MINUTES OF THE MEETING Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel HELD ON Thursday, 13th February, 2025, 7.00 - 8.45 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Makbule Gunes (Chair), Anna Abela, Marsha Isilar-Gosling, Grosskopf, Anna Lawton and George Dunstall

ALSO ATTENDING:

102. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein'.

103. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Panel received apologies for lateness from Cllr Lawton and Cllr Dunstall.

104. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

105. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

106. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None

107. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting on 13th January were agreed as a correct record.

108. ANNUAL SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Panel received a report which provided an overview of safeguarding and social care activity and performance for 2023/24. The report was introduced by Richard Hutton, Senior Performance Officer and Dionne Thomas, AD Safeguarding and

Children's Social Care as set out in the agenda pack at pages 1-24. The Director of Children's services was also present for this item. The following arose during the discussion:

a. The Panel queried the seeming assertion in the report that higher levels of adoption should be seen as a positive trend, and queried why. In response, officers advised that there were more cases of children who were currently in placements coming through the system that would result in higher adoption figures. The numbers could fluctuate significantly, but ultimately the best outcome was for children to remain with their families where possible. Where adoption was considered the best outcome, this had to be done in a timely way. Officers advised that the service undertook benchmarking around adoptions and this was monitored closely.
b. The Panel welcomed the report and highlighted that there were a number of positive outcomes contained within it.
c. The Panel queried the types of residential accommodation and the costs involved. In response, officers advised that costs for residential units were always the highest and that there were a range of costs within residential settings. The lowest costs was in-house foster care or children being placed with their family. This was true across the country. Officers set out that the Council had to procure placements that met the needs of the child, and were bespoke. The Council sought to pay the lowest price for residential payments that it could. It was commented that if a child had particularly high needs, a bespoke package would be commissioned and it was expected that the provider would work with the child to reduce need over time. The DCS advised that the service worked with health colleagues to share costs where appropriate and that the service benchmarked costs across London and Haringey was not paying the highest. It was acknowledged that the costs of residential payments were inflated due to the providers inflating those costs and that there was significant research to back this up.
d. The Panel questioned the reasons for a drop in UASC and whether this was just a result of less children presenting for asylum. In response, officers advised that they didn't know why the numbers had dropped, but that the authority was ready to make referrals and offer placements in the way it should. There was a drop in the number of children being referred to Haringey from the National Transfer Scheme and there had been a drop in children presenting from particular countries. In response to a follow up, officers advised that there was a general drop across some areas of London and it was speculated that this might be partially accounted for an increase in people arriving by small boats, at the expensive of other routes.
e. In response to a question about the underlying factors that were involved in the dip in completing assessments, officers advised that they knew the quality of assessments was good and that the service had been regularly audited to that effect. The DCS advised that they had a very strong Early Help service that helped with assessment work. The service worked with Early Help officers in frontline assessment teams at an early stage and it was suggested that this might mitigate the need for assessments further down the line.
f. The Panel sought assurances around how parents of children with learning difficulties were being supported. In response, officers advised that there was a dedicated parenting support team within Children's Services and that there were seven parenting programmes in place to support parents, including

Cygnet which worked with parents of SEND children. Other programmes included, sleeping behaviour and managing routine.

g. The Chair queried the prevalence of domestic violence as a factor in assessment, in response officers advised that domestic violence was one of the most prevalent categories and that this was true across different local authorities. Officers advised that they had a range of interventions, programmes and different methods of assessment, which enabled the service to think about the most appropriate mechanism to support a particular family, who may be affected by domestic violence.
h. The Panel highlighted the percentage of care leavers in higher education (11%) and queried whether more could be done to increase this figure. In response, officers advised that they would always be looking to do more, but that 11% was good in relation to benchmarking with other boroughs. The London average was 8% and the national average was 6%. There was a strong aspiration that everybody should thrive and the service continually looked at how it could support care leavers. It was suggested that this did not always mean higher education and that there were also a range of apprenticeship and training options available.

RESOLVED

That the service improvement and challenges contained within the report were noted, along with the actions taken during 2023/24 in response to local demand and the financial pressures experienced by the service in relation to placements

109. UPDATE ON CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES AND DEVELOPMENTS UNDERWAY FOR IMPROVEMENT

The Panel received a report which provided an update on work to support the mental health and mental wellbeing of children and young people in Haringey, in the context of the post-pandemic period which was characterised by increasing complexity and demand for mental health services. The report was introduced by Caroline Brian, AD Commissioning & Programmes & Dionne Thomas, AD Safeguarding and Social Care as set out in the agenda pack at pages 25-43. The following people were also present for, and took part in, this agenda item: Colin McKenzie, Commissioning Project Manager (LBH); Tim Miller, AD Place, integration, Transformation & Delivery for NCL Integrated Care Board (NHS); Michelle Guimarin - NHS North Central London ICB; Penny Mitchell, Director of Population Health Commissioning for NCL Integrated Care Board (ICB); and Clive Blackwood – Head of CYPMHS at North London Foundation NHS Trust. The following arose as part of the discussion of this item:

a. The Panel sought clarification over the term neurodiversity, in response NHS colleagues advised that this related to a variety of challenges faced by young people from conditions such as ADHD or autism. It was explained that this could impact the child's ability to socialise and could also impact the wider family.
b. In response to a question, officers advised that emotional wellbeing was a journey for young people and that various events in a young person's life, such as bereavement or separation, could have a cumulative impact on their emotional wellbeing and could impact their ability to regulate the world around them. NHS colleagues set out that there were a number of support services

available to young people to help them work through the challenges they may face.

