

# **Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board**

**6 February 2017**

## **Summary of Matters Considered at the Board**

### **Report of the Chair, Councillor Underhill**

The Scrutiny Board met on 6 February, 2017 and the following items were considered. For more detail, copies of the minutes are available on the Committee Management Information System (CMIS) via the Council's website at <http://cmis.sandwell.gov.uk/cm5/>

#### **Strategies for improved careers guidance in schools**

The Board received a report from the Director – Education on the progress being made to careers guidance in schools in Sandwell in the previous twelve month period.

In the statutory guidance for maintained schools, governing bodies have a duty to ensure that all registered pupils at the school are provided with Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance from year 8 (12-13 year olds) to year 13 (17-18 year olds).

The OFSTED school inspection framework states that schools should assess schools career guidance in relation to:-

- the quality of the schools careers programme;
- the quality of independent careers providers;
- the quality of careers professionals working with the school.

Sandwell Council uses the eight benchmarks identified by the Gatsby Foundation in 2013 that identify different dimensions of good career guidance. The Connexions Service promotes and supports schools to be externally assessed against a quality award; five schools have received the award in Sandwell with a further nine to be assessed in 2017.

The Board considered a number of matters to improve careers guidance in schools, as follows:-

- working with children in primary schools to raise aspirations of work at a very early stage. The West Midlands Combined Authority will look toward

a cross border approach that will involve the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP);

- local firms and businesses should encourage employees to become school governors, particularly builders and firms with an understanding of skills gaps and social value. There are moves for banks to get financial employees involved in becoming school governors to bring financial understanding to the school governor mix;
- the need to take advantage of the Apprenticeship Levy and to encourage apprentices into working in schools;
- monitor the annual performance data relating to careers guidance which includes the path that an individual has taken following year 11 at school.

The Board welcomed the progress to improve careers guidance in schools across Sandwell and asked the Director - Education to circulate the annual performance data to the Board and to identify a high performing school to share best practice about how it delivers careers guidance to a future meeting of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board.

### **Children's Trust Update**

The Board received an update from the Director - Education and are reassured that work streams are progressing and work is ongoing to agree the resource model. Concerns have been identified about manageable workloads, the need to ensure appropriate numbers of Social Workers and the weight, level of complexity and experience needed for each case to be taken into account when allocating caseloads.

The Board requested that the Director - Children's Services present an update to all members of the Council about progressing the Children's Trust work streams.

### **Recruitment and Retention of Social Workers Work Stream**

The work stream group met on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2017 and will report to the Scrutiny Board on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

### **Childhood Obesity**

Childhood obesity will be considered by the Scrutiny Board on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

### **Councillor Underhill**

### **Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board**