

# **MINUTES OF MEETING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY 6TH SEPTEMBER 2022**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Makbule Gunes (Chair), Anna Abela, Lester Buxton, Lotte Collett, Marsha Isilar-Gosling, Sue Jameson and Mary Mason**

**Co-opted Member: Lourdes Keever (Church representative)**

## **14. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The Chair referred Members present to item 1 on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting. Members noted the information contained therein.

## **15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Amanda Bernard, Yvonne Denny and Anita Jakhu.

## **16. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

## **17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **18. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

None.

## **19. MINUTES**

It was noted that all of the actions arising from the minutes of the last meeting had now been undertaken.

In respect of the appointment of a non-voting co-opted Member (item 8), Amanda Bernard had been appointed to represent the Haringey SEND Parent Carer Forum on the Panel. The Chair welcomed her to the Panel.

In respect to the reference to transitions (item 9 – Cabinet Member Questions), it was noted that Haringey Healthwatch were undertaking specific work on this issue. This was particularly focussed on the transition from an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan to adult social care services. It was agreed that Healthwatch be invited to come along to the joint meeting that the Panel was planning to arrange on this issue with the Adults and Health Panel.

## **AGREED:**

1. That Healthwatch be invited to attend the joint meeting with the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel on transition that is planned to take place early next year to report on their work on the issue; and
2. That the minutes of the meeting of 4 July 2022 be approved.

## **20. FINANCIAL MONITORING - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Josephine Lyseight (Head of Finance (People)) and Andrew Osei, the finance lead for Children and Young People, reported on the current financial position for Children's Services at the end of Quarter 1. There was currently a projected overspend of £4.7 million which mainly arose from Children's Social Care and from Prevention and Early Intervention.

Referral rates in Children's Social Care continued to be high and were 24% up. In addition, the percentage of families in acute stress had increased from 18% to 30%. Work was taking place to manage these pressures. In respect of Early Help and Prevention, there had been an increase in the number of EHC Plans and this had increased demand for SEND transport. There was also an overspend in Children's Centres of £0.2 million, which was mainly due to the increase in the cost of living.

In respect of safeguarding and social care, the number of looked after children (LAC) was still high but had recently reduced. The number of secure placements had gone down but unit costs had increased. This was being addressed through better procurement. In Early Help and Prevention, measures were being taken to manage down the costs of SEND transport. This was being done through a range of actions, including improved procurement, travel training and route mapping.

Mr Osei reported that all the savings projected for Quarter 1 had been achieved. The outturn position for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) had shown a £3.5 million overspend, which had left an accumulated DSG overspend of £20.5 million. £4.6 million of last years DSG overspend had come from the high needs block. There was currently a projected overspend for the current year of £3.8 million, all of which came from the High Needs Block. This would bring the cumulative deficit up to £24.3 million. The reason for the pressures on the High Needs Block was the increasing number of children with EHC Plans, which included 25% of looked after children (LAC). The DSG was ring fenced so could not become mixed in with the Council's budget. 95% of capital projects were currently on track, with £1.8 million slippage anticipated.

In answer to a question regarding which electoral wards were seeing the largest increases in safeguarding referrals and EHC Plans, Ann Graham (Director of Children's Services) reported that this information would be included in future performance reports to the Panel. In answer to a question regarding the levels of funding for schools within individual EHC plans, she reported that it was difficult to make comparisons as they were unique for each child. Jackie Difolco, Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention, reported that there was a banding framework that had been shared with the previous Panel. It was agreed that this would be re-circulated. The service were

working in partnership with an organisation called ISOS who had been commissioned to review the current bandings model with stakeholders and involving schools and parents. The current banding model provided a fixed rate, although the range of delivery varied according to the needs of the child and their EHC plan.

In response to a question regarding the deficit within the High Needs Block, Ms Graham reported that the projected deficit had reduced from last year. Extensive work was taking place to address the issue, including the government's Safety Valve programme. She would report back in due course on the progress of this. It was a national issue that had arisen from the 2014 Children and Families Act.

The Panel commented that many schools had budgetary deficits. The focus was currently on managing demand of EHC Plans but it was important that preventative work took place to ensure earlier support was in place to prevent needs escalating. It was noted that a report on the Council's participation in the Safety Valve programme would be being considered by the Council's Cabinet on 13 September. It was agreed that the report would be circulated to Panel Members and that a report on the issues would also be brought to a future meeting of the Panel.

