

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel HELD ON Tuesday, 10th June, 2025, 6.30 - 9.45 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Makbule Gunes, Anna Abela, Grosskopf, Anna Lawton, George Dunstall, Bernard, Cathy Brennan, Pippa Connor (Chair), Thayahlan Iyngkaran, Mary Mason and Sean O'Donovan.

ALSO ATTENDING:

114. 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'.

115. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Cllr Isilar Gosling, Cllr Opoku and Helena Kania.

Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Lawton.

116. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of Urgent Business.

117. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

118. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

119. NOTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING IN COMMON

The notes from the last Meeting in Common in May 2024 were noted, along with the actions and recommendations contained therein.

120. UPDATE ON THE TRANSITIONS PROGRAMME

The Meeting in Common of the Adults & Health, and the Children & Young People's Scrutiny Panels received a presentation on the Council's Transitions Programme. The presentation was introduced by Ann Graham, Corporate Director of Children's Services along with Jo Baty, Director of Adult Social Services, Dionne Thomas, Director of Safeguarding and Social Care, and Sara Sutton Corporate Director of Adults, Health and Housing as set out in the published slide deck, which accompanied the agenda papers. Cllr Brabazon, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families was also present, along with Cllr Das Neves, Cabinet Member for Adults and Health. A number of other officers from Children's Services and Adult Social Services were also present. The following arose as part of the discussion of this report:

- a. The Panel sought assurances about the numbers of agency staff within the Transitions service. In response, officers advised that there were six posts within the service and all of them were either fixed-term contracts or permanent positions. The Corporate Director of Children's Services added that there had been a lot of work done generally within Children's Services to keep the number of agency staff to a minimum. Within Children's Social Care, the number of agency staff was around 17%, which had fallen from approximately 30% four or five years ago.
- b. The Panel welcomed the inclusion of a case study into the slides, but enquired whether there was an example that could be shared of a not so positive story. Further assurances were sought about what would happen if the Transitions service was not in place. In response, officers commented that the service worked with people who had a level of need. There would be examples of young people struggling to get CAMHS appointments or around a lack of housing, but the service worked hard to meet those needs. In response to a follow up question about what was being done differently, officers advised that the team had worked with 27 young people to date and that what they had done was provide an early intervention, saving that young person a waiting time of weeks. That additional time meant that there was better planning and they could work with the young person and their parent carer to ensure that they achieved what that young person saw as a good outcome. It was emphasised that the key point here was around early intervention.
- c. The Panel queried about the role of health colleagues in the development of a transitions service. In response, officers set out that they were trying to build an integrated transition team with health at the centre of that. It was acknowledged that health colleagues had a crucial role to play in this. Work was ongoing to build health into the governance arrangements, but there were capacity issues at present. Officers commented that health were involved in developing the SEND two-year strategic plan and that to date, five joint transition assessments had been carried out. Officers noted that there had been some delays in completing joint assessments on-time. The Panel was advised that the Mental Health Trust gave a presentation to the Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee in April, where they shared some of the work they had been doing around mental health and transitions. By way of context, the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services advised that the government had announced the end of NHS England and asked the ICBs to cut expenditure by 50%, this was on top of 30% cuts that had already been made. The Cabinet Member stated that there was a lot of uncertainty and change affecting the ICBs.

- d. The Panel raised concerns about the findings of a CMA study that stated that one of the biggest drivers of high cost placements, was private companies charging vastly over inflated rates. The Panel noted that in the case study in the report, the placements for the young person reduced from £126k a year to £33k, the Panel queried why the cost difference between the two placements was so big. In response, officers advised that placements costs varied and that it was not unusual for significant savings to be made when a young person transitioned from a childhood placement to an adult one. There were more options available to a person when they became 18, including the ability to claim housing benefit. The Panel were advised that £126k a year was not a particularly extortionate fee for a children's placement, especially in London. It was commented that at the most expensive end of the market, some placements could cost £15k per week and above.
- e. In response to a question, officers advised that there were two Housing First services in Haringey. The first was direct delivery, which was grant funded and used LBH stock. The second was a commissioned service which was done through St Mungo's, this had a mixed tenure and include some private sector housing.
- f. The Panel raised concerns about young people effectively getting lost in the system when they transitioned from children's mental health services into adult mental health services. An anecdotal account was given of a young person who was hospitalised before their 18th birthday and upon turning 18 they were under the NHS and unable to access LBH Adult Social Services. In response, officers advised that local authority social workers could be embedded within health or they could be separate. Different authorities had different approaches, but in Haringey they were separate. Officers acknowledged that this could lead to some confusion about which pathway a patient would go down. It was commented that the service needed to have really clear advice and information as a starting point. Officers acknowledged that there was more to be done to understand the real life experience of going through the CAMHS system.
- g. The Panel agreed to invite Health colleagues to the next joint meeting in order to discuss what programmes they had in place to manage the transition from childhood to adult mental health services and to discuss the different pathways for parents to navigate the system through the different NHS versus local authority services in this area. **(Action: Clerk)**.

