

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL
MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2016**

Councillors: Kirsten Hearn (Chair), Mark Blake, Toni Mallett, Liz Morris,
Reg Rice and Charles Wright

Also Present:

Apologies:

CYPS18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Carter.

CYPS19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mallett stated that she was a governor of Broadwaters and Chair of its Community Services Committee. Councillor Wright stated that he was Chair of Governors at Highgate Wood School.

CYPS20. DEPUTATIONS/ PETITIONS/ PRESENTATIONS/ QUESTIONS

None.

CYPS21. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meetings of 9 July and 16 November 2015 be approved.

CYPS22. LOCAL CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING BOARD - ANNUAL REPORT

The Panel welcomed Sir Paul Ennals, Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

He reported that arrangements for effective safeguarding were improving and that there were no immediate issues, although there were a number of matters of concern on the horizon. Ofsted had rated the service as requiring improvement when it had visited in 2014 and had flagged up a number of areas where improvement was required. These included:

- Gangs and engagement with girls at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- Children missing from care; and
- Engagement with schools.

Good progress had been made against each of these.

Serious case reviews were the issues most likely to attract public interest into the work of the LSCB. The report into the case of Child O had been published and had flagged up a number of issues requiring attention including;

- Out of borough placements;
- Work with mental health services; and
- The quality of risk assessments.

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2016

The learning from these had been implemented. Two further serious case reviews had been commissioned.

The LSCB faced a number of specific challenges;

- Partners were still not good at sharing performance data;
- Engagement with children and young people still required improvement;
- All agencies were facing budget cuts and these would probably impact most severely on staff most likely to have a role in supporting multi agency work;
- The increasing fragmentation of services

He reported that a review was taking place on the future role of the LSCB and this was due to report in April. There was a need to consider partnership working beyond borough boundaries, possibly on a sub regional basis.

Specific work had been undertaken to improve how the views of children and young people were sought and responded to by the LSCB. New and better tools for listening had now been developed and progress would be monitored regularly.

In answer to a question, he stated that he met annually with Aspire and had twice met with them so far. In terms of peer advocacy, the benefits of this were well proven. However, a lot of funding that could be used for such initiatives had gone and it was not a cheap option.

In terms of issues relating to data, this was a London wide problem. Most agencies worked beyond borough boundaries and their data systems therefore were not coterminous with Haringey's. The data available to Haringey needed to be broadly the same as that available to other LSCBs as well as meaningful and proportionate. It was also essential that core data was focussed on the areas of greatest risk.

Sir Paul felt that the partnership was working better than it had been 15 months ago. He encouraged strong challenge and this needed to be taken properly and responded to effectively. There were considerable resource issues for partners though. For example, the Police sat on 7 different LSCBs whilst the Whittington Hospital and the North Middlesex sat on 3. Action had therefore been taken to reduce the number of meetings and alternatives such as the use of video and telephone conferencing had been explored. Attendance had nevertheless been good. Partners had sought to preserve the front line but the next year was likely to prove a challenge with further reduced resources. Whilst it was possible to do more on a sub regional basis, there would still be a continuing need for local provision.

Partners had been encouraged to respond to the recent government review of the role of LSCBs and it was noted that the Council intended to respond to this. The number of child protection plans (CPPs) had gone up and this had been driven, to some extent, by improved data on children.

Jon Abbey, the Director of Children's Services, commented that the number of child protection cases was increasing. There had been a decrease in the number of Looked After Children (LAC) of over 100 in the last 14 months with figures going down from 514 to 413. This was still higher than the average for London and statistical neighbours. The number of LAC had an impact on child protection figures. In terms of the duration of CPPs, data on these showed that Haringey was coming into line with statistical neighbours.

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2016

In answer to a question, Sir Paul stated that there was strong evidence of the link between CSE and gangs in Haringey. Unlike other areas, there was little evidence of the involvement of middle aged men so far. Although men that were older than victims were involved, they were not markedly older. It appeared likely that there had been CSE related to gang activity for some time but the Police were now starting to make inroads in respect of the issue.

Sir Paul commented that there was a need for all partners to become more effective at intervening early. By the time cases came to the attention of the LSCB, it could be more difficult to address problems. A large proportion of funding had previously been spent on placements for LAC. Early help provided better long term outcomes and could reduce levels of risk. A consequence of early help could be not taking some children into care who previously would have been and effective monitoring was required to ensure that judgements were sound. Levels of risk had to be kept as low as possible during the transition process.

Sir Paul reported that in all cases where a child died or suffered a serious injury, a serious case review panel that included representatives from all agencies was required to be set up under an independent Chair. This made recommendations to the LSCB. It was often the case that serious case reviews could not be published for some considerable time and acting upon the learning arising from them did not wait for this. The relevant Cabinet Member briefed Councillors whilst the Chair of the LSCB briefed the Opposition lead. The full report was made available and the focus was on promoting learning. The ultimate aim was to make services better.

In answer to a question regarding to stability of placements, the Director of Children's Services reported that the percentage of children who had had three or more placements was 7.6% in 2015-16 and 7.5% in 2014-15, which compared to an average in London of 10% and 13% amongst statistical neighbours.

