

**ADULT SOCIAL CARE, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
31 JANUARY 2018**

**Present:** Councillor McElligott (Chair)  
Councillors Eden, Gavin, Hoskin, Jones, Khan, Maskell, McKenna, O'Connell, Pearce, Robinson, Stanford-Beale, Vickers and J Williams.

**39. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2017 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**40. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND COUNCILLORS**

A question on the following matter was submitted, and answered by the Lead Councillor for Children's Services and Families:

| <b>Questioner</b> | <b>Subject</b>    |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| Peter West        | 16 - 25 Railcards |

(The full text of the question and reply was made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

**41. HEALTHWATCH REPORT: THE EXPERIENCE OF PEOPLE ADMITTED TO PSYCHIATRIC WARDS AT PROSPECT PARK HOSPITAL - SCRUTINY ITEM**

Mandeep Sira, Chief Executive, Healthwatch Reading, submitted a copy of the Healthwatch report on the Experience of people who had been admitted to psychiatric wards at Prospect Park Hospital.

The report explained that all six Healthwatch in Berkshire had worked together to visit and capture the views of people who were staying as patients at Prospect Park Hospital that was run by Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust (BHFT). Forty patients had been spoken to in the wards and the main findings of the project were as follows:

- 80% of people (32 out of 40) said they had not been given a date for their discharge from hospital;
- 75% of people (30 out of 40) said they had taken part in activities at the hospital;
- 69% of people (27 out of 39) said they had been told about their right to have an independent mental health advocate;
- 67% of people (27 out of 41) said they had been in contact with a community service before coming into hospital;
- 62% of people (24 out of 39) said they had not had their care and treatment plan explained to them in hospital.

Staff attitude, care and friendliness had been the most common response from patients when they had been asked to identify one good thing about the hospital, followed by getting treatment they needed, feeling safe, support from other patients, the environment, the hospital's location and the care on Rose Ward.

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More staff had been the most suggested improvement by patients followed by different treatment, more escort trips, environment changes, nearby smoking areas, better food, more information and peer support.

The report made the following ten recommendations:

1. BHFT should share the feedback of the project with all ward staff as part of ongoing staff education, motivation and performance appraisal about the impact of their behaviour on people in their care;
2. BHFT should explain how shared decision making was carried out in practice and how it checked that there were opportunities for all types of people, including those under section, to be involved, to ensure a consistent approach on all acute wards;
3. BHFT should outline the process, if any was in place, for ward staff to follow, to ensure patients were made aware of their rights while under section, and also their general rights as set out in the NHS Constitution if they were voluntary patients;
4. BHFT should: describe how its current activities programme had been developed; provide a greater range of activities at the weekend and; launch a service user involvement project to review and possibly change the activities programme to match a variety of patient needs, culture or preference;
5. BHFT should ensure that staff discussed with patients, at the earliest opportunity, their approximate discharge date from hospital and future care options and make this information available in a copy of a care plan given to the patient;
6. BHFT should describe any joint working it was undertaking with local authorities, other NHS providers, and commissioners, that would reduce delayed discharge, when people were ready to leave hospital;
7. BHFT and CCGs should outline how they intended to meet the NHS England target, and current progress to date towards it;
8. BHFT and CCGs should explain how they would address patient concerns about the 'revolving door' nature of mental health care and treatment;
9. BHFT and CCGs should explain what local strategy they had, if any, to improve ward staff recruitment, including details of any new funding, recruitment targets, changes to skill mix, patient involvement, and milestones for expected increases;
10. BHFT should proactively work to implement patients' suggestions raised through this project, involving them in discussions on how to do this, and/or publicising to patients when these changes had occurred, in order to value the input of patients.

Mandeep told the Committee that this had been the largest piece of work of its kind that had been carried out by any Healthwatch and that there had been two reasons for it being undertaken, mixed feedback from patients about their experience at the hospital and there not being enough staff.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed that BHFT and the CCGs should be invited to a future meeting to report on their progress in addressing the recommendations that had been made in the report.

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Resolved -

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That Mandeep Sira and Healthwatch be thanked for their work;
- (3) That BHFT and the CCGs be invited to a future meeting to report on their progress in addressing the recommendations as set out in the report.

**42. SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA 2018/19**

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report that considered the arrangements for the Reading Schools Funding Formula in 2018/19 including updated information from the National Formula consultation and Reading Schools Formula Consultation. A table setting out the responses from the Reading Schools Formula Consultation was attached to the report at Appendix 1, items within the new Central Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) were set out in Appendix 2 and a Budget Process Timetable for 2018/19 was attached to the report at Appendix 3.

