

FALKIRK COUNCIL

MINUTE of MEETING of the PERFORMANCE PANEL held in the MUNICIPAL BUILDINGS, FALKIRK on THURSDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2016 at 9.30 AM.

CORE MEMBERS: Stephen Bird
Cecil Meiklejohn (convener)
Rosie Murray
Baillie Joan Paterson
Depute Provost John Patrick

MEMBERS David Alexander
ATTENDING: Brian McCabe

OFFICERS: Fiona Campbell, Head of Policy, Technology & Improvement
Jack Frawley, Committee Services Officer
Joe McElholm, Head of Social Work Adult Services
Rose Mary Glackin, Chief Governance Officer
Philip Morgan-Klein, Service Manager, Planning & Resources
Robert Naylor, Director of Children's Services
Anne Pearson, Head of Education

PP11. MINUTE

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Performance Panel held on 19 November 2015 was approved.

Councillor Alexander entered the meeting during consideration of the following item.

PP12. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The performance panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services setting out a summary of performance for the period April to September 2015. The report provided information on key priorities, key areas for improvement, an update from the last meeting, important indicators and engagement with customers. Appended to the report was the Children's Services – Performance Panel Statement – April to September 2015. Robert Naylor provided an overview of the report.

The panel discussed the new examination system relating to National Qualifications and requested a briefing for all members including information on Insight, the Scottish Government's online benchmarking tool. Robert Naylor stated that a briefing had previously been held on Insight, that it wasn't well attended and that there might be benefit in including it at a future meeting of the Education Executive.

Members discussed that what constituted positive outcomes for young people varied depending on their circumstances and that it was about more than exam performance. Robert Naylor stated that achievements made by young people were recognised by schools at award ceremonies and assemblies but that such information was not reported in the performance statement. Members commented that it would be positive to publicise the achievements of local young people across the district as it would help to inspire others to achieve. It was suggested that this information could be included in the briefing for all members or reported through the Information Bulletin.

The panel asked for further information on the policy of early presentation for Standard Grade examination. Robert Naylor advised that schools no longer presented any learners for their examinations early following the introduction of the National Qualifications. Larbert High School and Falkirk High School had presented all students in all subjects early while at Denny High School and at St Mungo's High School early presentation had only been in place for English and Maths. Anne Pearson stated that there were six local authorities in Scotland who had opted to utilise early presentation. Robert Naylor noted that there was insufficient data nationally or locally to reach conclusions on the benefit of early presentation.

Members discussed the Service's move to introduce more e-business and online solutions as part of the corporate channel shift approach in areas such as online enrolment, placing requests and school payments. Robert Naylor stated that for some systems the shift to online was easier than for others. In some cases parts of the process could be moved online while other elements of the process could not. He commented that the next iteration of the project was to move as much as possible online, particularly in relation to payments and signing-up to services.

The panel asked why the Service's target in relation to respite weeks provided to children with disability was lower than the Scottish Government Concordat. Philip Morgan-Klein stated that performance depended upon the availability of services including placements offered from the voluntary sector. He advised that the target reflected the pattern of demand which had been seen locally. Robert Naylor stated that the information was required as a national benchmarking figure and that performance depended on the number of children and young people in the category at any one time. He stated that a better measure may be to use a specific number of weeks per child in the category. Philip Morgan-Klein stated that the measure was standardised to cover the range of provision in place in different local authorities. He commented that there were other services, including day care and play schemes, which included respite but were not counted as such as their primary service was not respite. Further, the episodic nature of care made calculating an average difficult. Members requested that the Service look at how this information was reported and that it was contextualised differently.

Members discussed work experience programmes and requested that information, in narrative form, was included on this in future reports to show where added value was being achieved.

The panel discussed collaborative work being undertaken with early years, primary and secondary teachers and leaders at cluster level. Anne Pearson stated that a 3 – 18 years approach to education provided opportunities to the Service to work more efficiently and make savings. When introducing this approach schools had been asked if they were interested and initially one cluster had come forward, however, all clusters now wanted to

implement the approach. The Service senior management team had developed an implementation strategy to roll out the approach across all clusters.