Clerks note at 19:22 – Helena Kania joined the meeting virtually at this point.

- h. The Chair also requested the Council publish information about the pathways through CAMHS services, so that young people and their parent/carers were able to access this information easily. **(Action: Jo Baty)**.

Clerks note at 19:32 – Cllr Mason left the meeting at this point.

- i. In response to a question, officers acknowledged that supporting the transition to employment had not been as strong as it could be, and that more work could be done around inclusive apprenticeships. Officers set out that other local authorities had a disability employment network to look at the employment offer. Previously, many local authorities had commissioned services working with health partners around supporting employment.
- j. The Panel sought assurances around what was being done to support families of children who did not meet the statutory threshold for intervention. In response, officers commented that of the 50 referrals that had been received to

date, the Transitions service had completed the Care Act assessment and those young people who were identified as having care and support needs would then have a support plan in place. In regard to those families who were not deemed eligible, the service used a range of signposting to guide people to the local service offer. The team was compiling a directory of local community services across the borough to signpost people to. In relation to housing, officers advised that they commissioned 500 units of non-statutory supported accommodation for those who did not meet the threshold for statutory services.

- k. In response to concerns raised about cases involving having to interact with multiple services, officers advised that the next stage of the development of the Transitions team was to mitigate against people getting to a crisis situation, particularly where families had multiple complex needs. One possible response was to establish a Panel to look at complex cases and to prevent people being pushed around different Council services.
- l. The Chair requested that further details around how the voluntary sector were helping families with children who did not meet the statutory benchmark for intervention through the Transition team, be brought back to the next joint meeting in 2026. **(Action: Dennis Scotland)**.
- m. The Chair commented that she would be interested in hearing about the aims and outcomes sought by young people and how the organisation measured whether we had met those aims through the co-production process. The Chair also commented that she would like to see the next update include the voice of young people and how they thought the service was working, as well as more information around KPIs - as this would hopefully help focus the questions a bit more. **(Action: Clerk to note)**.
- n. The Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families commented that it was worth considering that the service had only be up and running for a year and in that time it had gone from nothing to where it was currently. The Cabinet Member emphasised that this had been an enormous amount of work and without it, there would be services having continuous arguments about responsibility and who was going to pay. Cllr Brabazon commented that she and the Cabinet Member for Adults and Health had been pushing for the creation of the dedicated service since 2021 and that this was a complicated area of service delivery. The Corporate Director for Adults, Housing and Health drew Members attention to pages 14 and 15 of the slide deck which set out the summary outcomes and KPIs.
- o. The Panel welcomed the £317k saving that had been made and the improvements to the lives of young people since the service was up and running in September 2024, and it was commented that they would be interested to see what savings could be made in a full year.
- p. In relation to the numbers of HRS supported accommodation, officers advised that there was 46 units accommodation that they would be looking to recommission. It was commented that demand far outstripped the supply. However, there were other types of accommodation available but in terms of other specialist housing cohorts and general needs housing that could be used. In response to a follow up question around specialist support transitioning services, officers advised that they would be looking at the information, advice and guidance offer going forwards and how it could be specialised for individual cohorts.