Sir Paul stated that work to address violent behaviour and reduce thresholds of what was acceptable took time to take effect. Early help and training were important parts of this. There had been a consistent message that the quality of assessments needed to be improved and the "signs of safety" scheme had been developed in response to this. This would require the retraining of staff across the partnership.

In terms of female genital mutilation, Sir Paul reported that Haringey had one of the highest rates in London due to its demographics. A lot of work had been undertaken by the LSCB on the issue, particularly with health colleagues and reference to it appeared on threshold documents.

Panel Members stated that they were keen to keep CSE under the spotlight. In addition, they also wished to focus attention on the further development of early help and, in particular, step down. In addition, they would also be interested in hearing more about the signs of safety initiative.

The Panel thanked Sir Paul for his attendance at the meeting.

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MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2016

That the Chair of the LSCB be invited to report further on progress to a meeting of the Panel in the late autumn.

CYPS23. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION; OUTCOME OF DIAGNOSTIC REPORT

The Director of Children's Services reported that it had not been possible to share the executive summary of the diagnostic report with the Panel at this stage as the action plan associated with it had not yet been agreed formally with partners.

He stated that OFSTED had been keen to pilot their new joint area targeted inspection process with local authorities. Haringey had instead decided to commission its own review, with assistance from Police and health colleagues. This process had included desk top analysis, examining cases at random, observation and tracking and focus groups.

There had been a number of findings from the review. There was found to be good leadership and partnership and tackling CSE was seen as a priority. There was good engagement with staff and some high quality practice. However, the review highlighted the lack of prosecutions. Investigations were also found to be fragmented and not child and victim focussed enough. It highlighted that there was a lot of movement amongst the young people concerned. In addition, CSE and missing children were found to be closely linked. An operational group of relevant partners had been set up to address the issue of missing children and it was recognised that work was still required in this area.

The Panel noted that there were currently 162 children who were home educated and that this had grown from 100 three years ago. There was currently no defined remit for partners in respect of them but action was now being taken to improve engagement with such children. Regular contact was also made with all schools as well as supplementary schools.

In answer to a question, the Director of Children's Services stated that the local authority strove to have a relationship with all schools and, to this end, met regularly with diocesan authorities. There was a small team that responsible for school improvement and they could intervene where risks were identified at particular schools. There was less engagement where schools were performing well. In addition, specific work had been undertaken with governors on safeguarding policies.

AGREED:

That, when available, the diagnostic report be circulated to Panel Members.

CYPS24. 2015 TEST AND EXAMINATION RESULTS

Jane Blakey, Head of School Standards and Performance, reported on the outcome of 2015 Tests and Examinations. With the exception of Key Stage 4, improvement had been either maintained or further accelerated in all areas and remained above the national average. This was despite the borough being the 24th most deprived local authority in the country.

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL

MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2016

In respect of early years, performance was above the national average and the gap with the London average had been narrowed. The setting of targets for schools had led to improvements in this area. Key stages 1 and 2 had shown the biggest improvements with performance being above the national average and in line with the London average. For Key Stage 2 reading, progress had been in the top ten nationally. This had followed a particular focus on reading and, in particular, teaching. The School Improvement Team was very small though, with only 5 staff to cover 90 schools.

There were major changes to tests and examinations in progress. GCSEs were to become more academically rigorous and fewer vocational routes were now recognised. Performance was now assessed exclusively by test. This had affected results already. From 2016, the main measure of progress by schools at KS4 would be Progress 8, which will be based on students' progress measured across eight subjects.

At post 16, there had been strong improvement with the gap with other London boroughs being narrowed. Across all tests and examinations, performance of disadvantaged children was generally above national averages. Groups that were making good progress but which needed to make better than expected progress in order to narrow attainment gaps were black caribbean pupils and school action plus/statemented pupils.

In answer to a question, Ms Blakey reported that specific groups within schools had been targeted in order to accelerate progress against challenging targets. Work had also been undertaken to identify where weaknesses lay. It was noted that the percentage of schools rated as either good or outstanding had increased from 61% to over 90%. School data was analysed by the Fischer Family Trust, which looked at data for every group and which ensured that schools were fully aware of any specific issues. School governors were also challenged in respect of performance issues of schools.

Panel Members were concerned that the changes in the curriculum might result in schools focussing disproportionately on high achievers. There were also recruitment and retention issues facing schools in respect of teachers. Ms Blakey stated that all areas were facing challenge in dealing with these issues. In addition, there were demographic issues including a large number of teachers reaching retirement age.

The Director of Children's Services reported that the role of local authorities in respect of schools had diminished considerably. Schools paid for the work undertaken by the Council's School Improvement Team due to the high regard in which they were held. The key issue facing the borough was how progress could be maintained in the light of the challenges now being faced.

In answer to a question, Ms Blakey reported that there was no specific definition of illiteracy. What could be regarded as functional illiteracy was very low and Haringey's performance was in line with the national average at 1.7%.

AGREED:

That the report be noted.

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL
MONDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2016**

CYPS25. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

AGREED:

1. That the future work programme be noted; and
2. That the draft scope and terms of reference for the Panel's review on disproportionality in the youth justice system be approved.

Cllr Kirsten Hearn

Chair