

SAFEGUARDING SUB (COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Monday, 8 February 2021

Minutes of the meeting of the Safeguarding Sub (Community & Children's Services) Committee held virtually on Monday, 8 February 2021 at 10.00 am

Present

Members:

Randall Anderson (Deputy Chairman)
Mary Durcan
Helen Fentimen
John Fletcher
Marianne Fredericks
Susan Pearson

In Attendance

Officers:

Chloe Rew	- Town Clerk's Department
Aqib Hussain	- Chamberlain's Department
Julie Mayer	- Town Clerk's Department
Zoe Dhani	- Community & Children's Services
Rachel Green	- Community & Children's Services
Sarah Moore	- Community & Children's Services
Scott Myers	- Community & Children's Services
Chris Pelham	- Community & Children's Services
Andrew Russell	- Community & Children's Services
Teresa Shortland	- Community & Children's Services
Ellie Ward	- Community & Children's Services
Robert Wood	- Community & Children's Services
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Also in attendance:

Mary Lee	- Designated Nurse, City & Hackney CCG
Rory McCallum	- London Borough of Hackney
Sophie Mcelroy	- London Borough of Hackney

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from the Chairman Ruby Sayed and Alderman David Graves.

2. MEMBERS' DECLARATIONS UNDER THE CODE OF CONDUCT IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

There were none.

3. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes and non-publics summary of the previous meeting held on 12 October be agreed as a correct record.

4. **OUTSTANDING ACTIONS**

Members received the Sub-Committee's list of outstanding actions and the following points were noted:

- Action 1 was completed; and,
- Action 2 would be addressed in the meeting and could be marked as completed.

5. **GLOSSARY - ADULT SOCIAL CARE**

The Adult Social Care glossary was read in conjunction with the reports.

6. **GLOSSARY - CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE**

The Children Social Care glossary was read in conjunction with the reports.

7. **CITY OF LONDON JOINT HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY (JHWBS) REFRESH - UPDATE AND ENGAGEMENT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the City of London Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (JHWBS), which was refreshed for the 2021-24 period.

Members sought assurance that children and families would be consulted in the development of the strategy, in particular vulnerable children, children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), children in care and those known to social care. It was reported that there were many strategies in place which addressed these cohorts, many of which would fit into the JHWBS. Officers were working to ensure there were no gaps in services provided to those in need. Officers were working with the Health and Wellbeing Boards both at the City Corporation and Hackney Council, to identify target groups to reduce healthcare inequalities, and reduce barriers to accessing healthcare.

RESOLVED, that – Members note the progress made on developing the 2021-24 JHWBS.

8. **CITY & HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

Members received a report of The City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership relative to the City & Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) Annual Report 2019/20. New social care arrangements were established and had been implemented during the 2019/20 period, however the pandemic posed challenges in terms of consistent implementation. With two dedicated contingency oversight groups for the City Corporation and Hackney Council, this allows for more attention in each borough.

Members raised a number of questions and the following points were noted:

- *What permanent changes to the way operational and strategic safeguarding arrangements would be delivered post-pandemic? Virtual arrangements (ie. for meetings and visits) which were implemented due*

to the pandemic had changed the way the partnerships operated. The entirely virtual environment created challenges in terms of building relationships, and therefore it was hoped that a blended approach could be established once restrictions were eased.

- *How had the pandemic impacted identifying vulnerable children?* There had been a reduction in referrals due to the fact that children were not in school, which made it more difficult to identify vulnerable children as schools are typically where need and risk were identified.
- *Had there been an increase in mental health problems amongst young people?* The pandemic had exacerbated known issues such as the negative impact of social media on young people's mental health and cyber-crimes targeting young people.
- *Why had there been an increase in head injuries in babies and toddlers?* The increased pressure in the home due factors (ie. working and schooling from home; potential job losses; increased alcohol consumption) made the young and vulnerable potentially more exposed to harm. A child safeguarding practice review had been commissioned as a result of a head injury case in Hackney and this would be published in the next 4-5 months. There had been no head injuries for children under 1 year of age. There had not been any cases in the CoL.
- *What kind of leverage do safeguarding partners have to enforce compliance with self-assessments from sectors?* Legally, safeguarding partners can seek injunctions to enforce compliance, however collaboration was the preferred approach to emphasise the importance of cooperation in carrying out self-assessments.
- *How have the City of London Police (CoLP) been engaged with their safeguarding responsibilities?* The CoLP have been very engaged with the strategic leadership team and the new arrangements show that the CoLP are a statutory partner for safeguarding.
- *As the CoLP have moved to sector policing, as opposed to community policing, how are the CoLP able to connect with communities and identify risks?* Having officers embedded in communities was important to build trust and gain intelligence for community issues. Training opportunities were available to train police to focus on safeguarding over criminal justice in certain interventions, ie. in schools.

RESOLVED, that – Members noted the contents of the report, in particular the sections setting out progress on implementation of the new arrangements, COVID-19 and the strategic priorities of the CHSCP going forward.

9. **CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 AND CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY UPDATE**

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the Corporate Parenting Annual Report for 2019/20 and Corporate Parenting Strategy Update. The strategy set out how the Corporation delivers in its role as corporate parent, and how the Corporation meets the needs of children and young people in the City. The strategy reflected the changes that had been implemented due to the pandemic. The strategy annual report was also included to report on the Corporation's corporate parenting activities for 2019/20, including health and wellbeing, safeguarding education, employment

and accommodation. The annual report did not report on the pandemic, as this would be the subsequent year's annual report.

The Deputy Chairman noted an issue raised at a previous meeting where children were not aware of the City Corporation Corporate Parenting Pledge. Officers advised that children in care receive a lot of information on arrival, including the pledge, and often know the principles of the pledge but not that it is called a 'pledge'. Options were being considered to ensure children were aware of the pledge.