The report explained that over the previous few years the government had published two consultations in respect of the introduction of the National Funding Formula for Schools. Reading had reviewed the Local School Funding Formula with the Funding Working Group and in July 2017 had proposed five key questions. In July 2017 it had been noted that funding proposals had yet to be finalised by the Department for Education (DfE) in respect of the Funding Formula for 18-19 and 19-20 year olds but it had been agreed to review the Formula locally. This consultation had been developed by the Funding Working Group and had been issued at the beginning of the autumn 2017 school term. In September 2017 the government had published their findings of the latest national consultation with indicative DSG budgets for 2018-19, with confirmation that a National Funding Formula would be introduced. The key changes from the national consultation were detailed in the report and included the following:

- The DSG would now be split into four blocks, changing from the current three; a new Central Schools Block would be introduced that would incorporate the old Education Services Grant and the centrally retained budgets from the Schools Block;
- With the approval of Schools Forum, and following a consultation, the authority was allowed to transfer 0.5% of the Schools Block to another block. This 0.5% equated to £421k in the current draft budget for 2018/19;
- Pupil Premium Plus (for Looked After Children (LAC)) would increase from £1,900 to £2,300, this was due to the National Formula not having a LAC factor.

With regard to the local consultation, four secondary schools and three primary schools had responded and one other primary school had replied with a letter asking for more information but agreed to the general principle of the proposed changes.

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The School Formula Working Group had met in the summer term 2017, with the local consultation having been prepared and issued prior to the publication of the national consultation response. As the consultation had been directed towards the proposal of transitioning to the National Funding Formula in 2020-21, the responses had agreed mostly to introduce Formula that currently the authority did not use and were going to be in the confirmed national Formula.

The report set out the local authority recommendations for the 2018/19 Formula on which the Schools Forum would vote which stated that the local authority would:

- Implement the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) Factor;
- Implement the Free School Meals Factor - Ever 6;
- Move towards or use the new National funding factor values;
- Review the Lump Sum amount while reviewing the factor values and working out the impact due to the minimum funding guarantee;
- Use responses from Question 5 to determine what factors could be used to reflect a potential local Formula;
- Be asking schools regarding the 0.5% that was allowed to transfer to the High Needs Block.

The report stated that it was for the local authority to propose and decide on any changes to the Formula. The Schools Forum had to be consulted on any changes and had to inform schools of any consultation, although in practice this was done by the authority and all Primary and Secondary School and Academy members had a vote on this matter. In previous years the authority would only make any changes to the Formula if the Schools Forum was content with the proposed changes.

The Committee discussed the report and Councillor Jones told the Committee that a table setting out the position for each school in the Borough would be sent to the members of the Committee once it had been finalised.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the National Formula Consultation update be noted;
- (2) That the Local Consultation Responses be noted;
- (3) That the agreeing to Local Authority formula planning recommendation be noted;
- (4) That a table setting out the position for each school in the Borough be sent to the members of the Committee once it had been finalised.

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**43. EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY 2018-2021**

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an overview of the Early Intervention and Partnership Strategy 2018-21. A copy of the Strategy was attached to the report.

The report stated that Early Help Services were subject to Ofsted's inspection regime and the November 2017 monitoring visit had focused on Early Help and had concluded that the Council's approach to Early Help had improved. The report had also noted the developments in partnership working and strategic direction. The Strategy had outlined the steps to sustain this momentum and proposed that capacity and confidence were built in partner services by:

- Releasing skilled local authority workers to support partners to complete Early Help Assessments and hold the Lead Professional role;
- Developing a shared workforce development programme with an emphasis on evidence based practice;
- Viability of a partner portal on the case management system to ensure robust information sharing.

The Strategy had proposed new ways of engaging families before concerns had warranted a safeguarding referral to the front door, ways to develop family and community resilience and for delivery of the Strategy to be monitored by the established partnership that was represented at the Children's Trust Board. The Strategy recognised the need to provide compelling evidence for the efficacy of early intervention and had adopted an outcomes framework that had been recommended by Research in Practice. The Strategy had also adopted the Troubled Families Outcomes Framework for family outcomes and data sets had been put in place to track sustained outcomes for whole families.

The report stated recent evidence had suggested that there was willingness across the partnership to support the delivery of the Strategy and tangible commitments had been made, with Thames Valley Police having contributed both financial and personnel resources. The Council had to continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders to identify and support whole families at the earliest opportunity and data intelligence should be shared appropriately and proportionately. Early Intervention would be maintained and should be delivered with rigour as it afforded the most cost effective way of reducing demand on high cost specialist services.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the Early Intervention and Prevention Partnership Strategy 2018-19 be approved;**
- (2) That an update report be submitted to the meeting in autumn 2018 on the performance of the Strategy.**

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**44. LEARNING FROM READING BOROUGH COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND NEXT STEPS IN ADDRESSING CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION**

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an overview on the significant improvements that had been delivered in addressing the risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Reading.

