

## Scrutiny Café 2024 – 20 September 2024

### Children and Young People

#### *Top Priorities from Survey from within terms of reference:*

- 1) Transitioning and Autism
- 2) SEND & Housing
- 3) Stop & Search
- 4) Ethical debt policy and the impact on low-income families

#### *Top Priorities from the Scrutiny Café:*

- 1) Schools and Education – 52
- 2) Youth Service s- 50
- 3) Early Years and Childcare -48
- 4) Safeguarding children – 33
- 5) Looked after children and care leavers – 29

#### *Specific Suggested Issues or Concerns:*

No.	Suggestion	Comment(s)	Priority – High, Medium or Low	Proposed Action  (Item for future Panel meeting/potential review/Cabinet Member Question/no further action).
1.	Ethical debt collection	Issues relating to ethical debt collection policy. There were numerous cases of low-income families who had missed their council tax payments. When one payment was missed, tenants were liable for the whole amount. Bailiffs when seeking repayment tended to behave aggressively and this would be observed by children and impact them. Alternative manners of debt collection needed to be sought.	Medium	Item referred to the OSC.
2.	Unemployment after school	Children experienced unemployment after they had been through the schooling system. Daughters United were now working with schools to help children to engage and have transparent conversation regarding their future. It was an evidenced based organisation. Parents often suffered from traumas especially with refugees and	Medium	Questions to Cabinet Member

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		needed an understanding of culture and traditions. Daughters United provided bespoke packages in a transparent and supportive way including a one stop shop women to help them get back into employment.		
3.	Autism and Autism in girls	Resources for autism found that children and young people who were on waiting lists were high. In relation to girls, underrepresentation was high. General inclusivity towards autistic people was needed. Even live events hosted by the Council was an example of un-inclusivity of autistic or deaf people. Girls ‘masked’ more often than boys. This meant that opportunities for girls would be impacted in future. Haringey had an autism strategy which was a 10-year strategy. This was a large timespan for change significantly, so the progress of the strategy itself may need to be considered.	Medium	Update on the Autism Strategy to come to a Future Panel meeting.
4.	Young people in the Caribbean community	Recent statistics in the Caribbean community revealed clear disadvantages. Young people suffered from alienation. This caused problems when community members spent their recreational time as the outdoors had an absence for spaces for young people who then ended up on the streets sometimes in trouble with the police. They also developed mental health issues. They did not feel valued and this triggered problems in the home which escalated. Young people also needed mental health support. Dealing with mental health such as the use of counselling in conjunction with specific cultural aspects of the community had not been taken into consideration. Young people from Caribbean or African backgrounds were also disproportionately targeted by police.	Medium/ High	Questions on disproportionality to be put to the Cabinet Member.  A further update on mental health and wellbeing to come to a future meeting.
5.			Medium	

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	Mental Health issues in young people	Work needed to be done on socialising children during puberty as mental health issues could accumulate and young people were being bombarded with various potentially bringing each other up. Something that addresses helping year 6 or 7 children onwards especially those dealing with puberty dealing with growing up.		A report on the monitoring and interventions to improve mental health and wellbeing in children to come to a future meeting.
6.	Social Media Use	There were issues with young people misusing social media and the need to be able to use smart phones in a way that was safe for them. Children had mental health support via apps in school. The mental health of parents needed to be taken into consideration and how children coped with this issue at home.	Low	No further actions
7.	Transitioning from Adults to Children's Services	There were issues with transitioning between children services and adult services. Sometimes it was difficult to know who the caseworker was working with a particular family. This frustrated families and often when they got hold of someone reliable, the individual could leave their job causing a breakdown in communication between families and authorities. There were issues with personal budgets. It was important to give parents tools on how to cope and have a constructive relationship with their child.	High	A joint meeting of the Adults and Children's Panels will be held to discuss transitions.
8.	Adequate accommodation for children with disabilities	There were parents with children who lived with disabilities living in subsidised housing and it was hard to help these types of families and adequate accommodation did not necessarily help the child. Working closely with Housing to assist families in the timely way could help along with how families were responded to.	High	A report to come to a future panel meeting.

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9.	Cycle Training	Cycle training needed to be made available to Haringey’s children. Cycling promoted social interaction and having a sense of responsibility. It should be part of schooling like swimming was. Scrutiny could do a survey of how many people were cycling.	Low	Question to be put to the Cabinet Member.
10.	Useful tool for communicating with parents	It was worth noting the direct information flow which school newsletters had along with talking to parents. Schools were a good place for making links into the community.	N/a	No further action.
11.	Ethical debt collection and potential long term-effects	Many problems relating to children indirectly involved council tax collection or other areas being outsourced to external companies. If the Council knocked on people’s doors, there was concern that this would be about money or something else that the Council wanted from tenant, not about engaging with young people or providing a service to the community. People had a generally negative attitude towards the Council leading the Council to spend money to re-engage community members. Residents have had their belongings taken from them for the debt they owe and children having observed this would remember the experience and associate it with the Council. Exemptions were made for people on low incomes who were exempt from council tax payment, but consideration should be given to households with children. Engagement with families and sending round bailiffs not going to help everything.	High	Referred to the main OSC for a report to be submitted to a future meeting.
12.	Homelessness and its effect on young people	There were issues with homelessness. It was difficult to send the children to the park as homeless people had created community around the park and this was unnerving. The park was less	Medium	Referred to the Housing Panel.

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		occupied by children and more with homeless people.		
14.	Facilities for Young People	Hobbies and interests were only catered for after 18. There were no youth clubs, no after school clubs and nothing for young people to engage in activities.	Medium	Questions to the Cabinet Member
15.	Complaints procedures	In relation to children’s services, when a parent made a complaint there should be an independent person present who was not a Haringey employee. A co-production approach rather than a consultative approach should be taken. There needed to be clarity regarding the complaints pathway and process.	Low	The Annual Complaints and Feedback report is considered by OSC on an annual basis – no further action.
16.	Transitioning and Autism	One of the challenges was allocations of funding for students with significant needs. Some schools took students with needs on and were supposed to receive additional funding, but this could be delayed or students could be taken on by a school for whom additional funding had not been provided. The increase in demand was also high. Work needed to be done with Haringey to streamline how this process could work better. Haringey was supposed to be commissioned to create transitions group for SEND students. This had faded out and transitioning from 18 to 25 was difficult. There was also no provisioning and working on how to cope with young people with autism and how their home-living was supported. There was also not enough progression into employment. In relation to autism and disabilities, the Council had been focused only on severe ends of the spectrum, rather than those with moderate conditions. Not understanding the needs they had could	High	An update on the Autism Strategy would be provided to a future meeting.

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		result in them getting into trouble with Police who did not understand their needs. A review was currently being done on transitioning to adult services.		
17.	SEND & Housing	Adequate housing for young people with autism was also important. The Council was building more social homes and some of those homes were for people with disabilities, but Housing needed to communicate better with Learning Development services.	High	A report on the allocations policy will come to a future Children’s Panel meeting.
18.	Stop and Search Campaign	Consideration needed to be given as to if there was a particular area where individuals were commonly stopped and searched and possibly lead the way for a new scheme. Haringey was leading in this area and audits were to be undertaken regarding who was being stopped and searched.	High	Question to the Cabinet Member,
19.	More Police on the streets	More Police on the streets was required.	High	Referred to the Culture, Community Safety and Environment Panel.