- q. In relation to the supported housing case study referred to in the slide pack, the Panel sought some assurances around the reasons for the delay in identifying the risks. In response, officers commented that people living in supported accommodation had a significant degree of autonomy and independence. It was acknowledged that there was a balancing act when it came to supported housing and that in the case study, the service built a risk profile about what was happening but that took some time.
- r. The Panel also questioned how the Council could support people to transition to their own accommodation after the age of 25. In response, officers advised that there was no strict age criteria in supported housing and being over 25 was not a barrier. Officers commented that there were caps to benefits for those under 35 and that this could reduce the number of options available to them.
- s. The Chair requested that there was a more detailed breakdown of the £17k savings figure in the next update. **(Action: to note).**
- t. In response to a question, officers provided assurances that the 46 units of supported housing related to a re-tendering of what already existed in the community. Moving forward, the service had learned lessons about making sure they were spread across different geographic locations and that they came from a number of different providers.
- u. The Panel queried the young person's LGBTQ+ housing offer within the transitions space. In response, officers acknowledged that people may not identify themselves as LGBTQ+ when speaking to the Council. Instead, the Council had a number of specialist providers across London, which it took referrals from directly.
- v. The Chair sought clarification about what was meant in slide 23 about 2.6 times more lets to general needs housing. In response, officers advised that this was a direct comparison between the number of lets in 2024/25 to 2023/24. These related to general allocations to the social housing register rather than being specific to the Transitions programme. Officers commented that this could be related to more new build properties coming online or more void properties being turned around quicker. In terms of the numbers it was clarified that the baseline was 232 units, which increased to over 700 units.
- w. The Panel sought clarification about 300 of 3000 new Council homes being adaptable for people with disabilities, and questioned why it wasn't more. In response, officers advised that these 300 homes referred specifically to M4(3) of the Building Regulations which was a category of homes with a higher standard of adaptability, to accommodate people who needed to use a wheelchair all the time. Officers advised the Panel that around 2200 of the 3000 homes would be adaptable to a lower level, such as someone with a mobility concern or those with visual impairment, for example. Officers set out that the wider bespoke housing programme was a collaborative programme and that officers were working to strengthen links between Housing, Adults, Children's and the Transitions team. There would be a direct route from the Transitions team into identifying lifelong housing needs for individuals.
- x. A coopted member of the Panel commented that she knew a family with four children, who all SEND and were living in Temporary Accommodation. The Panel was advised that that family had been placed out of borough and clarification was sought about who was being prioritised for new homes, if that family seemingly did not meet the relevant criteria. In response, officers set out that there were a couple of main reasons why someone might be placed out of

borough. The first was for a very temporary move and this would be based on what was available for Nightly Paid Accommodation on that day. The second related to private rented sector accommodation, officers commented that they had to weigh up who was given priority for in-borough accommodation on a daily basis. These instances related to the Allocations Policy. The Bespoke Homes Programme was separate to this. There was a band within the Allocations Policy that was based on individual medical need and family circumstances and that prioritised people according to the date they went into that band. It was commented that an updated Allocations Policy was out to consultation and this set out when and in what circumstances would be given priority.

- y. The Panel requested a further update in relation to the Haringey Works programme at its next meeting in common on Transitions. **(Action: Sharon Bolton).**
- z. In relation to the support offered to young people with SEND, officers emphasised the importance of having the right employment support and careers advice in place to support this particular cohort. Cllr Das Neves provided assurances to the Panel that she had met with Cllr Gordon to discuss how to best take this issue forward. Officers also set out that there was a SEND internship programme in place which currently supported 45 young people between the ages of 16-24 who had an EHCP who were on a SEND support internship. This included 12 who were placed within the Council. The Panel was advised that from September 2025, there would be 160 SEND support placements available across different sectors within Haringey.
 - aa. The Director Early Help, Prevention & SEND agreed to send round the link via email for the brochure of internships for next year. **(Action: Jackie Difolco).**
 - bb. The Panel raised concerns about a cohort of young people with SEND who had perhaps not had the benefit of some of the services that were being offered now, and questioned what more could be done to help with employment support. In response, officers set out that they believed that significant progress had been made in relation to employment support for 16-24 year olds with an EHCP, from what was admittedly a low baseline. The offer that was available was much more varied in terms of the range of employment opportunities available and the offer had been developed in conjunction with feedback from young people. Officers also highlighted that there was a borough partnership arrangement with health which included an employment and health partnership forum, which also included voluntary and community sector participation. It was suggested that there were opportunities within the community and health offer to look at how they could better align with the Transitions team. In addition, the connect to work programme was due to be considered by Cabinet in the coming months and this would look at the barriers to work for those with a disability, complex needs and health conditions.
 - cc. In response to a request for clarification, officers advised that within the 16-18 cohort who received employment support none of them declared that they had a disability. In 2024-25, 208 young people registered with Haringey Works. 83 were supported into work and 38 went into full time education. Officers commented that the figures covered up to the end of March 2025 and that it was possible that more young people had been supported into work since then. Of those 208, 17 declared that they had a disability. Officers commented that the connect to work programme was a five year programme that approached

local businesses on behalf of young people to see if roles could be adapted to make them more inclusive.

dd. In response to a question about the extent to which the website could be improved in order to make the relevant information more accessible, officers advised that there was a local offer steering group that involved young people and parents/carers which regularly reviewed the quality of information and the accessibility. Officers set out that they welcomed any feedback or comments that the Panel may have in this regard.

ee. The Chair commented on the savings and KPIs for next year and requested further assurances about the fact that £1.5m savings would not be detrimental to outcomes for young people. The Chair also requested that the next update include more information about how young people had shaped the service offer through the co-production process and that this is evidenced in the next update to the Panel.

121. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

CHAIR: Councillor Makbule Gunes

Signed by Chair

Date