

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 29 June 2022 at 7.00 pm

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Luke Warner (Vice-Chair), Yemisi Anifowose, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Carol Webley-Brown, Monsignor N Rotheron and Mark Ingleby

ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Councillor Coral Howard and Bryan Strom

APOLOGIES: Councillor Jack Lavery, Clive Caseley and Erica Wooff

ALSO PRESENT: Emma Aye-Kumi (Scrutiny Manager) and Pinaki Ghoshal (Executive Director for Children & Young People)

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Councillor Chris Barnham - Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance, Caroline Hirst - Head of Joint Commissioning, Claude Jousselein - Deputy Director CAMHS, SLaM NHS Foundation Trust, Johanna Dench - Joint Commissioner and Sara Rahman - Director of Families, Quality & Commissioning.

NB: Those Councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972

1. Election of Chair and Vice-Chair

RESOLVED that Councillor Luke Sorba be appointed Chair and Councillor Luke Warner Vice Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022

RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Responses to referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

There were none.

5. Select Committee work programme

- 5.1 The Chair introduced the report and highlighted that some suggestions had been received but were yet to be incorporated into the draft work programme. These were school places planning, amplifying the voices of children and young people,

and the Birmingham and Lewisham African Caribbean Health Inequalities Review (BLACHIR).

The following was noted in discussion:

1. School places planning would cover changes in demand and popularity of schools. The general trend was a downturn in primary pupil numbers and it was expected that that trend would continue. Meanwhile the secondary school population was increasing.
2. Members asked that it include information on church schools. It was explained that Lewisham did not hold that information, but the two diocesan co-opted members may be able to provide that information.
3. The item on school places planning should be added for consideration in January. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to add school places planning to work programme for January**
4. Amplifying voices of children and young people could be heard in March as a single, stand-alone item for in depth scrutiny. It should cover how best to engage young people in policy making and service design and delivery. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to add “amplifying the voices of children and young people” to work programme in March**
5. The Chair encouraged Members to make a greater effort to attend forums that are ‘owned’ by young people. Members were reminded that there would be a pizza evening with the Young Mayor and Advisors on 6 July at the Bank of Things in Lewisham Shopping Centre.
6. The Chair requested that a meeting with the Children in Care Council be arranged. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to arrange**
7. Councillor Ingleby suggested that the schools response to climate emergency could be incorporated into this item. Others felt it could be a great opportunity to engage children and young people in policy making.
8. The Committee was keen to scrutinise the Birmingham and Lewisham African Caribbean Health Inequalities Review. As Healthier Communities Select Committee was due to look at this on 7 September, the most efficient use of resources would be to seek an invitation from the HCSC Chair to enable CYP Select Committee members to fully participate in that discussion. The Committee could then decide whether to look at BLACHIR further, under the work programme item at its September meeting. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to liaise with HCSC Chair.**
9. One Member highlighted that not all schools were trauma informed and that mental health provision for children and young people needed to be looked at. They asked how many schools had gone through trauma informed training, how many have Place2Be and whether Place2Be therapists with representative of the children they work with.
10. One Member said there was a crisis in children and young people’s mental health provision. She said there was a shortage of young

people's beds, and the closest such available bed in the week prior to the meeting was in Weston-Super-Mare. She also said that vulnerable children were being brought into hospital in handcuffs by the police and predicted that the summer holidays would be challenging for mental health services due to a lack of activities for young people. She told the Committee that social workers were handing out McDonald's vouchers to parents of children suffering from mental health issues to try to help them to re-engage with their children. She urged the Committee to visit children's A&E to see the challenges facing children and young people's acute mental health services for themselves. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to arrange**

11. Members of the Committee felt that the cost of living crisis was resulting in increased poverty affecting families. One Member was keen to visit schools to find out good practice on how schools are supporting families in poverty. The Education Strategy report on 13 September could include schools' actions on poverty and the Schools White Paper. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager liaise with report author**
12. Members asked for a briefing on what youth and food provision was in place over the summer holidays, as well as an update on Youth First. The summer holiday briefing would be circulated by the end of term. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to add to work programme.**
13. The Youth First update would be shared in time for the September meeting and should include how the new contract is going, where referrals are coming from, how staff are managing programmes, Riverside refurbishment. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager to add to work programme**
14. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee would be looking at the cost of living crisis in September. There was consensus that the CYP Select Committee should look at the cost of living crisis on 9 November and schedule visits as part of its evidence gathering. **ACTION: Scrutiny Manager add to work programme.** The report could include how grant and other support funding was being utilised, taking a medium term view as the cost of living crisis was not likely to end soon.
15. The Cost of Living crisis was felt to be a good topic for a Task & Finish Group.

