

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 15 June 2023 at 7.00 pm

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Luke Warner, Yemisi Anifowose, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Jack Lavery, and Hilary Moore and Clive Caseley

APOLOGIES: Councillor Jacq Paschoud and Monsignor Nick Rotheron

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Chris Barnham (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) (Cabinet Member), Pinaki Ghoshal (Executive Director for Children & Young People) Sara Rahman (Director of Families, Quality and Commissioning), Jentai Gen-One (Young Mayor) and Shanti Elliott (Young Advisor), Katy Brown (Advisor to the Young Mayor), Simon Whitlock (Head of Service – CYP Joint Commissioning), Claude Jouselin (Deputy Borough Director – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital)), Johanna Dench (CYP Emotional and Mental Health Joint Commissioner), and Susan Rowe (Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum)

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Councillor Rudi Schmidt (ex officio), Bryan Strom and Maryland Ocansey (Services Manager – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital))

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

- Cllr Luke Sorba be appointed as Chair of the Committee
- Cllr Luke Warner be appointed as Vice-Chair of the Committee

Introduction

It was agreed that Jentai Gen-One, Young Mayor, and Shanti Elliott, Young Advisor, be given speaking rights.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2023

RESOLVED

That the minutes be agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. Declarations of interest

None.

4. Response to referral to Mayor and Cabinet

- 4.1. Katy Brown, Advisor to the Young Mayor, informed the Committee that she attended a workshop on 5 May to begin the development of a participation strategy in consultation with the Young Mayor and Advisors. Future engagement with young people in the community was important.

RESOLVED

The response be noted.

5. Children and Young People's Wellbeing and Mental Health

Witnesses

Cllr Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director for Children and Young People

Sara Rahman, Director of Families, Quality and Commissioning

Simon Whitlock, Head of Service – CYP Joint Commissioning

Claude Jousselein, Deputy Borough Director – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital)

Maryland Ocansey, Services Manager – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital)

Johanna Dench, CYP Emotional and Mental Health Joint Commissioner

- 5.1. Sara Rahman and Simon Whitlock introduced the report.

Members and the Young Mayor and Advisor put questions to the witnesses. The following key points were raised:

- 5.2. Events had been held and an anti-racist action plan was being developed to address the underrepresentation of Asian, Black and Mixed Race young people in referrals. In recognition that CAMHS (the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) was not reflective of the community and that making the workforce more representative would take time, a further programme was being considered under which paid mentors would encourage and support young Black, Asian and Mixed Race boys to attend appointments.
- 5.3. For 2023/24, the representativeness of the workforce would be a focus; certain CAMHS teams would employ people with different levels of qualification and experience and train them to work in the services.
- 5.4. In the spirit of cultural humility, South London and Maudsley Hospital (SLaM) was piloting a Patient Carer Race Equity Framework under which it would ask the community how CAMHS could be improved to increase access and engagement by minority communities. As the number of staff exceeded the number of residents in attendance at initial engagement event in November 2022, SLaM had engaged with the community at a recent well-attended parent exposition held by a voluntary organisation and planned a further engagement event for September 2023.
- 5.5. CAMHS was reaching out young people and their families where they lived, rather than waiting for them to come to services. A walk-in service was being provided via general practices and services via schools.