**AGREED:**

1. That the banding framework for funding for schools in support of EHC Plans be circulated to the Panel;
2. That a report be made to a future meeting of the Panel on the Council's participation in the government's Safety Valve programme and that the report to the Cabinet meeting of 13 September on this matter be circulated to Panel Members; and
3. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the panel on preventative work and early intervention in respect of children with SEND.

**21. DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SAFEGUARDING**

Beverley Hendricks, Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Social Care, reported on the implications of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. The Act recognised that children can be victims of domestic abuse and that the whole family can also be affected. It specified that a child who sees, hears or experiences domestic abuse and is related to the person being abused or the perpetrator, is also to be regarded as a victim of domestic abuse. Abusive behaviour towards a child or young person under 18 was still dealt with under child protection procedures. There was a clear role for health services and the Police in the prevention of Domestic Abuse.

The Act provided a statutory definition of domestic abuse and emphasised that it was not just physical violence but could also be emotional, controlling or coercive behaviour. It also placed a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation support for victims and their children in refuges and other safe accommodation. In addition, it provided a list of what suitable accommodation might look like which will be shared with the Panel.

The Act had clarified the circumstances in which a court could make a barring order to prevent proceedings that could further traumatise victims. It extended the controlling or

coercive behaviour offence to cover post-separation abuse and created a new offence of non-fatal strangulation or suffocation of another person. In addition, it clarified the general proposition that a person may not consent to the infliction of serious harm and prohibited health professionals from charging a victim of domestic abuse for reports and/or evidence.

The implications for safeguarding of domestic abuse on children and young people were well established. Growing up in a household of fear and intimidation could impact on children's health, wellbeing, and development. Young people could also experience domestic abuse within relationships, although they may not identify themselves as victims. Those who engaged in abusive behaviour might seek to deny the abuse by stating that they were not in a relationship. The Act specified that social media and information technology could now be identified as a means of harm. Young people's lives were often heavily reliant on the use of digital technology and perpetrators of abuse could exploit this.

There were four strands to the response to the Act by the Council and its partners:

- Developing a Co-ordinated Community Response;
- Prevention and Early Intervention;
- VAWG Commissioned Services; and
- Raising awareness.

The overall approach was captured within the VAWG Strategy. The key focus of the partnership had been to develop a co-ordinated community response. It had delivered:

- A programme of awareness;
- 32 Safe Spaces; and
- 150 VAWG Community Champions had been trained.

The VAWG Business Group was set up to strengthen the response across key agencies and an action plan developed. The Police had set up a specialist domestic abuse unit called 'ADAPT' with 7 dedicated staff members as a direct result of gaps highlighted within the action plan. This was an intervention developed specifically for Haringey and Enfield and was already having an impact. A joint report with Police colleagues on this could be made in due course. There had also been significant training and capacity building support for strengthening the VAWG partnership across key agencies and services.

In terms of prevention and early intervention, the initial focus had been on working with young people to challenge the high prevalence of victim blaming around sexual violence. Three videos had been produced and could be accessed via a link within the presentation. Solace Women's Aid had been commissioned to deliver training to key staff from all secondary schools by March 2023 on embedding a whole school approach. A public health approach to supporting schools in preventing peer-on-peer abuse had been co-developed in partnership with the Healthy Schools Programme, Sexual Health and Anchor Project Teams. Many schools had now amended their PSHE curriculum to address sexual violence myths, victim blaming and 'rape culture'. The Protect Our Women (POW) Project had continued to be commissioned although it had not been possible yet to roll it out to all schools.

In respect of VAWG commissioned services, there was ongoing funding for a domestic abuse support service for women from minority communities. This was provided through IMECE, who had already established an effective service and links in the borough. An independent domestic violence advocate had been commissioned to support LGBTQ people experiencing or at risk of abuse and would start in July. The process of re-commissioning the Council's core domestic advocacy service was beginning and there was additional investment into the service. The new service would have a focus on supporting older women, women who were disabled or were experiencing multiple disadvantage.

Recent research had estimated that 1.9 million adults had experienced domestic violence in the last year. This has specific implications for women in the Council's workforce and structures needed to be in place to respond to the impact of this. The VAWG Strategy prioritised the provision of safe spaces for women in the workforce to talk as well as services to support them.