Members discussed the reporting of outcomes for looked after children and asked if it would be best to measure performance against other young people in similar circumstances. Robert Naylor stated that such an approach could be taken but that it was slightly problematic to compare looked after children with one another in terms of attainment as the circumstances of each young person's life could be very different. This included that children became looked after for different reasons and at different stages in their lives. He advised that the Service sought to have a value added experience of education for looked after children so that their progress went beyond that which would be typically expected. He commented that there did need to be a meaningful way to report on the category and that it may involve looking at positive destinations for each young person.

The panel asked how the Service evaluated when demographic pressures were at such a point that a school needed to be extended through the Capital Programme. Robert Naylor stated that the Service projected rolls on the basis of many factors including birth rate, new build housing, patterns relating to existing housing and planned future building. After evaluating this information the Service would determine if increases to the population were likely to be sustained or short term. If it was felt that increases were short term then modular units would be brought in to provide sufficient capacity. In cases of sustained increase, e.g. where a school may need to increase from two to three streams, a bid would be made to the Capital Programme to extend the school.

In relation to industry recognised qualifications, members asked if focussing on this was a national direction or if it had been implemented by individual schools. Robert Naylor stated that the Service had encouraged schools to utilise this approach and that Head Teachers were keen to get the best possible outcomes for individual children which could include obtaining an industry recognised qualification. He commented that such achievements would not currently be recorded through Insight but that discussion was ongoing with the SQA to address this.

Members asked how best practice in schools was shared across the district. Anne Pearson highlighted that Head Teachers worked in collaboration to share practice. There were also subject development groups, blogs and shared materials. She stated that this approach had led to improvements in attainment in Higher English.

The panel asked if demand for further education opportunities was higher than the number of available places. Robert Naylor stated that he was not aware of any particular issues. Historically Falkirk had greater numbers of young people leaving education to directly enter employment than the national average. Further, Falkirk had approximately 25% of school leavers go to university and 33% go to college, while in other areas the average was closer to 66% of school leavers entering some form of further education.

Members discussed the approach of obtaining service user/carer input into recruitment and selection processes. Anne Pearson stated that in terms of Education this involvement usually involved the inclusion of parent representatives on interview panels. Robert Naylor stated that during the recruitment of foster carers, service users were engaged. Further, Philip Morgan-Klein advised that during staff selection processes for respite and day care services, service users would be involved in part of the recruitment

process. Their views were meaningfully considered and an important part of the selection process.

Members asked for clarification regarding figures for the proportion of looked after children in residential placements. Robert Naylor advised that figures previously provided to the Scrutiny Panel – Outcomes for Looked After Children related to all looked after children but that those in the report were only for those in residential placements. He stated that historically in situations of crisis the Children's Panel in making its decision had often selected residential school placements as being the most appropriate for a young person. The Service was seeking to change this as it was better to have young people in their own communities. The Service had undertaken work to increase the number of foster carers and residential care beds available locally. This would be supplemented by the relocation of the Mariner Support Service to the former Focus school building, Laurieston. Robert Naylor advised that he had met with the chair of the Children's Panel and with newly recruited members as he wanted them to have confidence in the services available to young people in Falkirk which could be accessed rather than using a residential school placement.

The panel asked what the approach of the Service was in cases where a family was going through challenging circumstances temporarily, citing cases of ill health for example. Robert Naylor advised that unless a crisis point was reached the education provision for a young person would not change although the level of care support could be increased. He commented that he would not expect a residential school placement to be made as a short term measure but that such decisions were taken by the Children's Panel.

Decision

The performance panel noted the report.

PP13. SOCIAL WORK ADULT SERVICES PERFORMANCE UPDATE

The performance panel considered a report by the Head of Social Work Adult Services setting out a summary of performance for the period April to September 2015. The report provided information on key priorities, key areas for improvement, an update from the last meeting, important indicators and engagement with customers. Appended to the report was the Social Work Adult Services – Performance Panel Statement – April to September 2015. Joe McElholm provided an overview of the report.

