

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee – 26th June 2014

Report of the Lead Officer

Summary of work undertaken by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee 2013/14

Purpose of report

1. To provide Members with a summary of the work undertaken by this Committee in the 13/14 municipal year.

Background

2. The work programme undertaken by the Children's Scrutiny Committee 13/14 was as follows:
 - Safeguarding Standards within the Borough and Children's Services contribution
 - Early intervention strategy for the Borough.
3. The Committee undertook its work in a variety of ways, including formal and informal meetings, establishment of a shaping group, visits, listening to expert witnesses and service users.
4. Minutes of all the Scrutiny Meetings are available and new Members to this Committee may find it useful to read these for background purposes as the following is only a brief summary.
5. Children's Centres

The conclusion from the work undertaken was:

Staff, volunteers and families should be proud of the excellent work that goes on in our children's centres. They are embedded in our community and offer the potential to deliver immediate and ongoing benefits to our children and their families. An early intervention strategy is paramount to dealing with inequalities and ensuring that all children can have the best start in life.

The testimony of parents given to members of this committee during visits to children's centres and at a formal meeting demonstrated the life changing nature of early intervention. In austere times, local authorities and their partner agencies cannot afford to act in isolation is necessary or desired, the best possible outcome should be the aspiration for our children and the identifiable outcomes.

6. Safeguarding and child trafficking

Safeguarding training was undertaken by all Members of the Scrutiny Committee and training arranged for all Members of the Council.

It was concluded and recommended that Safeguarding and Child Exploitation training should be mandatory for all Councillors both to raise awareness and ensure that everyone is on alert.

Recommended that a Multi Agency Confidentiality Exchange Agreement be set up to ensure all data is available and shared.

Recommended that there was continued liaison and awareness campaigns with hotel managers and staff around the need to be part of the programmes – Safeguarding Kite Mark and Say Something if you See Something. It was evident that hotel staff were key to tackling child/sex abuse.

Recommended that closer links were made with the 'Street Teams' and that they were invited to present their 'education programme to all schools and colleges in the Borough to educate on how to recognise potential dangers.

Recommended that schools should be encouraged to engage and work with the Child line Schools service.

Finance

7. This report in itself has no financial implications.

Law

8. Scrutiny Committees are established in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972 and the requirements of the Council's Constitution, which was adopted under the Local Government Act 1972 and the requirements of the Council's Constitution, which was adopted under the Local Government Act 2000, subsequent legislation and associated Regulations and Guidance.

Equality Impact

9. Provision exists within the recommended scrutiny arrangements for overview and scrutiny to be undertaken of the Council's policies on equality and diversity.

Recommendations

10. Members are asked to note the contents of this report.



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List of Background Papers