In answer to a question regarding child to parent abuse, it was stated that the new Act covered this under the new definition of personal connection. It had previously not always been considered as domestic abuse. Haringey and other local authorities were currently addressing the issue with partners. It was now included in social worker training. Local authorities were now also required to prevent, detect and intervene where such abuse took place. She would be happy to come back to the Panel with VAWG partners to discuss further this issue.

Information was shared across the VAWG structure, which covered all childrens and adults agencies. Whilst they were all represented and included, it was hard to determine how effective information was. She agreed to share details of the VAWG structure with the Panel. In respect of information sharing through the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC), she stated that the two Chairs were open to looking at the learning from Domestic Homicide Reviews and how information might be safely shared across agencies. Ms Graham stated that victims of homicides were not always known to services. There had previously been publicity campaigns on zero tolerance that the Police had led on. Consideration could be given to raising the possibility of reinvigorating such campaigns with Police colleagues. Panel Members emphasised the critical role of health visitors. However, the service had been subjected to cuts in recent years that had limited their capacity to carry out important work. It was also felt that grandmothers should be included in the broader definition of families.

In answer to a question, Ms Hendricks reported that the new Act embodied the right to ask and the right to know about a partner. It also gave the Police more discretion to approach and inform. In respect of health visitors, there were three dedicated health visitors who were linked to the MASH and were actively involved in sharing appropriate information. Independent reviews had also stated that information sharing was sound. In respect of grandmothers, she felt that their role was critical. A whole family approach was undertaken and outlined in the "Think Family" protocol, which she agreed to circulate to the Panel. In respect of support to the workforce, she would report further on the detail of this in due course. Support did not yet extend to private contractors.

The Chair suggested that a Council wide campaign to highlight domestic abuse could be considered as a way of highlighting the issue locally.

## **AGREED:**

1. That the following be circulated to the Panel;
  - The list within the Act of what suitable accommodation support for victims of domestic abuse and their children might look like;
  - Details of the VAWG structure; and
  - The “Think Family” protocol.
2. That the Director of Children’s Services give consideration to raising the reinvigoration of zero tolerance campaigns with Police colleagues.

## **22. HARINGEY YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN 2022/23**

Jackie Difolco, Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention, reported there was a duty for each local authority area to produce an annual youth justice plan. This was to include details of how youth justice services were funded and delivered.

The report highlighted achievements during 2021/22. There had been reduction in serious youth violence offences of 25% and of 12% in knife crime. There had been a specific focus on mental health and well-being in order to address the increase in such issues. As part of this, there was now a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) practitioner in the service who could also support staff in their work. There continued to be a strong focus on disproportionality, which enabled practitioners to obtain a better understanding of their cohort. In addition, there was also a range of identity based work taking place.

There was a continuing and increased focus on health, well-being and substance abuse, including systemic training for all front facing staff. The service was also working with other colleagues in Children’s Services as part of an exclusions working group to ensure that there was a joined-up approach. A pledge was being created that all Haringey schools will be encouraged to sign up to. The Service’s office had remained open for five days a week to during the pandemic but services had also been made available in community settings. 71% of young people that the service worked with were supported to remain in full time education. Community reparation projects had been expanded and this included a recent partnership with the food bank at the Selby Centre. The service had been proactive in involving fathers of young offenders and would continue to be a priority in the 2022/23 plan. Overall performance was high, with plans, interventions and home visits undertaken in a timely manner and to a high standard.

In terms of the cohort, half of those were young black men. The overall number of offences had reduced by 37%. Drugs offences had overtaken violence for the first time. 44 young people had entered the youth justice system for the first time. The percentage of young people who reoffended was higher than in comparable local authorities but had come down. Audit activity concluded that, in over two thirds of the cases audited, work with young people was graded as either good or outstanding. There had been a drop in young people staying on in full time education post 16 and this would therefore be a key focus of the new plan.

There had been a strong focus on systemic training and evidence based interventions. Three members of staff had also taken part in Your Choice cognitive behavioural therapy training with the aim on reducing serious youth violence via therapeutic skills and sessions. The service had undertaken two participation initiatives; Think Space was aimed at young people and their families whilst Team Space involved staff. Feedback from young people was obtained regularly, responded to and incorporated into service planning.

Key priorities for 2022/23 were:

- Reducing poor outcomes, particularly for the most vulnerable young people;
- Reducing serious youth violence and knife crime;
- Continuing focus on stop and search;
- Resettlement;
- Statutory Key Performance Indicators:
  - Reduction of first time entrants
  - Reduction of reoffending
  - Prevention of custody.