The panel welcomed Joe McElholm to his first meeting of the Performance Panel and asked how the Service would tackle the number of outstanding occupational therapy assessments highlighting that this had been an issue for a number of years. Joe McElholm stated that it was important that the Service looked to learn lessons from best practice in other areas. He commented that if early screening showed the need for a minor adaptation then that should be done quickly to prevent a person's condition deteriorating. He advised that there would be a shift in the Service toward prevention and reablement. He stated that if this was not done that there would be increasing need for people to access home care and costly services. The provision of equipment was a core part of the service. Further, the Service would look at how to do more online for those who needed low level support or to carry out self assessment. He stated that such approaches could lead to long term savings and reductions in waiting lists. Members

suggested that assessments for grab rails at front doors did not need to be carried out by occupational therapists in order to speed up the process.

Members discussed the Joint Loan Equipment Scheme (JLES) and if there were opportunities to look at the efficiency of the service, particularly in relation to the re-use of equipment. Joe McElholm commented that the JLES was a Forth Valley wide scheme, funded by Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire Councils and NHS Forth Valley, and that requests for service were received from multiple agencies including the acute hospital. He advised that the stock management system had been looked at and the Service recognised that the re-use of equipment was important. He highlighted that this needed to be backed up by robust hygiene and decontamination processes.

The panel discussed delayed discharge and challenges around the consistency of reporting across authorities. In relation to home care services, Joe McElholm advised that other local authorities were more targeted in their use of resources to those with the highest level of need. In Falkirk there was little resource used for people who required 10 hours and over of care a week, while a lot of resource was deployed to assist people who required less than 10 hours a week of care. This meant that there were people who received care locally who would not if they lived in other areas. If the Service concentrated more on those with the highest level of need it might result in more people staying in their own homes and relieve some of the pressure on care home places. However, he advised that this would be a long term challenge and could not be changed overnight.

Members discussed the high levels of satisfaction reported by service users and carers and asked that Joe McElholm pass that information on to staff.

The panel commented that the indicator for the number of carers' assessments carried out did not provide useful information in its current form, requesting that information on how long it took to get an assessment, the proportion of grading and the outcome of assessments was provided to members. Philip Morgan-Klein advised that the data was only for the period to December 2015 but that the period ran to the end of financial year 2015/16, although projections were that this year's figures would finish below that of the previous year. He commented that the majority of carers opted not to have an assessment carried out and that most carers who were assessed were done as part of the assessment of the service user's needs. All carers were offered a formal carers assessment. Members commented that the joint inspection had raised the engagement of carers as an area for improvement and that this was part of the action plan. Philip Morgan-Klein advised that in future reports could be more detailed as the Service was implementing personalised outcomes. Further, he noted that the eligibility of the service user impacted on the level of support available for carers.

Members highlighted that the uptake of self directed support had been low in Falkirk. Joe McElholm stated that further work was required to update the eligibility criteria and that an officer within the Service had lead responsibility for this. He commented that this would be a priority for the Service going forward. Philip Morgan-Klein stated that 2015/16 was the first year of implementation for self directed support and that there was no reliable national data available at this time. He advised that the Service was committed to ensuring that people had choice and that awareness of the four options within self directed support was increased. He advised that as some people decided to utilise self directed support others dropped off if they felt that it was not the most appropriate

approach for them so that even where numbers were relatively stable this did not necessarily relate to the same individuals.

Members discussed adult support and protection referrals and the number of adult protection plans in place. Philip Morgan-Klein highlighted that there had been significant increases to the number of adult support and protection referrals which puts extra pressure on the Service. He advised that the national data on adult support and protection was not yet published. He stated that the approach to adult support and protection varied across the country and that in some areas every Police Scotland vulnerable persons report was treated as an adult and support protection referral. That was not the approach taken in Falkirk and a national group would meet in the near future to look at guidance and develop a consistent approach to reporting.

The committee asked if there was any reason known for the increase in referrals. Philip Morgan-Klein stated that it was difficult to identify a single cause but that there was increased awareness around adult protection generally. Further, he highlighted that partner agencies were making more referrals as staff received training in adult support and protection which increased their awareness of the issue.

Members commented on the impact on the Service where staff who were trained occupational therapists were allocated to undertaking work relating to adult support and protection. Philip Morgan-Klein advised that the team manager tried to avoid allocating the workload in that way but that if demand required it then the approach would be used.

The committee asked where the review of the ASSET employment service for adults with learning disabilities would be reported. Members discussed that the information was included in the budget papers. Fiona Campbell stated that the information would be available in the employability services report.

Decision

The performance panel noted the report.