

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 24 January 2019 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Liz Johnston-Franklin (Vice-Chair), Andre Bourne, Octavia Holland, Coral Howard, Caroline Kalu, Hilary Moore, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Lilian Brooks (Parent Governor Representative - primary schools), Kevin Mantle (Parent Governor Representative - special schools), Kate Ward (Parent Governor Representative - secondary schools), Gail Exon (Church Representative) and Monsignor N Rotheron (Church Representative)

APOLOGIES: None.

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Chris Barnham (Cabinet Member for School Performance and Children's Services), Sara Williams (Executive Director, Children and Young People), Emma Aye-Kumi (Scrutiny Manager), Ruth Griffiths (Service Manager for Access Inclusion and Participation), Angela Scattergood (Assistant Director for Education Services), Lucie Heyes (Assistant Director of Children's Social Care), Caroline Hirst (Joint Commissioner, Children and Young People's Services), Harold Bennison Harold Bennison (Interim Service Director, CAMHS at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM)), Martin Wilkinson (Managing Director of NHS Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)), Dr Omer Moghraby (Clinical Lead and Consultant Psychiatrist at Lewisham CAMHS, SLaM), Michael Roach (Interim Director of Lewisham Learning Needs), Helen Delaney and Nicky Dixon (both representing ParentENGage)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 6 December 2018

1.1 The order of the agenda was changed, and items were considered as follows:

Item 1 – Minutes

Item 2 – Declarations of Interests

Item 3 – Responses to referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

Item 6 – Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report

Item 4 – CAMHS waiting times

Item 7 – Safeguarding Services 6 monthly report

Item 5 – Lewisham Learning Partnership

Item 8 – Provisional secondary school results

Item 9 – Elective Home Education

Item 10 – Select Committee work programme

Item 11 – Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

1.2 It was RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 6 December be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 Councillor Sorba declared an interest in the CAMHS waiting times. He is a member of the Council of Governors of South London and Maudsley (SLaM) Trust. He also delivers workshops for the SLaM Recovery College.

2.2 Kevin Mantle declared that he is a Trustee of Signal – a charity supporting families in Lewisham with autistic children. His son is also a CAMHS service user.

2.3 Councillor Holland declared that she authored the report on mental health provision for children and young people in Lewisham and therefore was precluded from participating in scrutiny of that item, other than to be questioned as a witness.

2.4 Kate Ward declared an interest in the provisional secondary school results. She is the Vice Chair of Governors of the Leatherseller's Federation.

3. Responses to Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

3.1 It was NOTED that, although a written response to the referral the Committee made on 6 December was not yet due, the Mayor and Cabinet had agreed to pause proposals to cut health visitor posts, pending a review of the public health budget.

4. CAMHS waiting times

4.1 Caroline Hirst – Joint Commissioner introduced the item. She was accompanied by Harold Bennison - Interim Service Director CAMHS at South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM), Martin Wilkinson – Managing Director of NHS Lewisham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), and Dr Omer Moghraby – Clinical Lead and Consultant Psychiatrist at Lewisham CAMHS, SLaM.

4.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following was noted:

1. Lewisham works together with other boroughs as part of a 6-borough transformation plan. Mr Bennison took up post in 2018 and has worked to ensure that all boroughs are using the same approach and definitions so that data could be accurately compared.
2. The “52 week wait” referred to the time taken between referral and assessment. There could be a further wait between assessment and commencing treatment.
3. In most cases, the person carrying out the assessment would also provide treatment, unless a particular specialism was required.
4. Although there were considerably more children waiting 52 weeks to assessment in Lewisham than in comparator boroughs, the time from assessment to treatment in Lewisham had a tighter range than in these boroughs.

5. Around 40% of cases waiting 52 weeks for assessment had resolved or moved away by the time assessment came around. It was thought that in some cases the condition may be self-limiting, the patient may have practiced self-help or sought help privately. In some cases, an untreated condition could get worse and the service had received calls to that effect.
6. SLaM's objective was that the number of patients waiting 52 weeks would be brought in line with other boroughs by 31 March 2019.
7. The number of referrals waiting 52 weeks had risen to 138 because the number of cases reaching a 52 week wait was rising faster than assessments were happening.
8. SLaM colleagues gave assurances that the focus on reducing the time between referrals and assessment would not grow the time between assessment and treatment.
9. Some Members expressed concerns about the high numbers of temporary staff (15.2 out of 64 roles). Mr Bennison explained that funding uncertainty had caused significant disruption, however recent collaboration between the commissioner and provider resulted in a different 'feel' and service was beginning to attract new recruits.

4.3 Councillor Holland presented the highlights of a review of mental health support for children and young people in Lewisham that she had prepared at the request of Councillor Barnham, Cabinet Member for School Improvement.

4.4 A discussion following during which the following was noted:

1. Members asked for a report back on CAMHS waiting times in 3-6 months. Officers suggested that 6 months would allow a more accurate picture.
2. Members recognised the links between mental health and the review into exclusions from school. The committee expressed its commitment to making mental health part of both the Exclusions and Early Help reviews.
3. The Cabinet Member for School Improvement and Children's Services formally thanked Councillor Holland for conducting the review. The committee heard that the review would inform the future development of services. The review would be considered by Mayor and Cabinet, and was also of relevance to the violence reduction agenda.
4. The CCG requested that Cllr Holland present the findings of her report to them.
5. Although transformation grants and pupil premium were time limited, there was nothing to suggest that pupil premium would stop soon. The CAMHS transformation fund had been retained in the budget allocation for next year.
6. There would be a mental health strand in the Early Help review.
7. Some Committee Members stressed the need for greater patient and user group involvement, including the views of young people.
8. Mr Wilkinson invited members of the committee to visit CAMHS services.

4.5 It was RESOLVED that:

1. the report be noted.
2. An update on waiting times be provided in 6 months' time.

5. Lewisham Learning Partnership

5.1 The time being 9:20pm, it was MOVED, SECONDED and RESOLVED that standing orders be suspended to allow for the completion of committee business.

- 5.2 The Chair proposed, and it was agreed that the items: Lewisham Learning Partnership, Provisional Secondary School Results and Elective Home Education would be considered together.
- 5.3 As regards the results, the committee noted that a more detailed report would be available in March, and would provide a breakdown of results by several categories such as eligibility for Free School Meals, gender, ethnicity, school by school. Officers had that day received the validated results and assured the committee that there was very little difference between the results as presented and the validated results.
- 5.4 The Chair invited Nicky Dixon and Helen Delaney of local parent education network ParentENGage to address the committee.
- 5.5 Ms Dixon informed the committee that:
- ParentENGage had over 100 members and 500 followers on Facebook. It considers itself to be a group of positive parents trying to promote Lewisham's schools, with the aim that every Lewisham school should be good enough for every Lewisham child, whatever their needs.
 - In her view, Lewisham Learning needed to engage more with parents. She argued that it was not transparent and needed better communication.
 - In her view, GCSE results did not entice parents to apply for schools. Rather they wanted to know about the culture and ethos of schools.
 - ParentENGage had arranged coffee mornings for prospective parents to meet parents of Y7 students to find out about the schools. This had not been sustainable so they had come up with the concept of a Lewisham Education Week, where all of Lewisham's secondary schools could gather in one location and set out their stalls. This would happen in Year 5 as the time between Year 6 term starting and the deadline for applications was too short.
 - Her view was that doing GCSEs over 3 years was not in the best interests of the child, and she was not in favour of Saturday catch-up tutoring.
 - ParentENGage were involved in a parent resilience programme. They were training with MIND to teach resilience skills to parents in schools. They had secured some funding and were working with a primary school and 11 parent volunteers. They were keen to work with the council.
- 5.6 The committee then heard from Helen Delaney, also representing ParentENGage. Ms Delaney is a Trustee of Signal, a parent support group for autistic children and their families in the borough of Lewisham. Ms Delaney informed the committee that hers was not an exceptional case, rather it was similar to the experiences of many families that she had encountered at Signal.
- 5.7 Ms Delaney explained how her autistic son became so depressed and anxious upon transitioning to secondary school, that he required CAMHS support. She asserted that the school had failed to protect him from bullying and had not provided the SEN support described in his EHCP. She alleged that he had been punished for behaviours directly related to his autism, and felt that the school and its SENCO had had a very poor understanding of autism.