The report explained that the approach in addressing CSE in the Borough had been based upon the 'Child Sexual Exploitation Definition and Guide' 2017. This advice was non-statutory and assisted practitioners, local leaders and decision makers who worked with children and families to identify child sexual exploitation and take appropriate action in response. Since the Ofsted Inspection in 2016 there had been significant activity across the partnership to address the system and practice weaknesses in managing the risk of CSE. Experts, who had brought experience of learning from other authorities, had added insight and credibility to local experience and had re-shaped the established direction. The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) had reviewed the Terms of Reference of its CSE Sub-Group and had revised their strategy in order to better address CSE. The approach to victims of CSE had been amended to ensure that they received tailored individual support plans and risk assessments addressing strengths and vulnerabilities with a view primarily to safeguarding the child. The Chief Executive routinely chaired multi-agency briefings with senior officers and an experienced consultant had been employed by the Council to drive a partnership approach with all key stakeholders including police, health and education. A retrospective review of CSE cases in the Borough, combined with learning from current cases over summer 2017, had provided an opportunity to learn and adapt local process to meet the requirements of local risk. The creation of the Children's Single Point of Access (SPoA) combined with the learning from a local police operation had facilitated the revision of a number of operational pathways to address CSE and Missing Children and specialist CSE practitioners had been added to the SPoA.

The report stated that there were currently eight children who were looked after who had been identified as victims of CSE and the cost to the authority of their placements was currently £13,429 per week (this equated to an annual Children Looked After placement cost of £688k for CSE alone). There were an additional 65 children who had been identified as 'at risk' of CSE; in January 2017 there had been only 12 children identified as engaged in or at risk of CSE. This increase represented a 600% increase in identification and delivery of services to children in the previous 12 months.

The report stated that recent evidence in the Borough had suggested that the criminal exploitation of children had reached beyond that of CSE and the recent escalation of youth violence and the use of weapons had pointed to an emerging 'County Lines' issue in the Borough (County Lines was a police term for describing child (and vulnerable adult) criminal exploitation to move drugs and money). County lines activity and the associated violence and exploitation had a devastating impact on young and vulnerable people and their communities. The local and national picture of County Lines had continued to develop and it was known that

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County Lines groups were able to adapt their practice. The full scale of child involvement was not yet known or understood but 65% of regions nationally had reported the criminal exploitation of children and 85% of all activity had referenced the use of knives. There were significant gaps around the known level of exploitation of children both locally and nationally and there was no consistent or proactive way of identifying if a vulnerable person/child had entered another police force area or local authority area. Elements of the criminal exploitation picture would be held on a range of different partner agencies systems, therefore there was scope for increased intelligence sharing and coordination to improve the collaborative response. The Council had to continue to work collaboratively with key stakeholders in identifying and addressing risk and data and intelligence should be shared appropriately and proportionately and awareness had to be raised across all agencies in collaboration with the LSCB.

Like CSE the approach to County Lines was not statutory and the delivery of preventative and early disruptive activity was reliant upon the provision of early intervention and preventative intervention with children and young people across a wide spectrum. The activity relating to missing persons should be maintained and should be delivered with rigour as it afforded the most tangible early indicator of risk. The Council should continue to learn from the emerging national picture on Criminal exploitation of children and Children's Services should be open to learning from local evidence, learning from feedback from children supported by statistical evidence from police, health, education and the community and voluntary sector.

The Committee discussed the report and agreed that an update report should be submitted to the Committee in autumn 2018.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the shift, both operationally and strategically, in responding to the local risk of sexual exploitation for Reading's children and vulnerable adults be acknowledged;
- (2) That the application of the strategic and operational infrastructure to achieve the best response in the prevention and management of exploitation be endorsed;
- (3) That the continued support to prevention and early intervention activity in mitigating and managing a Reading response to the criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults be approved;
- (4) That the nature of criminal exploitation as an ever changing environment be recognised and thereby continuous learning and adaptation of practice and process to best safeguard Reading's children be supported;
- (5) That an update report be submitted to the meeting in autumn 2018.