Members requested that Corporate Parenting Training be rescheduled, as this had previously been cancelled due to the pandemic, however could now take place virtually. The Deputy Chairman requested the report be presented to the Court of Common Council, as the entire Court was the Corporate Parent.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

10. CITY & HACKNEY CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN UPDATE

Members received a report of the Designated Nurse, Safeguarding Children City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).

Members asked how meeting the health needs of children and families, including Looked After Children (LAC) had been impacted by staff redeployment in the health system. It was reported that there had been fortnightly meetings with the CCG and LAC health services team to monitor health provision to ensure health issues were identified before they were too severe to manage. In terms of staff redeployment, two junior doctors were redeployed from the LAC health team at an early stage in the pandemic, but the risk to health assessments had been mitigated by a locum doctor. Children requiring follow-up visits were seen in person.

There had been a lower footfall of children than typically seen during this time of year, however this could be related to fear of accessing health services due to the risk of contracting the virus, and lower instances of communicative illness as children were not mixing socially.

In response to a question on how agile and flexible mental health services were in meeting the needs of LACs, a social worker had been embedded in the London Borough of Hackney, particularly due to an increase in eating disorders. This trend was noted across London.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

11. VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN: ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2019-2020

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the Virtual School for Looked After Children Annual Report for the Academic Year 2019-20.

In response to Members' concerns about the implications of lockdown for Looked After Children (LAC) to fall behind in schooling compared to their non-LAC peers, and mitigate efforts in place to support LACs, it was reported that there had been challenges in the transition to digital schooling, as many of the young people and/or their carers had limited English language abilities and computer skills. All of the students were now fully equipped with laptops and work was underway for tech training and support. There was ongoing anxiety amongst the students regarding the wellbeing of family members abroad which impacted schoolwork and sleep. Nationally there had been an increase in exclusions from virtual schools, however this was not the case for the City school.

The Deputy Chairman noted that the libraries had been doing considerable work supporting those who could use assistance, and suggested the virtual school connect with the libraries to take advantage of these offerings.

In response to Members' concerns about the increased risk for children in care and care leavers to become NEET (not in education, employment or training), Members were informed that monthly monitoring meetings were held with relevant officers and interventions were held when necessary. Good work was taking place with the Information and Advisory Service Prospects to implement plans for CiC who were vulnerable to NEET.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

12. **QUALITY ASSURANCE ANNUAL REPORT**

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the Quality Assurance Annual Report.

Members expressed concern regarding the impact of changes in social workers had on young people. It was reported that a number of social workers left the team about one year ago, however strong relationships have developed with young people and the new social workers.

Officers also confirmed, in response to Members questions, that up to date recordings of virtual meetings were in place to ensure accurate understanding of each session.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

13. **ACTION FOR CHILDREN SURVEY OCTOBER 2020**

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the Action for Children Survey for October 2020. The survey was conducted every year for everyone who uses the service and the results of the 2020 survey were positive in comparison to the national picture. In response to Members' questions on work being done to address housing issues (both for families with children and care leavers), tenancy support arrangements were in place, and efforts were being made to manage expectations for housing that was available. For care leavers, shared housing was available, and support was available for those living alone.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

14. SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the Service Development Plan. In light of the Excellent and Outstanding ratings from last year's Ofsted inspection, the plan looks at how these standards can be maintained. The plan also factors in the impacts of the pandemic, the Black Lives Matter movement which impacts many of the children and families that use these services. Some examples of work that was underway in relation to the plan included the family therapy programme with Kings College London.

In response to Members' questions on how excellent standard was being maintained for LAC and care leavers, one example was the sleep support which involved sleep packs and working with psychologists and social workers to ensure young people sleep well to maintain wellbeing, along with diet and exercise.

In response to Members' questions on how the 'good' Ofsted judgement for children and need and children in need of protection was being addressed to establish excellent practice, these children and families were prioritised for the Kings College London family therapy clinic. Systems were also in place to support management oversight and assessment of risk for CiN and CP. For example, a CiN Tracker meeting had been established; the case closure and risk management panel continued to meet; the oversight of the performance data in the performance meetings enabled close tracking of new contacts and referrals, and there had been several audits undertaken which included threshold reviews.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

15. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) UPDATE

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Update.

In response to Members' questions on the virtual multi-agency meetings, such as the SEND Board and SEND Panel, it was reported that these meetings were working well and attendance had increase. The Deputy Chairman remarked that overall meetings of professionals were better attended since moving to virtual meetings.

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

16. QUESTIONS OF MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE

There were none.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT

There was no other business.

18. **EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED, that – under Section 100(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of the Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act.

19. **NON-PUBLIC MINUTES**

RESOLVED, that – the non-public minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 October be agreed as a correct record.

20. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE - MONTH 9 2020/21 (DECEMBER 2020)**

Members received a report of the Director of Community & Children's Services relative to the Children and Families Service Performance for Month 9 2020/21 (December 2020).

RESOLVED, that – the report be received and its contents noted.

21. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX - ACTION FOR CHILDREN SURVEY**

The non-public appendix was read in conjunction with the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services at agenda item 13.

22. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX - SELF-EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

The non-public appendix was read in conjunction with the report of the Director of Community & Children's Services at agenda item 14.

23. **NON-PUBLIC QUESTIONS ON MATTERS RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE SUB-COMMITTEE**

There were none.

24. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT AND WHICH THE SUB-COMMITTEE AGREE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHILST THE PUBLIC ARE EXCLUDED**

There was no other business.

The meeting ended at 11.50 am

Chairman

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