- 5.6. Services were encouraged to use voluntary and faith groups to engage with the community.
- 5.7. To learn from The Big Conversation, links had been established with The Albany, which had been the key coordinator of the event. How the steering group resulting from the Big Conversation could be supported in the longer term was being considered.
- 5.8. The increased number of children not attending school, due to absence or elective home education, was noted. CAMHS was providing assessments via the Virtual School and special educational needs and disability and had contributed to the new SEND strategy.
- 5.9. Increased referrals to eating disorder services were contributed to by the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns. Research was underway to establish more recent drivers, which may have included the 'cost of living crisis'.
- 5.10. In relation to the 117 young people waiting 38 to 52 weeks or more for assessment, it was reported 9 of them had to wait more than 52 weeks. All of those nine young people had appointments assigned for within the next three weeks; it was noted they had all missed about three previous appointments, contributing to their long waiting times. More suitable and accessible assessments were being offered, such as twice-monthly Saturday clinics, in addition to usual provision. Services understood peaks and troughs in demand and sought to configure capacity around them. Services were working with the voluntary sector to provide young people with support before they required more-specialist services. Young people who were waiting for assessment received contact, information and advice and group interventions from volunteers.
- 5.11. Following the increase resulting from the pandemic, demand for services was slowing but had not returned to pre-pandemic levels. National data and research indicated that increased children and young people mental health and wellbeing needs would remain; the situation was not unique to Lewisham or London. The Chair noted that the Select Committee had warned 18 months ago that a sustained surge in demand inevitably leading to longer waiting lists for CAMHS was imminent.
- 5.12. A proactive national strategy to address workforce challenges would be welcomed.
- 5.13. The Mulberry Centre, delivered by a voluntary organisation with NHS support, provided drop-in support in the north of the borough for young people. Kooth enabled young people to access online counselling and support of several forms, with the option of anonymity. How such services, self-referral and referral without parent or carer, school or GP involvement could be expanded were being explored. It was noted that many young people were unaware such support existed.
- 5.14. It was noted by the Young Advisor that when a young person acknowledged their mental health needs, it was likely those needs had been present for a while, and that accessing support was stigmatised and the support available from CAMHS were viewed negatively in the community.
- 5.15. Engagement had been undertaken with the local system regarding the development of a Single Point of Access (SPA) associated with the Family Hub programme. The SPA would provide an avenue for children and their families to access the most appropriate support available from a broad range of services delivered by a number of bodies, which would otherwise be

confusing to navigate. The SPA was being designed locally in partnership as there was not a one-size-fits-all model. It would include the multi-agency safeguarding hub and CAMHS staff.

- 5.16. The Cabinet Member, accepting there remained cause for concern regarding waiting times, highlighted that the number of young people waiting a long time had significantly reduced and funding had substantially increased in recent years. The significant pressures faced by young people were reflected in increased demands on health, social care and education services. It was still not empirically proven that early help would reduce demand for acute services, but the Cabinet Member was hopeful such impact would become apparent in the next year.

RESOLVED

The report be noted.

ACTION

Claude Jousselein, Deputy Borough Director – Lewisham CAMHS (South London and Maudsley Hospital) to provide the gender breakdown of referrals to eating disorder services.

6. Select Committee work programme

- 6.1. The Chair suggested four topics were cornerstones of Committee's work: the annual school standards (assessment/examination results) report; implementation of embedding race equality in schools; budget proposals; and monitoring of children's services improvement, including any inspection findings. He proposed four further topics: in-depth (research and site visits leading up to a single-issue meeting) scrutiny of holistic school improvement; family hubs; post-16 education; and early years provision. He suggested holistic school improvement include career pathways, inclusion, behaviour management and schools dealing issues such as pupils' home lives and wellbeing, and refer to the council's Education Strategy.

The following further suggestions were made by the Committee and Susan Rowe, (Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum):

- 6.2. Falling primary and secondary school rolls and published admission numbers and their impact.
- 6.3. School standards (assessment and examination results).
- 6.4. Post-16 education, opportunities and pathways. It was suggested the Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Skills be invited as a witness.
- 6.5. Youth violence.
- 6.6. Future-focused career opportunities, particularly in the technology sector, including ones which don't require a degree or which enable young people to live and work in the area.

RESOLVED

The following items be included in the Committee's work programme:

- Budget proposals

- Embedding race equality in education
- Children’s social care improvement, including any inspection findings
- Holistic school improvement
- Post-16 education and career pathways
- Youth violence
- Primary and secondary school organisation: estate, published admission and roll numbers and planning for the future
- School standards (validated data)
- For information only: school standards (unvalidated); admissions numbers; attendance and exclusions; and children’s safeguarding partnership annual report.

7. Joint Targeted Area Inspection Action Plan

7.1. It was clarified that a site had been identified in which to create a safe and appropriate place for young people who were taken into police custody for safeguarding to be taken to. Young people would be accommodated there for a short time while arrangements were made for their safe return home to other care arrangements, options for which included emergency foster care placements.

RESOLVED

The report be noted.

8. Notes of visit to Greenvale School

RESOLVED

The report be noted.

The meeting ended at 9.23 pm

Chair:

Date:
