

Strategy Boards & Committee(s):	Date(s):
Safer City Partnership Strategy Group	16/05/2022
Subject: Community and Children's Services Update	Public
Report of: Andrew Carter, Director of Community and Children's Services Author: Scott Myers, Strategy & Projects Officer, Community and Children's Services	For Information
<p style="text-align: center;">Summary</p> <p>This report provides and update of relevant data and activity from the Department of Community and Children's Services.</p> <p>Recommendation(s)</p> <p>Members are asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Note the report 	

Main Report

Background

1. This report provides an update on developments within the Department of Community & Children's Services and provides an update on work related to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, Afghanistan evacuees, suicide prevention, response to the Child Q case and living with Covid-19.

Current Position

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

2. In March 2022, the Government announced the Homes for Ukraine sponsorship pathway to support refugees fleeing the war in Ukraine.
3. As required by the Home Office, the City Corporation are carrying out checks on the homes of potential sponsors to ensure that the home is suitable and safe to host a Ukrainian family

4. The City Corporation is working with its partners to ensure that any refugee family in the Square Mile is protected from harm and exploitation.

Child Q

5. Following the widely publicised Child Q case, the City of London's Family of Schools and Department of Community and Children's Services have responded to the findings of the report in several ways.
6. The Aldgate School leadership have reviewed the report and shared learning with senior leaders and staff, as well as previously conducting significant work in relation to anti-racism, safeguarding and the curriculum.
7. The review findings have been shared in school assemblies with all year groups and written to parents to offer reassurance and an opportunity for further conversations.
8. Schools have also continued to ensure that they use appropriate systems to record all types of police searches
9. In addition to the schools, colleagues in Community and Children's Services have also engaged in activities following the publication of the review, including:
 - Reflective briefing sessions took place with staff in the People Directorate following the publication of the report. These were chaired by the Children Social Care Systemic Therapist and provided a safe and supportive environment for staff to consider the findings of the review and help reflect on and process the difficult messages related to adultification, gender and race.
 - Over the last 18 months, staff in the People Directorate and Community and Children's Services have been engaged in anti-racism development work. This has included: running systemic group-based reflective sessions; action learning sets; establishing a book club for staff that provided the opportunity to work through the book *Me and White Supremacy* by Layla Saad over 25 weeks; our Independent Reviewing Service provided a video message for our children in care and care leavers providing information on how they can receive support from CoL on any issues that are impacting them directly; and managers presented our anti-racism work to the DfE.
 - The CoL Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) group, jointly chaired by Children's Social Care and the CoL Police, reviewed the findings from the report at the April meeting. The implementation of the recommendations by partner agencies will be reviewed via the MACE group to help strengthen safeguarding arrangements specific to child sexual and criminal exploitation.

- Finally, the CHSCP has extended an invitation to all CoL Safeguarding Partners, including CoL schools, to attend the three-day Hackney Anti-racism conference in May 2022.

Afghanistan Evacuees

10. The City Corporation is continuing to support evacuees from Afghanistan who are staying in bridging hotels in the City of London.
11. The City Corporation are supporting evacuees alongside colleagues from the Department for Work and Pensions, the NHS, City of London Police, and the Voluntary Sector to ensure that their needs are met and that they remain safe.
12. The City Corporation have also commissioned a new youth provider, SocietyLinks, to support Afghan children and young people living in bridging hotels within the City of London.
13. The provider hosted activities for younger children, including Stay and Play sessions for 0-5 and play sessions for 5- to 8-year-olds.
14. Youth club activities were held at a SocietyLinks centre for 8–12-year-olds and 13–19-year-olds, which was well attended, and young people were able to take part in outdoor games, such as cricket.
15. The City Corporation is looking to extend this provision through the summer holiday and sessions during term time that provide greater integration with local children and young people.

Suicide Prevention in the City of London

16. The City Corporation's Planning and Transportation Committee in April adopted new planning guidance on mitigating the risk of suicide from tall buildings in the Square Mile as part of a long-term plan, becoming only the second local authority in the UK to devise a planning note on this subject.

Update on Covid-19 measures

17. Following the removal of free Covid-19 testing for most of the population and the legal requirement to self-isolate in April, City & Hackney Public Health have issued the public with advice on how to stay safe.
18. It is advised that residents and City workers get their covid vaccine and booster doses, isolate at home when feeling unwell, wearing a face covering in crowded places, such as on public transport, washing hands regularly, and letting fresh air in to improve ventilation.

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