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**45. PROGRESS ON THE DELIVERY OF THE SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) STRATEGY 2017-2018**

The Director of Children, Education and Early Help Services submitted a report providing the Committee with an overview of the Early Intervention and Partnership Strategy 2018-21. The SEND Strategy Board Terms of Reference were attached to the report at Appendix 1 and the DfE Note of Visit December 2017 was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report stated that the SEND Strategy had been communicated to a range of partners and a communications plan was being developed to ensure all partners were kept informed. A SEND Strategy Board, chaired by the Director of Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Education and Early Help Services, had been set up with a membership from all key partners, including Reading Family Forum (RFF). The Board was monitoring the implementation of the Strategy. The Council had been working closely with RFF at both an operational and strategic level and they had brought a valuable perspective and constructive challenge to the future planning of services. 'Special United', the young people's forum, had also been involved in reviewing the Local Offer and Short Breaks. Multi agency strand groups had also been established and meetings had been held for three of the four strands. A comprehensive SEND data report had been developed to support strategic planning and commissioning decisions, including any changes in provision that might be required.

In line with national trends there had been an increase in the numbers of children with additional needs and a change in the profile of needs, in particular those that had been diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC) and those who had been identified with social, emotional and mental health difficulties (SEMH). A needs gap analysis was being carried out to identify the support that would be required by schools in relation to children with ASC and SEMH and this analysis would be used to develop proposals to improve outcomes for children building on existing good practice. A detailed graduated response guide was also being co-produced to support early years professionals and settings, schools and colleges and partner agencies in identifying and meeting the needs of children and young people as early as possible. The range of services and provision, including support for universal services to identify and meet the needs of children at the earliest stage, were being reviewed to ensure that the majority of current and future children could have their needs met within the local area. Audits were also being carried out in a number of areas.

The report stated that there had been historically a significant overspend in the High Needs Block (HNB) of the DSG, a report had been submitted and considered at the Schools Forum and next steps agreed. Steps had been taken to reduce costs where possible in the short term while actions were agreed to ensure the budget was focussed on statutory requirements and against priority areas of need. Progress had been made with converting the previous statements of SEND to Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and additional capacity had been put in place to meet the March 2018 deadline for the conversion of all statements to EHCPs. The service had maintained good performance against the target of completing EHCPs within 20 weeks and the service priority in the next 12 months



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was to ensure consistency in the quality of plans that were produced. In addition, the DfE SEND Adviser had met with every local authority SEND lead on a termly basis to monitor the implementation of the Children and Families Act 2014, this was in addition to a survey that had been returned separately by local authorities and Parent Carer Forums each term. RFF were also invited to these meetings.

The report explained that the manager of the Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) had been working with the SEND Improvement Adviser and RFF to investigate and trial models of delivery that were used in other areas and to ensure capacity was built within universal services to support families. Detailed financial analysis had been carried out and the service had been receiving a government grant via the National Children's Bureau which would end in March 2018. There had been a carry forward of this grant each year, due to the length of time it had taken to recruit staff, and there would be some carry forward into 2018/19. An element of the SEND Reform Grant would also be carried forward into 2018/19. The service would be able to meet a proportion of the agreed efficiency saving and the balance had been identified as a compensatory saving from core budgets not required elsewhere and a manageable increase in an income target in bought back services. This would allow time for the new models of delivery to be trialled and evaluated, as well as to build the required capacity.

The government had recently announced a new contract in 2018/19 and 2019/20 to ensure that, in every local authority area, children and young people with SEND and their families had access to impartial information, advice and support covering SEND issues. Once the information was known regarding the focus and terms of the grant this would be incorporated into the development of a new delivery model. The service was also trialling a new, term time only, helpline model. Feedback to date had been positive and consideration was being given to where the line management of the service best sat in the future that would ensure it was arms-length from the authority.

Ramona Bridgeman, Chair of RFF, and Tara Robb, RFF, attended the meeting and addressed the Committee. Ramona told the Committee that there had been a sea-change in their work with officers in Children's Services who were listening and working in cooperation with the Forum. Officers had also attended and spoken at meetings of the Forum. Progress had also been made in getting data together so that plans could be made for the future. However, there were still issues such as the difficulty young people had in moving towards independence, finding places for children in schools that would meet their needs, particularly finding places in special schools, and the difficulty in engaging with academy schools.

**Resolved -**

- (1) That the progress made on delivering the SEND Strategy be noted;**
- (2) That the Department for Education note of the visit regarding progress in SEND in Reading be noted;**
- (3) That the development within the IASS Service be noted;**

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- (4) That Reading Families' Forum be thanked for their work and persistence on the SEND Strategy and Ramona Bridgman and Tara Robb be thanked for attending the meeting.

(Councillor Stanford-Beale declared an interest in the above item, stayed in the meeting and took part in the discussion. Nature of interest: Councillor Stanford-Beale was Chief Executive Officer of Autism Berkshire).

**46. PROVISION OF SCHOOL CATERING SERVICES - CONTRACT EXTENSION**

This item was not considered.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 8.00 pm).