In terms of progress to date, positive feedback had been received from the Court on the service's pre-sentencing template and the child first, offender second principle. Work was also taking place to develop a prevention service and engaging with young people who were at risk but had not been formally referred to the service yet. A successful application had been made to the MOPAC for a joint project with Islington that would focus on disproportionality and include mentoring. A new resettlement policy had been drafted to ensure that young people were supported well when they returned to the community after being in custody.

In answer to a question, Ms Difolco stated that workshops had been held with young people and the Police regarding stop and search. These allowed young people to raise awareness, explain to Police officers how it had made them feel when they were stopped and searched and to ask questions. It also enable Police officers to respond in a safe environment. In respect of the gaps in speech and language therapy that were being addressed, these were aimed at older young people who did not currently have access.

She reported that approximately 8% of the youth justice cohort were young women. There were female staff within the service and efforts were made to match staff appropriately to young people. There was also a girls group. The format of the strategic plan was standardised and set out by the National Youth Justice Board. She was nevertheless happy to consider producing a summary version alongside the statutory plan next year. She was also prepared to take a summary of the report to any group or organisation that might be interested. There was not currently a schools representative on the Youth Justice Board and this was something that they were currently seeking to address.

In answer to another question regarding data on ethnicity and, in particular, the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (IGRT) community, Ms Difolco reported that the recording of ethnicity categories were pre-determined. However, the service ensured that more detail ethnicity data was collected in case notes so that this could be reflected

in interventions. The Panel was of the view that such data was vital. In particular, it provided the opportunity to undertake preventative work with specific communities.

Councillor Zena Brabazon, the Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families, stated that she felt that the report was very young person centred and this was reflective of the current culture of the service. The plan also demonstrated the child first, offender second approach that was now followed. She felt that it was important that schools were represented on the Board. She also felt that summarised version of the plan could be provided for schools. There was a need to involve governors and consideration would be given to how this could best be done.

**AGREED:**

That consideration be given to the production of a more accessible and/or summarised version of the Strategic Plan in future years.

**23. RISING GREEN YOUTH HUB - OPENING**

Ms Difolco reported on the opening of the Rising Green Youth Hub in Wood Green. A wide range of partners had been involved in the project, from its inception to completion. It had required £1.3 in capital, which had come from a range of sources. Young people had been actively involved in the design of the Centre and the builders had been open and encouraging of this. Wood Green Youth Voices had been established to facilitate this. 60 people had attended the launch and the centre was now regularly attracting between 50 and 70 young people to sessions. It was intended to extend the usage of the centre to young children and older people. There would also be a focus on income generation.

Ms Graham commented that the intention had been to develop a similar model to the Bruce Grove Youth Centre but in Wood Green. The new centre was proving to be popular and was well attended. It was noted that, following a successful summer holiday programme, there had been increased attendance from children young people with a learning disability, which was welcome.

The Panel welcomed the opening of the new centre and agreed to visit it.

**AGREED:**

That a visit be arranged by the Panel to the Rising Green Youth Hub.

**24. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

The Panel noted that a work plan was being developed for all of overview and scrutiny, including the Children and Young People's Panel. This would cover the next eighteen months. A comprehensive consultation process was currently taking place on which local issues should be prioritised within it. An on-line survey had taken place and there was also shortly to be a Scrutiny Café event to which a wide range of people had been invited including Members, officers, partners, community and voluntary organisations and young people. Each scrutiny body would be given the opportunity to select specific issues to undertake in-depth reviews on and items for regular panel meetings. In



addition, there were routine and regular items that would need to be included, such as Cabinet Member Questions, updates on the implementation of recommendations from recent reviews, the budget and performance data.

In respect of the next meeting of the Panel on 7 November, the following provisional items had been identified:

- Cabinet Member Questions – Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families;
- Review on Haringey Family of Schools – Update on Implementation of Recommendations; and
- Exam and Test Results.

The Panel suggested that the issue of sexual abuse and violence in schools be added to the list of potential items in the work plan. Amongst other things, this could explore how good practice could be shared. Ms Graham reported that work was already taking place on this matter and an update on the “Everyone’s Invited” initiative could be provided at a future meeting.

**AGREED:**

That the issue of sexual abuse and violence in schools be added to the list of potential items for inclusion in the work plan.

**25. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 7 November 2022;
- 3 January 2023; and
- 20 March 2023.

CHAIR: Councillor Makbule Gunes

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....