RESOLVED that:

1. The Scrutiny Manager arrange visits for the Committee to:
 - a. Children's A&E to better understand the care experience of Children and Young People during an acute mental health episode
 - b. Schools
2. Scrutiny Manager to ask the Chair of Healthier Communities Select Committee (HCSC) to invite CYP Select Committee to participate in their scrutiny of BLACHIR at the HCSC meeting on 7 September;

3. An item on the cost of living crisis be scheduled for consideration at the 9 November meeting. In particular this item will look at best practice gained from visiting schools and other frontline settings;
4. An information item providing an update on the youth service be scheduled for September;
5. An information item providing information about holiday activities and food should be added to the work programme for July;
6. An item on school places planning to be added to work programme for January;
7. An item on amplifying the voices of young people to be added to work programme for March.

6. Presentation - Children and Young People's Emotional and Mental Health

6.1 A presentation was made and the slides are available on the council website.

In response to questions from the committee, it was noted:

1. Steps were being taken to ensure the workforce was culturally aware
2. Young people were producing and delivering training that covers religion, gender identity, race etc
3. The Child wellbeing practitioners eg the Mental Health Schools Team was attracting a different workforce who may have prior schools experience, but not so much mental health experience. They were being trained on mental health.
4. Acceptance criteria differed according to problem and need level. The threshold was lower criteria for routes involving child wellbeing practitioners and MHST than CAMHS.
5. Young people and stakeholders have been involved in service development.
6. Recruitment continued to be a concern both in Lewisham and NHS-wide. However, crucial roles had been recruited to. To counter some of the recruitment difficulties, the service was trying to find creative solutions, also thinking about early intervention and prevention roles.
7. Members sought an explanation for why the number of young people waiting more than 52 weeks had double on the previous month. This was due to an increase in demand and recruitment difficulties. Work was underway to reduce the number of 52 week waits, as well as those waiting 6 or 3 months for an initial assessment
8. To mitigate the impact of the 52 week wait, a volunteer programme had been implemented to bridge the gap. This meant volunteers would keep in touch and offer assurance to young people on the waiting list, and signpost, where relevant.
9. Mental health support after school was available in the form of KOOTH online counselling, which had been re-procured until 2024, with the option to extend up to 2026. KOOTH provides children and young people aged 10-25 with immediate counselling and is available til 10pm. Work was also underway with children and family centres to build therapeutic offers within community settings.
10. There was a GP pilot in north of borough working with CAMHS service focusing on emotional and mental health.
11. There are lots of services available, but access is but fragmented. Having a single point of access and consistency and common language was key.

12. GPs are the largest source of referrals to CAMHS, followed by schools and social care. The quality of referrals from schools has improved which speeds up the response.

It was MOVED SECONDED and RESOLVED that the meeting be extended beyond 9:30pm to allow for the discussion to conclude.

13. There was some concern that the process for simplifying access to services seemed more complex than the existing arrangements.

14. The MHST statistics skewed towards girls and white pupils. The data sample was small but included 2 all girls schools which could explain the larger number of girls involved.

15. Ethnicity needs some thinking. Taking it seriously want to be thinking how to make sure access those who need it. Involve diverse YP in all service planning.

16. There was sufficient capacity in the area for mental health-related hospital admissions of young people. There was sufficient bed capacity in SE and SW London and had been for some time. However, there may be some specialist areas that cannot be met locally.

17. In response to concerns raised by a committee member about lack of beds locally, the committee heard that young people are never admitted to adult wards. The CAMHS Deputy Director at SLaM NHS Foundation Trust invited members to send him details of individual cases that they had concerns about.

18. Members were concerned that difficulties access GP appointments may be another barrier to young people accessing services, but no change to GP referring patterns had been detected.

19. A walk-in youth clinic was being developed with GP practices.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

The Chair brought the meeting to a close and Councillor Ingleby reminded the committee to consider appointing a climate change champion. The Chair said this would be considered at the next meeting and that there had been no evidence of impact of the champion in the previous year.

The meeting ended at 21:47.

Chair:

Date:
