

REPORT ON THE CHILDREN'S TRUST MEETING HELD ON 22 FEBRUARY 2010

Agenda Item 1

Matters arising from Cambridgeshire Children's Trust Executive Minutes

- Children's Trusts now have a statutory duty to address child poverty. South Cambs have a role to play by e.g ensuring that families are appropriately housed.
- Promoting positive images of children and young people. The role of the partnership representative (Cllr Smith for South Cambs) is to be responsible for sharing positive news stories about Children and Young People (C and YP) with the Trust. They in turn will work closely with the media to promote these stories.
- Financial and service planning. It was clearly stated that financial constraints meant that services would have to be targeted more specifically to deprived areas. In those areas where universal services would be discontinued some one off pump-priming would be available to help communities develop alternative arrangements. These cuts will take effect from 2001-2012. I interpret this as meaning that youth provision in particular will be reduced and that there may be one off grants to sweeten the pill. There was a lot of discussion about this and it will be an agenda item in the near future.

Agenda Item 3

Embedding the Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF)

The aim of CAF is to share information about C and YP in order to safeguard them and improve the outcomes for them and their families. Most CAFs are originated by schools, locality teams and health professionals but South Cambs needs to be engaging in the process as well.

There have been problems in Cambridgeshire with CAFs:-

- There are far fewer than in comparable authorities
- The quality of CAF referrals is inconsistent
- There is a need for greater engagement by partners, (including South Cambs).
- Cambs uses a 2 tier referral system which appears to be adversely affecting the effectiveness of CAF.

Proposed actions that affect South Cambs

- We need to identify the most appropriate officers to implement CAF and ensure that they are replaced promptly if necessary.
- We need to commit to participate in a revised CAF training programme.
- We need to agree, with partners, the circumstances under which a CAF should be completed and provide support for our designated officers to do this.
- We need to facilitate attendance by the designated officers at Locality Allocation and Review Meetings (LARMs) where the recommendations of CAFs are implemented.

Agenda Item 4

Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked after Children – post inspection improvement plan.

Most of the recommendation resulting from the Ofsted inspection relate mainly to County Council Social Care Services but a couple require support from partners:-

- Recommendation 4: Ensure that thresholds for early intervention and child in need services are better understood and consistently applied across the area. We need to appreciate the thresholds for social care intervention. A leaflet is being produced for partners and the public explaining how to access Children's Social care.
- There was also discussion about the protocol for 16-17 year olds who had in the past been looked after by the DCs but are now becoming 'looked after children' and are consequently a burden on Social Care.

Agenda Item 5

Work Plan of the Trust.

I have asked for the following subjects to be included in the work plan:-

- Access to information on mental health services by C and YP
- The results of the South Cambs and City Area Partnership study into deprivation and disaffection with particular reference to Gypsy and Traveller children.
- Transport issues for C and YP in rural areas of Cambridgeshire.

Please do let me know if there are any other issues you would like the Children's Trust to look into. I am very keen that South Cambs are active informing the work of the Children's Trust where appropriate.

Agenda Item 7

Reducing the Number of YP who are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

There has been a steady rise over the past year and the NI targets are not being met. South Cambs has lower numbers than the rest of the county but is still seeing an increase and not meeting targets. There is no confidence that Gypsy and Traveller children are being included in the figures, which may indicate that those for South Cambs are higher still.

Cambs has lost more employment opportunities than its statistical neighbours
22% of looked after children are NEET

- Partners are being encouraged to increase training/apprenticeship opportunities for YP within their organisations.

Cllr Mrs Bridget Smith