



Essex County Council

People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

11:00	Thursday, 15 July 2021	Council Chamber County Hall, Chelmsford, CM1 1QH
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For information about the meeting please ask for:

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Pages

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| ** | Private Pre-Meeting for PAF Members Only
Please note that there will be a private pre-meeting for committee members at 10.00am in the Council Chamber, County Hall. | |
| 1 | Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest | 4 - 4 |
| 2 | Appointment of Vice-Chairmen
To appoint two Vice-Chairmen of the Committee. | |
| 3 | Minutes: 18 March 2021
To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021. | 5 - 10 |

- 4 Questions from the Public**
A period of up to 15 minutes will be allowed for members of the public to ask questions or make representations on any item on the agenda for this meeting.
Please note that members of the public wishing to ask a question must email democratic.services@essex.gov.uk by noon on the day before the meeting and that questions must relate to an item on the agenda for the meeting. Questions may be asked either in person or online via Zoom, in which case a link will be provided.
- 5 Adult Social Care Update (including Residential and Domiciliary Care Trends) 11 - 12**
- 6 Work Programme 13 - 15**
- 7 Date of Next Meeting**
To note that the next meeting will be held on Thursday 9 September 2021, in County Hall.
- 8 Urgent Business**
To consider any matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered in public by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Exempt Items

(During consideration of these items the meeting is not likely to be open to the press and public)

The following items of business have not been published on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972. Members are asked to consider whether or not the press and public should be excluded during the consideration of these items. If so it will be necessary for the meeting to pass a formal resolution:

That the press and public are excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the remaining items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, the specific paragraph(s) of Schedule 12A engaged being set out in the report or appendix relating to that item of business.

- 9 Urgent Exempt Business**
To consider in private any other matter which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered by reason of special circumstances (to be specified) as a matter of urgency.

Agenda item 1

Committee: People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Enquiries to: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

Recommendations:

To note

1. Membership as shown below
2. Apologies and substitutions
3. Declarations of interest to be made by Members in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct

Membership (Quorum: 4)

Councillor R Gooding Chairman
Councillor L Bowers-Flint
Councillor S Crow
Councillor M Durham
Councillor J Fleming
Councillor M Goldman
Councillor C Guglielmi
Councillor J Lumley
Councillor P May
Councillor A McGurran
Councillor R Playle
Councillor L Shaw
Councillor W Stamp
Councillor A Wiles

Non-elected Members

Christine Martin (St John Payne Roman Catholic School - Catholic diocese representative)

Co-opted educational representative members may advise and vote on all matters relating to children's services in schools. Two places are available for church Diocesan representatives. Two further places are available for parent governors at maintained schools in Essex (one primary and one secondary school). To date one representative is in place as above. A review of representation is underway.

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee, held at 10.15am by video conference on Thursday, 18 March 2021

Present:

County Councillors:

J Chandler (Chairman)
J Baker (Vice Chairman)
M Durham
B Egan (Vice Chairman)
C Guglielmi
M Hardware
J Lumley
P May
R Pratt
P Reid
C Souter
M Steptoe
L Wagland

Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer and Gemma Bint, Democratic Services Officer, were also present.

1 Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations of Interest

The report on Membership, Apologies, Substitutions and Declarations was received and noted.

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Jude Deakin and Christine Martin from St John Payne Roman Catholic School (Roman Catholic Diocese education representative).

2. Minutes

The draft minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2021 were approved as a true record and signed by the Chairman.

3. Questions from the public

There were no questions from the public.

4. Children and Families Services - update

The Committee considered report PAF/04/2021 comprising an update on Children's and Families services and projects.

The following joined the meeting to introduce the item:

County Councillor Louise McKinlay, Cabinet Member – Children and Families;
Christopher Martin, Director – Strategic, Commissioning & Policy (Children and Families);
Richard Comerford, Managing Director, Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service, Virgin Care Services Limited
Clare Burrell, Head of Strategic Commissioning & Policy (Children and Families);
Sukriti Sen, Director – Local Delivery (Children & Families).