c. In relation to the Parent Psychology Service, the Panel queried whether mental health services were offered to new mothers. In response, the AD for Early Help, Prevention & SEND advised that this would be provided through family hubs and they would commission perinatal services that would support the mother through pregnancy and early motherhood. NHS colleagues advised that they were working closely with the Early Help service to target perinatal services and that there was a broad level of support available in this field across Haringey.
d. The chair of SEND Power queried the extent to which services were operating holistically, and raised concerns about a lack of CAMHS appointments and those appointments being cancelled at little or no notice. It was emphasised a shortage of services in this area had a big impact on families. In response it was noted that there was more than one provider referred to in the report, but that North London NHS Trust was the primary provider of CAMHS in Haringey. NHS colleagues advised that they were working through the ICB to improve services and bring them up to the national standard. The service levels were outlined as no child should wait longer than four weeks for their first contact. Performance on this metric was at 64%. It was acknowledged that this needed to improve, particularly as treatment for children was due to be started within eight weeks. It was set out that the longest waiting times were for ADHD services and that the waiting time for this was up to 14 months.
e. The Head of CYPMHS at North London Foundation NHS Trust advised that the Trust was working with the ICB to bring in additional resources to Haringey CAHMS at the St Ann's site and that this had seen additional staffing resources put in and weekend clinics for CAMHS offered. In relation to accessing services when in crisis, the Panel was advised that a range of interim support measures were in place whilst people waited for treatment, including wellbeing calls and hosting online groups. Officers advised that the service was conducting a review of existing contracts and pathways in order to redirect and refocus the services it commissioned, in order to focus on early intervention and prevention.
f. SEND Power impressed on the Panel how distressing some of the stories they had heard from their peer group about their own children being in crisis and unable to access mental health service. Attendees acknowledged the impact on children and young people and emphasised that the historical lack of service provision in this area was being tackled and that the right governance arrangements were in place for partners to move forward collectively.
g. In relation to under-funding in this area, NHS colleagues advised that they would like to see more funding in the system as the demand had increased above any additional funding that had been secured. It was noted that through the ICB's Inequality Fund, targeted work had been done in pockets of the east of the borough with high levels of historic deprivation. This has been done in partnership with Open Door. NHS colleagues set out that there had been a 67% increase in CAMHS cases in the last year. The ICB recognised that there needed to be an equitable offer for all children and adults in Haringey around access to mental health services and that there was a recognition that there had been historical underfunding in these services in some parts of the region.

Assurances were provided to the Panel that work was being done to address this historical underfunding.

h. The Panel requested a further update on Children's mental health outcomes come to the Panel in a years' time. **(Action: Philip).**

RESOLVED

Noted

110. YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE INSPECTION UPDATE

The AD for Early Help, Prevention and SEND gave a verbal update to the Panel on the recent inspection undertaken of the Youth Justice service. It was noted that the final report was not due to be published until 3rd March, so the findings from the inspection could not be given in full. However, a summary of some of the key findings was given to Members. Matthew Knights, Head of Youth Justice was also present for this agenda item. The following was noted in relation to this update:

- The inspection involved five weeks of preparation from when the visit was announced to the actual inspection on 9th -13th December.
- The inspectors said that they enjoyed their visit and that they particularly welcomed hearing from the children and their parents/carers.
- There was a team of nine inspectors, who spoke to 50 staff and partnership representatives about the wider youth justice system. This included: CAMHS, probation, police, social care, volunteers, SEND, children and parents.
- Across the inspection, there were 30 meetings and they looked at 40 children and held individual interviews with their case managers.
- The inspectors advised that leadership and governance was strong. It was also recognised as; child-centred, purposeful, clear on its priorities.
- Partners held each other to account.
- Data was used well and was used to drive improvements
- The leadership team were committed, passionate and working collaboratively with each other.
- Management had a good understanding of the quality of work being undertaken by staff.
- There was a key focus on empowering others to work and being truly creative and innovative.
- Staff planning was identified as being strong.
- It was identified that there was some variability in decision making in relation to assessment of practice to keep others safe.
- Work with victims needed to increase.
- Children and parents were overwhelmingly positive about the service.
- The inspectors commented that there was a real authenticity to Haringey.

The recommendations from the report will be included in the Youth Justice Plan, which will be agreed by the Youth Justice Partnership Board.

The Panel requested that the full inspection report be brought back to the next meeting of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel. **(Action: Philip).**

RESOLVED

Noted

111. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

RESOLVED

That the Panel noted the work programme.

112. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

113. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

This was the last meeting of the municipal year. Dates for 2025-26 will be agreed at Annual Full Council in May.

CHAIR: Councillor Makbule Gunes

Signed by Chair ……..

Date ……