

CHILDREN'S SERVICES PORTFOLIO DECISION RECORD

22 March 2011

The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. in the Civic Centre, Hartlepool

Present:

Councillor Cath Hill, Children's Services Portfolio Holder

Officers: Alan Dobby, Assistant Director, Resources and Support Services
Sally Robinson, Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services

John Robinson, Parent Commissioner

David Cosgrove, Democratic Services Team.

33. Admissions to Schools 2012/13 and Co-ordinated Admissions Procedures to Primary and Secondary Schools for 2012/13 *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Key Decision, test (ii) applies. General Exception Notice issued on the 10 March 2011.

Purpose of report

To determine the admission policy for community and voluntary controlled primary schools in Hartlepool for the school year 2012/13 and the coordinated admissions procedures to primary and secondary schools for 2012/13 following consultation with governing bodies, other admissions authorities and the general public.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Assistant Director, Resources and Support Services reported that latest statutory School Admissions Code came into force in February 2010 and applied to all maintained schools and academies, including Foundation schools. Admission Authorities were required ensure that their determined admission arrangements comply with the mandatory provisions of the code. The code was made under Section 84 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 as amended by Section 40 of the Education Inspections Act 2006.

The Children's Services Authority (CSA) as admissions authority for community and voluntary controlled schools was required to consult on admission arrangements for these schools each year. In September 2010

the Portfolio Holder approved consultation on arrangements for 2012/13.

Submitted as Appendix 1 to the report was a summary of the consultation responses received. The views expressed were considered by the Admissions Forum on 1st February 2011. Revised admission limits had been discussed with schools on the basis of revised net capacity figures, and those were submitted as Appendix 2 to the report. The co-ordinated schemes for primary and secondary admissions agreed by the Admission Forum are submitted as Appendix 3 to the report. In the case of secondary admissions, the schools had advanced sibling links above partner primary in their priorities.

The Assistant Director indicated that on the basis of the consultation exercise, it is proposed that the admissions policy for entry to community and voluntary controlled primary schools in 2012/13 would be as follows:-

- Parents / carers are invited to express preferences for up to 3 primary schools in priority order and give reasons for their preferences.
- In the first instance, places will be awarded to those pupils with a statement of special educational needs where the school is named in the statement.
- The remaining places will be awarded in the following priority order:
 - 1) those children who are in the care of the local authority;
 - 2) those children who live in the school's admission zone;
 - 3) those children who have older brothers or sisters who will be attending the school in September 2012;
 - 4) those children who are distinguished from the great majority of other applicants whether on medical grounds or by other exceptional circumstances and who would suffer significant hardship if they were unable to attend the school;
 - 5) those children who live closest to the school as determined by the shortest walking distance definition. Where there are places available for some but not all applicants within a particular criterion, distance from home address to the school entrance will be the deciding factor. Distance will be measured in a straight line by the shortest walking route from the ordnance survey point of the child's home address (including flats) to the ordnance survey point of the school (using the Local Authority's computerised measuring system) with those living closer to the school receiving the higher priority (definition agreed by Admissions Forum 1 February 2011).
- No places can be allocated at an oversubscribed school to parents / carers who have not stated their preference in writing for that school.
- In considering requests for admission to a particular school, all preferences will be considered on an equal basis.

- Should it prove necessary to distinguish between children within category 2 priority will be given to those with siblings attending the school in September 2012, followed by those who live nearest to the school. Should it prove necessary to distinguish between children in any other category (or between children with older siblings in the above situation) then priority will be given to those who live nearest the school.

If an application is unsuccessful, a child's name may be placed on a waiting list. The position on the waiting list is determined in accordance with the published priority criteria. If a place subsequently becomes available, the place will be offered to the next child on the waiting list.

Arrangements for handling requests for in year admissions are set out in a separate scheme, submitted as Appendix 4 to the report.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that she was happy to approve the policy documents as they had been subject to the detailed consultation process.

Decision

1. That the admissions policy for 2012/13 as set out in the report be approved.
2. That the revised admission limits be approved.
3. That the co-ordinated admission schemes be approved.

34. Hartlepool Young People's Substance Misuse Needs Assessment *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

Non-key.

Purpose of report

To seek approval to the submission of the Young People's Substance Misuse Needs Assessment to the National Treatment Agency.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Parent Commissioner reported that Hartlepool Children's Trust Board took responsibility for young people's substance misuse in 2009 with Children's Services taking the lead. The lead officer for substance misuse is the Parent Commissioner in Hartlepool who also has responsibility for family intervention, prevention and some integrated services. The Need Assessment Plan 2010/11 was the first published by the trust. The assessment submitted as Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 to the report is the proposed plan for 2011/12 and set the blueprint for the next three years.

The focus of the 2010/11 assessment was;

- The emphasis that Hartlepool is placing on prevention across services.
- The comparatively low numbers accessing the Tier 3 service.

- The need to consolidate pathways to and from treatment.
- The need to strengthen the responses of universal services to risky behaviour in general and substance misuse in particular.
- The need to ensure value for money services at Tier 2 and Tier 3.

The data shows that Hartlepool had made real progress across each of the targets and in particular has managed to increase the range of referring agencies to include schools, social care as well as the youth offending service who were, up until recently, the main referrers.

The Parent Commissioner indicated that referral numbers into the specialist service were higher this year than last, and this is a direct consequence of the efforts made by the service to ensure early identification and clear access routes. The upward trend was concerning but expected as the service became more effective. The prevalence of the use of cannabis amongst the young people referred was also concerning particularly as a strong form of cannabis, skunk, is increasingly available. The use of alcohol by young people was also still a worrying issue. It is clear that most young people in Hartlepool choose not to use alcohol regularly but there was still concern at the numbers coming through. The numbers of referrals tended to be weighted towards young men, and it was a local as well as national concern that young women with substance misuse issues were not being referred into treatment services for an early intervention.

The Portfolio Holder indicated that some of the prevalence of the use of cannabis could be due to the local supply. The Parent Commissioner did comment that the young people did always seem to know where a supply could be found. It did have to be stressed that this was not a huge problem in Hartlepool, though the numbers and continual increase in them was an issue that needed to be tackled.

Decision

That the Needs Assessment and Plan be submitted to the National Treatment Agency and form the basis of the young persons substance misuse programme in Hartlepool.

35. Children's Homes: Regulation 33/34 Reports *(Director of Child and Adult Services)*

Type of decision

None – the report is for the Portfolio Holder's information only.

Purpose of report

To present the Regulation 33/34 (formerly Regulation 22) report of visit to Children's Home for Exmoor Grove.

Issue(s) for consideration by Portfolio Holder

The Regulation 33/34 report of visit to Children's Home for Exmoor Grove covering the months of August, September and October 2010, were

submitted as Appendix 1 to the report; the appendix specifically contained exempt information under Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, (as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information)(Variation) Order 2006) namely, information relating to any individual (para 1) and Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual (para 2).

The Assistant Director, Prevention, Safeguarding and Specialist Services reported that the visit reports covered the period before the home had closed for refurbishment. As the home was now reopening, it was intended that a new 'ethos' to the inspections would be introduced to make the inspections more in line with the new operation of the home and generally a more thorough inspection.

Decision

That the report be received and noted.

The meeting concluded at 10.25 a.m.

P J DEVLIN

CHIEF SOLICITOR

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