During the discussion the following was acknowledged, highlighted and/or noted:

- There had been limited movement on Respite Care, but an update was likely to be provided in the summer.

Children services during the pandemic:

- The impact of Covid had been significant in terms of Children's services but the operational teams had adapted well, and a Children & Families Function Resilience Group had been established to provide leadership throughout.
- Virtual meetings had been the core way to communicate with families after a risk assessment had been undertaken in each case to decide whether there still needed to be face-to-face contact. A greater level of attendance had been noticed in some cases and this would be taken into consideration for future service delivery.
- The numbers of children entering care had been reasonably stable, but there was increasing complexity of the cases that had been coming forward.
- The Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service had continued to run successfully, and the staff had remained available throughout the pandemic due to the quick introduction of safe working practices including virtual contact. A challenge would be maintaining staff commitment and morale when the restrictions start to be lifted through the summer as levels of exhaustion and sickness rates could increase.
- Services had been maintained across Essex except the National Child Measuring programme, which had stopped due to children not being in school to be measured but it would be re-introduced from April.

Domestic abuse:

- From 1st April 2021 ECC would have a statutory duty to provide support for victims of domestic abuse.

- Evidence from other countries suggested that domestic abuse would increase during lockdown. Whilst cases were reported to have increased nationally, this had not been born out locally in Essex.
- There were a range of activities that enabled victims to be able to make themselves known and ask for and access help and these were promoted by all agencies including the Southend, Essex and Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board.
- There was a service for male victims of domestic abuse.
- A press statement was to be issued announcing the establishment of an advisory group on street safety with conversations taking place with the police and other partners.
- Community services were working with victims online and visiting high risk cases. The online chat functions had been very successful during the pandemic and communications that had been done through the police, ECC and the Southend, Essex and Thurrock partnership had resulted in a significant number of self-referrals. Numbers were steady and similar to previous years; however, cases were more complex, and numbers were expected to increase.
- There was ongoing work looking at how data analytical information could be provided in ways to enable some element of self service for people to help themselves.
- Not everyone used technology and information and signposting to services were also advertised in local newspapers. Recent newspaper campaigns had then correlated to a higher number of visits to connected advisory websites.

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service:

- There were 38 mandated children centre sites across Essex and each district had a Family Hub with affiliated satellite Delivery Sites. Clinics also operated from some libraries and GP practices.
- A priority group model was being used to target particular activities to address specific vulnerabilities identified.
- Some children had been displaying some behavioural issues and challenges when they returned to school which might require an underlying diagnosis to be identified such as ADHD or autism.
- The Harlow hub also hosted other partners to provide other early help children services such as autism and maternity services which had previously been delivered on multiple sites. Further

consideration was being given to replicate this type of site across Essex.

- Schools had helped children adjust to the return to the classroom and resocialisation by encouraging social activity and interactions with each other.
- Education colleagues had worked with schools to offer a programme of support on how to recognise and respond to the emotional needs of young children and signpost where to get help. Since schools had re-opened, one phone number was now being promoted for families to call and be signposted to the relevant service, and prevent families being passed around the system.
- Digital technology had facilitated interventions and new ways of delivering services and engaging with service users, particularly those living in remote locations.

Looked- after children:

- The numbers of children in care had fluctuated during the pandemic with peaks particularly in Basildon, Colchester, Harlow and Tendring.
- There had been an increase in both the 0-4 age group and teenagers coming into care and in each quadrant the referrals for unborn children had been higher than usual.
- There had been an increase in the number of children being exploited online and it was expected that there would be further indications of increasing exploitation as social restrictions were removed.
- There had always been challenges in finding suitable local placements for children in the teenage age group and those who were vulnerable to exploitation. A variety of options were looked at when considering a placement including internal foster carers, agency foster carers and alternative placements such as forms of residential care. The priority was to keep children within the Essex area, within the family setting and provide bespoke services for them.
- A Multi-Disciplinary team was launched in Tendring to support vulnerable families, initially as an 18-month pilot programme, and its effectiveness would be reviewed before looking to implement it elsewhere.

The witnesses were thanked for their attendance by the Chairman and then left the meeting.