5.8 The committee heard that while the family could ill afford to electively home educate, Ms Delaney felt she had no option as the school as her son's needs were not being met by the school. She reported that she home educated him for one year, and he now attends a large mainstream school out of the borough, where she feels he has been well supported and is happy. She commented that the measures that have helped him at that school have not necessarily had budget implications.

5.9 A discussion followed in which the following points were noted:

1. The terms Electively Home Educated and Educated Otherwise Than at School are not interchangeable. The latter is used where a child the local authority cannot provide an appropriate place but retains responsibility for the child's education. The Hospital Outreach Programme was given as an example.
2. Results are important to many parents, who do consider outcomes when looking at schools, including Ofsted reports.
3. Ofsted's recent announcement to change the framework of inspection to focus on the quality of education would help parents to understand the work of schools more widely.
4. There are also families with SEND children who have had very positive experiences in Lewisham schools.
5. The new Assistant Director for Education had already arranged to meet with both ParentENGage and Lewisham Education Group and was encouraging of positive parental involvement.
6. In addition to losing pupils with high prior attainment to schools out of the borough, Lewisham has high numbers of pupils with no documented prior attainment joining its secondary schools. The current Ofsted inspection regime looks at attainment between KS2 and KS4 but many pupils come to the borough in Y7 with no prior data. Therefore looking at attainment data alone is an insufficient indicator of the work that schools do.
7. The committee felt that parents do have a strong voice in schools and on the CYP Select committee, as they are represented by parent governors.
8. Officers were adamant there was no secrecy around the work of Lewisham Learning Partnership. Its business was partnership working between schools and therefore communicating the detail of its work to the wider population was not its top priority but the information was available in the public domain.
9. LLP was discussing a communications strategy and working with parents to promote schools continuously, and not just in the lead up to primary to secondary transition.
10. LLP was also promoting good governance and quality teaching.

5.10 Referring to the provisional secondary results, it was noted that:

1. The focus to improve maths results had paid off
2. Lewisham had the lowest Progress 8 figure in London. Research recently launched by the University of Bristol highlighted the shortcomings of Progress 8 as a measure, recognising that it favours schools in advantaged areas.

5.11 Referring to elective home education, it was noted that:

1. Some members had heard anecdotes of parents that had been encouraged to electively home educate as an alternative to prosecution for non-attendance. Officers were clear that this was unacceptable and gave assurances that if they were aware of any such cases, they would stamp down on it.

2. Members asked for detail on schools where parents had removed a child because they felt the education provided was inadequate. In particular they wanted details of where EHCP and SEND support plans were not being implemented properly, to see if this was a pattern in particular schools.
3. Officers advised that the SEND Advisory team works with schools where SEN provision needs strengthening.

5.12 The Chair thanked Nicky Dixon and Helen Delaney for their contribution to the discussion.

5.13 It was RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted
2. That information would be circulated of schools where parents had removed a child because they felt the education provided was inadequate, and where EHCP and SEND support plans were not being implemented properly, and any identified patterns.

6. Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report

6.1 Nicky Pace, Independent Chair of the Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), introduced the item. She highlighted that new partnership arrangements were being implemented which would mean that, by September 2019, the LSCB would be abolished, and responsibility for safeguarding would be shared between health, police and the local authority. Therefore the next annual report of the LSCB, due in approximately three months' time, would be the last.

6.2 The following was noted in response to questions:

1. Unaccompanied minors were not covered in the report because responsibility for these children lay with the Corporate Parenting Board. The LSCB looks specifically at safety, for example where children have gone missing. Some of these children may be unaccompanied minors, but not exclusively so.
2. The difference between private fostering and a private fostering agency was clarified. The former includes, for example, a child going to live with extended family or a family friend, as had been the case for Victoria Climbié.
3. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was being reorganised to streamline the process of referrals to Children's Social Care and to make thresholds more easily understood by partner agencies, such as schools, police, etc.
4. Early help was outside the remit of the LSCB.
5. The next report would provide an update on work done with fathers, as well as with children with complex needs, both of which had been subjected to high levels of scrutiny from the LSCB.
6. Two out of three serious case reviews that had been conducted in the reporting period had now been published. The other was waiting for criminal proceedings to conclude.
7. The LSCB considered that the increased risk to children of cuts to school nursing had been effectively mitigated.

