interviews should not be held at County Hall, but either at the interviewee's "home" venue, or at a neutral venue – according to his/her wishes.

A number of potential issues to be considered were proposed:

- Children's health
- Education
- Transition
- CAFs
- Process
- Funding
- Transformation issues
- Staffing levels
- Caseloads
- CRB checks (or their successors)
- Serious case review issues
- Health & Wellbeing Boards (and other committees, etc)
- What do they wish to see change?

Interviewees should be asked to come prepared, with certain statistical information, (eg relating to numbers of temporary staff, caseloads, staff working in certain areas, etc). There should also be the opportunity for interviewees to provide more subjective answers. They should be encouraged to see this as an opportunity to voice – anonymously – what changes they believe need to be made. Blunt questions would be needed, with blunt responses, as ultimately the Committee needed to know how these activities were improving people's lives.

It was **Agreed** that the Governance Officer should compile this protocol.

Dave Hill, Executive Director, Schools, Children & Families, had been advised of this process. He had two particular issues: that this would detract workers from their course, and how would they be selected. He will put forward a suitable officer to liaise with the Sub-Committee, to bring this about. It was **Agreed** that the Governance Officer should liaise with this individual on behalf of the Sub-Committee.

A suggestion was made, that Members should also be talking to parents. It was pointed out that Lady Kemp-Welch had carried out some work on this several years previously. After some further brief discussion, it was **Agreed**

that this work should be traced and reviewed, to see if it might be useful. It was also pointed out that the opportunity already existed to get feedback from children in homes, for example, and the Lively Trainers should be helpful here.

The intention was to present the finished Stage 2 report to the Children and Young People PSC meeting on 3 July, so progress on holding these interviews would need to be swift in May and early June.

b) Munro Report. The Munro Report was due to be published shortly, and it would need to be considered by this Committee. In the meantime, Members would be provided with a link to the website, for further information. (This is www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/evidence.shtml)

The Executive Summary would be circulated, along with a further link to the main document, on its appearance.

10. Ofsted/CQC Inspection

The Governance Officer informed the Committee that the result of the Inspection had been embargoed until after the elections on 5 May. Councillor Candy, as Cabinet Member for Children's Services, would circulate the result after the election and it would be an agenda item for the next Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny meeting, on 12 May, which Councillor Candy would also be attending.

11. Date of Next Meeting

To be confirmed.

12. Exclusion of the Public

Resolved:

That the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as specified in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (Paragraph 2 – information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual):

PART II (business taken in private)

13. Safeguarding Update (issues surrounding individuals) (Public and Press excluded)

The Committee received brief reports on Members' attendance at various Group/Panel/Board meetings. Issues arising would be anonymised in the Stage 2 report in due course.

The meeting closed at 1.25 pm.

Chairman