The meeting adjourned at 12pm and reconvened at 12.05pm

5. Task and Finish Group Report – Domiciliary Care

The Committee considered report PAF/05/21 comprising the final report of the Task and Finish Group established to look at aspects of domiciliary care provision in Essex.

The following joined the meeting to support the item:

County Councillor John Spence, Cabinet Member – Health and Adult Social Care;

Moira McGrath, Director – Commissioning (Adult Social Care).

During discussion the following was highlighted:

- There had been issues that the Group would have liked to have pursued further but was unable to due to the pressures from the pandemic and the need to close the review ahead of the County Council elections. In particular, the Group had not spoken to anyone from the NHS particularly in relation to hospital discharge processes.
- The Cabinet Member and Officers were able to accept the recommendations and assurance was given that officers would take forward other issues that had been raised that were not included in the recommendations and investigate further.
- ECC had been under notice of NHS plans to review discharge methodologies in any case and it was suggested that the review of discharges as proposed by the Group could align with, and benefit from being done in the light of the emerging NHS proposals.
- It was suggested that a briefing on financial advice management and debt work being undertaken by the County Council in the care market could be provided to the Committee at a later date.

Adult social care staff – working from home arrangements

- A recent County Council survey showed that 22% of its Children and Family staff were not working from home compared to 2% of Adult Social Care (ASC) staff, and it was queried as to why only 2% of ASC staff were doing face to face client contact. It was confirmed that whilst many ASC staff were predominantly working at home they would still be conducting visits as appropriate and necessary after suitable risk assessment. A risk-based approach had been

taken as part of the decision to ask staff to work from home but they were still in contact via video and phone calls. Domiciliary care was delivered by external providers and the vast majority of that service continued to be delivered face to face.

- Work had been undertaken through the Essex Wellbeing Service and wider services to ensure welfare checks were still taking place and service user feedback had indicated that this was greatly appreciated.
- The Task and Finish Group and the officers and contributors were thanked for their commitment and contributions.

Conclusion:

The Committee **agreed** to endorse the Task and Finish Group report and recommendations, set out in the final report.

The witnesses were thanked for their attendance by the Chairman and then left the meeting.

6. Date of Next Meeting

No further meetings were scheduled ahead of the County Council elections. The date of the next meeting would be confirmed after the Elections in May.

The Chairman thanked Members and officers for their hard work and contributions to the committee over the last four years. The contribution of the Healthwatch Essex representative at meetings was also acknowledged.

Members of the Committee thanked Councillor Jenny Chandler for her leadership as Chairman of the Committee.

There being no further business the meeting closed at 12.28pm.

Chairman

Adult Social Care update (including Residential and Domiciliary Care Trends)

Reference Number: PAF/06/21

Report title: Adult Social Care update (including Residential and Domiciliary Care Trends)	
Report to: People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Report author: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
Date: 15 July 2021	For: Consideration and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
Enquiries to: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
County Divisions affected: Not applicable	

1. Introduction

This item has been requested by the Chairman as a broad ranging introduction to some of the changes and trends being seen in residential and domiciliary care and Adult Social Care more generally as a result of the pandemic and the lockdown.

2. Action required

The Committee is asked to consider:

- (i) **The attached update [TO FOLLOW AS A LATE PAPER]; and**
- (ii) **Identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Full Committee last considered this issue on September 2021 and the meeting papers, together with the minutes of that discussion (scroll down to end of Agenda items and look under Meeting Documents), can be accessed using this link – [PAF 17 September 2020 meeting papers](#) .
- 3.2 A Task and Finish Group looked at some aspects of domiciliary care during October 2020 – January 2021 and the update is likely to make reference to the review. A copy of the final report of the Group can be accessed using this link [PAF Domiciliary Care Task and Finish Group report - 10 March 2021](#)

4. Update and Next Steps

The update is attached in the Appendix [to follow]. Next steps are as proposed under Action Required. Overleaf is a list of witnesses from Essex County Council who will attend and support the discussion:

Adult Social Care update (including Residential and Domiciliary Care Trends)

Expected attendees:

County Councillor John Spence, Cabinet Member – Health and Adult Social Care.