6.3 It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. Safeguarding Services 6 monthly report

7.1 Lucie Heyes, Assistant Director – Children’s Social Care, introduced the item.

7.2 The following was noted in discussion:

1. Schools consistently reported that the threshold for CSC involvement was too high. This was not unusual, however the threshold document had caused some confusion. A new document had been prepared and was currently out for consultation. Officers hoped that this would make the thresholds clearer for partners to understand.
2. There was no single threshold. Cases had to meet thresholds at various points in the process, for example
 - Threshold for assessment
 - Threshold for CP plan
 - Threshold for care proceedings
3. The low number of referrals had caused officers to wonder whether the initial threshold was too high. However Lewisham’s figures were comparable with Southwark, Greenwich and Waltham Forest. Early decision-making in the MASH had been externally audited and found to be right and safe, and officers had confidence that the initial threshold was right.
4. The thresholds for Child Protection plans and care proceedings were comparatively low. This meant that the wrong type of intervention might be happening too soon, and threshold needed to be raised.
5. The way in which threshold decisions were made was changing. A review of Child Protection plan decisions showed that some children could have been kept safe with a Child In Need plan.
6. Caseloads were around 15 children per social worker, rising to 25 in some cases. There was a trigger when a social worker’s caseload hit 20 children.
7. The vacancy rate in January 2019 was 33%. Nearly all these vacancies were filled with agency staff, and therefore the number of actual vacancies was very low.
8. Quality of agency staff was not an issue.
9. Quality of supervision and skills of management at all levels were areas that needed work.
10. Recruitment of skilled, experienced social workers was a national problem. Lewisham usually recruits newly qualified social workers, then trains them up.
11. Capacity issues within the performance team meant that only the statutory data had been provided. A strategy had been drawn up with a view to providing data that would give a more complete picture. Councillor John Paschoud asked to see this report.
12. Schools were having to support every-increasing need in the community on decreasing budgets. It was hoped that the Early Help review would address some of these resourcing tensions.
13. Initial scoping of the Early Help review was underway. It was agreed that the committee would consider the Terms of Reference of the review to inform the scope.

7.3 It was RESOVLED that:

1. The report be noted;
2. A copy of the data strategy would be shared with Councillor John Paschoud; and
3. The Early Help Review Terms of Reference would be added to the select committee work programme.

8. Provisional Secondary school results

8.1 This item was considered at the same time as Item 5 – Lewisham Learning Partnership.

9. Elective Home Education

9.1 This item was considered at the same time as Item 5 – Lewisham Learning Partnership.

10. Select Committee work programme

10.1 The following amendments to the work programme were discussed and agreed:

1. Add Terms of Reference for the Early Help Review;
2. Remove duplicate item “SATs results and Secondary Challenge Update”;
3. Add “new arrangements post Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board”;
4. Move the Children’s Social Care sufficiency strategy from March to May;

10.2 The Chair drew the Committee’s attention to proposed changes to the Ofsted framework and suggested that the Committee submit a response. The Chair and Vice Chair agreed to prepare an initial draft to circulate by email, and collate the committee’s comments.

10.3 Members of the Committee requested that future agendas be shorter to allow for longer discussion of fewer items.

10.4 It was RESOLVED:

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the work programme be amended as follows:
 - a. Add Terms of Reference for the Early Help Review;
 - b. Remove duplicate item “SATs results and Secondary Challenge Update”;
 - c. Add “new arrangements post Lewisham Safeguarding Children Board”;
 - d. Move the Children’s Social Care sufficiency strategy from March to May.

11. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

None.

The meeting ended at 10.55 pm

Chair: _____

Date: _____