Herefordshire Council

Supplement to the agenda for

Children and young people scrutiny committee

Tuesday 28 July 2020

1.00 pm

Online meeting only

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Supplement – schedule of questions received for meeting of children and young people scrutiny committee – 28 July 2020

Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Mrs Steel, Hereford	Para 53 of the Minutes records a request from the Chair of the Committee that in the next version of the report into historic cases of peer on peer sexual abuse, the committee is told whether cases involved rape or sexual assault and whether cases were substantiated or not. Why were these requests made?	Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Response: In scrutinising the response of the Council to historic cases it is felt important to establish if there was a consistency of advice provided and actions taken irrespective of whether the cases were substantiated or unsubstantiated and whether they were rape or sexual assault.			
PQ 2	Ms Shore, Hereford	At the last meeting, the written answer to the public question was supplied too late for a supplementary question to be submitted. The question concerned the failure to learn lessons about the handling of peer-on-peer sexual assault disclosures. The answer was concerning: firstly it quotes two projects which focus on prevention rather than dealing with disclosures. Secondly, the answer stated that the Council "did brief chairs of governors and schools in the May 2017 briefing on peer on peer abuse including reflecting on learning and continued to do so in regular briefings thereafter" Given that in November 2019 the Monitoring Officer identified that Chris Baird's understanding of the guidance on safeguarding in peer-on-peer assault cases was flawed in two material respects, how much confidence does the committee have in the quality of the briefings given to schools before November 2019?	Cabinet Member Children and Families / Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Response: <u>Cabinet Member Children and Families response:</u> I regret that the written answer was sent too late for the supplementary question to be submitted. Your first point was that the briefings focussed solely on prevention rather than dealing with disclosures. I can confirm however that the various briefings and shared resources over time have included details on dealing with disclosures appropriately. This effort was supported by expert sessions at conferences and corroborated by an Ofsted visit in December 2019. I have been provided with the answers to questions which the monitoring officer advised Cabinet of in November last year.			

One of the questions the monitoring officer considered related to a query arising from an email sent by the Director. The monitoring officer found that a paragraph in the email sent by the Director could have been better drafted. It does not say that the Directors understanding was flawed.

An independent review by Ofsted which confirmed the quality of the work being done and the fact that many briefings (in particular a full conference day in November 2019) were conducted by national experts would support our view that we do have confidence in the objectivity and content of the briefings given to schools. For example, several schools presented their experience at the Spotlight review which were well received. I am also happy to share the content of the conference which reassures that the quality and impact of the training sessions and briefings were strong. Please find below a link to the spotlight review papers:

http://councillors.herefordshire.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=1087&MId=7561&Ver=4,

I believe that the quality of the contributory sessions evidenced here supports the view that the briefings are accurate and of high quality. I therefore have confidence in them.

Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee response:

In December 2019 the committee held a Peer on Peer Abuse Spotlight Review to which a significant number of teachers attended and provided us with a presentation on the process they had adopted when dealing with Peer on Peer Abuse cases. Those teachers present were of the view that following National Guidelines produced in Dec 17 they were able, with the support of the Local Authority to deal with such cases whilst recognising that prior to Dec 17 this had been more challenging. They did however feel that the National Advice concerning the separation of victim and alleged perpetrator when both remain at the same school following an incident was still unclear.

The committee was reassured that following the National Guidance produced in Dec 17 that schools were receiving adequate support and briefing from the LA but took on board the teachers concerns raised about the clarity of some of the guidance. The Scrutiny Committee wrote to the DfE in April 2020 requesting that they review the information provided to schools with regard to the separation of the victim and alleged perpetrator when both remain at the same school. A response was received and conveyed to the committee in June 2020.