

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 DECEMBER 2009

DEVELOPMENT OF A SUNDERLAND BEHAVIOUR AND ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Strategic Priority: Learning City

Corporate Improvement Priority: Delivering Customer Focussed Services;

1. Why has this report come to Scrutiny?

- 1.1 This report advises the Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee of the development of a Behaviour and Attendance Strategy for Sunderland and the opportunity for consultation.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Behaviour and Attendance Strategy is being principally informed from a review of pupil behaviour issues announced in the Children's Plan (DCSF).
- 2.2 This review conducted by Sir Alan Steer recommends closer working arrangements between schools and other services to improve behaviour, support attendance and reduce exclusions from school.
- 2.3 Local Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships will be an important way to achieve this, and are included in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act. This is consistent with the focus on partnerships in the Children's Plan and in the Government's proposal for the 21st Century School.

3. Current Position

- 3.1 Sunderland's current Behaviour Partnership is directed by the Primary and Secondary Headteachers Behaviour Group with representation from the Local Authority Children's Services Teams including Behaviour Support Services.
- 3.2 In May and June 2009 this Partnership considered the implications of the Steer Report for these Services in the current partnership arrangements. This resulted in recommendations for a new vision and principles to support future working, as well as key working practices for schools to access support for behaviour.
- 3.3 The Attendance Service in Sunderland is managed by Children's Services with secondary schools having a named Attendance Development Officer to work with school staff to increase overall school attendance and reduce persistent

absence. Primary schools and nursery provision are supported by the Service through universal provision of campaigns and incentives to promote attendance and more focussed support for individual children when required.

- 3.4 The Service has a high focus on enforcement to secure school attendance and is developing earlier intervention systems to achieve this. The Service has reviewed its working practice and is implementing new case recording systems incorporating the Common Assessment, improving support for parents, as well as performance management arrangements with schools with a specific focus on vulnerable children with high levels of persistent absence.
- 3.5 The Behaviour and Attendance Strategy and new Partnership arrangements will provide a framework to draw together services and stakeholders. This is intended to improve behaviour, support school attendance and reduce exclusions in coherent and transparent arrangements to raise the achievements of children and young people.
- 3.6 The Strategy will provide a single coherent policy and practice framework to improve Children and Young People's behaviour and school attendance to raise attainment and narrow the gap in outcomes. The Strategy will be owned by a multi-agency Behaviour and Attendance Partnership Board who will oversee the continued development and delivery of services for the medium and longer term.
- 3.7 Behaviour and Attendance Partnership working relates specifically to all agencies, i.e. Education, Health, Social Care and the PVI, engaged and working together to reduce duplication of provision where it exists and maximise impact of all services.
- 3.8 This Strategy responds to the Government's intention to move to integrated services focussed around the Child or Young Person and their family, detailed in the Children Act 2004.
- 3.9 The Purpose of the Behaviour and Attendance Strategy is to:-
 - Set out the vision, principles and standards for Behaviour and Attendance practice and service delivery, which services in the city will operate.
 - Identify services and practices which will support early identification of need and effective interventions to improve outcomes for children and young people and their families with additional needs.
 - Identify priorities and set out the process for the commissioning of preventative services.
 - Prevent innovative practice in preventative working and to promote and develop new ways of integrated working.

- 3.10 The strategy is underpinned by a set of key principles, which form the foundation of key targets, as identified in the Strategy. Key targets contribute directly towards Public Service Agreement Targets and National Indicators.

4 Next steps

- 4.1 The following actions and timelines provide information to support consultation on the Strategy:-
- Draft Strategy available for consultation from 8th October 2009 to 10th December 2009 from a link on www.sunderlandchildrenstrust.org.uk and www.sunderland.gov.uk homepages. This will include instructions on how to respond to the consultation.
 - The second draft Strategy available from 14th December 2009 to 4th January 2010 on www.sunderlandchildrenstrust.org.uk and www.sunderland.gov.uk
 - Consultations with children and young people will continue to end February 2010.
 - Strategy published by end March 2010.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 The Children, Young People and Scrutiny Committee are asked to receive this report and note the information contained within it, including the timescale for consultation.
- 5.2 The Children, Young People and Learning Scrutiny Committee are invited to participate in the consultation process at this meeting, and also through the routes noted above.

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