Nick Presmeg, Executive Director, Adult Social Care.

Steve Ede – Head of Procurement

Moira McGrath - Director, Commissioning (Adult Social Care).

Zoe Harriss - Category and Supplier Relationship Lead

5 List of Appendices

Update to follow.

Note: Late papers will be sent direct to members of the Committee. They will also be published on the Essex County Council website alongside the agenda papers as soon as they become available. To see any late papers for a meeting please scroll down to the end of the list of agenda items on the website and look under 'Meeting Documents'.

Work Programme

Reference Number: PAF/07/21

Report title: Work Programme	
Report to: People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee	
Report author: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer	
Date: 15 July 2021	For: Discussion and identifying any follow-up scrutiny actions
Enquiries to: Graham Hughes, Senior Democratic Services Officer at graham.hughes@essex.gov.uk.	
County Divisions affected: Not applicable	

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The work programme is a standard agenda item. The work programme for the Committee is being developed and the current position is outlined below.

2. Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider this report and issues under consideration in the Appendix and any further development or amendments.

3. Background

3.1 Developing a work programme

The new membership of the Committee was confirmed at Full Council on 25 May 2021. Since then the Committee has held two induction sessions which have included discussions with relevant portfolio holders about their priorities in the coming months (issues discussed are listed in the **Appendix**).

It is anticipated that those priorities and other issues raised during the recent discussions will be further developed into an initial work programme by the Chairman and Vice Chairmen over the coming weeks.

4. Update and Next Steps

See Appendix.

5. **Appendix** – Agenda business for next meeting and list of issues discussed recently with Cabinet Members.

People and Families Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Main agenda item for next meeting: 9 September 2021

Overview of what ECC has been providing as support for young people and families as come out of the pandemic, to include initiatives already underway and planned (including the Education Recovery Task Force activity) - as precursor to a possible joint scrutiny working group.

Work programme update: Headline issues for further consideration

<u>Health and ASC</u>	<u>Education</u>	<u>Children and Families</u>	<u>Deputy Leader</u>
Older people -Work underway to further enhance quality of life. -CONNECT programme. -Re-ablement.	New SEND Strategy (in draft) – interim update to understand challenges.	Short breaks commissioning strategy – to be out for consultation in the summer.	Levelling up agenda: cross-cutting. Involves partnership work including districts. Timing: post September.
Learning disabilities -Largest component part of budget. -Considerable levels of care can be required.	Improvements to SEND provision update (CQC/OFSTED inspection)	New domestic abuse statutory duty and strategy – to be published in October.	Libraries Strategy – wider community role (linking summer camps and other outreach work). Also focus on pre-schools and school readiness.
Carers - further ways to support	Young people missing education group and its continuing work	Early Years strategy – parenting as a subject for scrutiny and support and assistance?	Youth Services strategy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Young carers - Community capacity reactivation - Early intervention and causal linkages
System working/ Blurred boundaries between Health and social care.	Education Recovery Task Force – how recovers post pandemic	Looked-after children -strategy (housing - care leavers).	Essex Outdoors – looking to increase usage and make it more commercial and reinvestment

-Especially applicable to mental health. -Emphasis on prevention. -New initiatives to rebuild lives back into the mainstream	(to be chaired by independent person)	-How well is adoption service working?	
Social care staff -Looking to enhance status. -Role of technology	ECC 100 Day Plan – how education service feeds into it.	Emotional wellbeing - Suicide rates in Essex, mental health, loneliness and isolation.	
	Adult Community Learning Strategy (to be informed by 100 Day Plan)	Domestic abuse	
	Lifelong learning – Skills – post 16 training possible joint work with other scrutiny committee(s)		
	ECC response on Government White Paper on future education proposals. Performance of academies and role of Regional Schools Commissioner		

There are also some additional legacy/loose-ends from before the County Council elections which may also be considered. This includes a follow-up on the recommendations from the Drug Gangs, Knife Crime and County Lines Task and Finish Group.