

SAFEGUARDING SUB (COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE
Thursday, 9 February 2023

Minutes of the meeting at Guildhall at 1.45 pm

Present

Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chairman)
Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chairman)
Mary Durcan
Anne Corbett
Deputy John Fletcher

Officers:

Chris Pelham - Assistant Director, People, Community and Children's Services
Debbie Rigby - Community and Children's Services
Pat Dixon - Community and Children's Services
Rachel Talmage - Community and Children's Services
Ellie Ward - Community and Children's Services

In attendance:

Rory McCallum - Senior Professional Advisor – City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Ben Murphy, Ceri Wilkins and Joanne Abeyie

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the public minutes of the meeting held on 7th November 2022 be approved

4. THE CITY & HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Sub Committee received the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) Annual Report for 2021/22, which included examples of the impact, evidence, assurance and learning arising from safeguarding arrangements in the City of London and the London Borough of Hackney.

During the discussion and questions on this item, the following points were noted:

1. The Partnership is moving to more pro-active reporting; ie - the introduction of separate strategic risk assessments for the City and Hackney, which should bring a clearer perspective.

2. The Child-C Case Review in 2019 had highlighted the connections between exclusions, gang culture and exploitation. In Hackney, this had coincided with a larger piece of work on exclusions.
3. Adulthood was a key finding from the the Child-Q Case Review in 2021 and had been the subject of an enhanced 18-month training programme, which reached 400 practitioners. Governor training is commissioned through the Family and Schools Team, in the Education Unit. Support for schools is also available through the work of the Safeguarding Education Forum Whilst the Safeguarding Forum do not have statutory enforcement powers, there is good partnership working and all Schools submitted self-assessments in terms of the Child-Q recommendations.
4. The Chair advised that the rising number of exclusions had been discussed at the City Corporation's Education Board, noting that it falls within the remit of the City of London Academies Trust (COLAT). Members were reminded that, as City Corporation Members, and specifically in their role as Safeguarding Sub Committee Members, they can access COLAT's reports.
5. Whilst the City of London Police are not members of the City Safeguarding Board, they are keen to be as active as possible in the partnership.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which advised Members of the performance of the City Corporation as a Corporate Parent, and the outcomes achieved for children in its care from April 2021 to March 2022. The report also advised that the Corporate Parenting Strategy had been reviewed and updated.

During the discussion and questions, the following points were noted:

1. Widening the offer of travel cards for use during the School holidays.
2. Dentistry is available for under-18's via 'Healthy Smiles', noting that some of our young people might not have not had access to dental care for a considerable time. Funding has also been provided for post-18's, when there is a medical need. There is also a possibility that the City Dentist, who made provision for our Afghan guests, could provide spaces for care leavers. Alternatively, spot purchase dental check-ups can be provided when young people attend CiCC meetings.

3. The 'Cherry Blossom Ball' will celebrate care leavers achievements, noting that our young people would very much like to attend a formal black tie event!

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2022/23**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which updated Members on safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. **VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Virtual School Headteacher, which provided Members with information about the City of London Corporation's Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker. The report provided a background to the School, its purpose and role in supporting children and young people with their education, and described the work undertaken during the last academic year.

Members noted that the City has very few care leavers not in employment or training (NEETS). Some are applying for university places, accessing English as additional language courses, or seeking vocational training in engineering, catering etc. The officer advised Members of an Open Day at Kings College this month, noting that Kings particularly recognise young people's potential outside of traditional qualifications. All of our care leavers are invited to the City's Annual Career Festival and officers are working with providers of construction apprenticeships.

RESOLVED, That – the report be noted.

8. **VIRTUAL SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022/2023**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Virtual School Headteacher, which provided the Virtual School Development Plan for the next twelve months. Members noted that the plan promotes high expectations of attendance, attainment and achievement for all pupils and students from 0-25 years. The plan builds on the outstanding work of the previous Virtual Headteacher, who retired in July 2022, and includes his ideas for the development of the Virtual School, as well as the ideas of the newly appointed Virtual Headteacher.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. **ACTION FOR CHILDREN SURVEY 2022**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in respect of the 7th Annual Service User Survey carried out in August 2022. As in previous years, participation was high, with an overall response rate of 68.5%, which is slightly higher than last

year. Generally, most people welcomed being contacted and consulted, commenting positively on the process. Most of the feedback contained in the survey was positive regarding the young people's relationship with their social worker and the support they received.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. **PARTICIPATION SERVICE - CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL (CICC) UPDATED PLEDGE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which identified how young people have been consulted, and what they considered to be important in the pledge, with clarification as to how it would be taken forward.

Members noted that all young people coming into care get a copy of the Pledge, and the Independent Reviewing Officer goes through this with each young person. An officer from the Children's Social Care Team attends the CiCC meetings and the draft Service Development Plan is reviewed with the CiCC to ensure it meet their needs.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

11. **CARE LEAVERS AND THEIR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which set out the current offer for Care Leavers, the support offered and its impact.

Members noted that this report intersects with other items on the agenda in respect of the CiCC and Virtual Head Teacher. The officer advised that there are very few immigration lawyers that offer legal aid. The Chair agreed to discuss this after the meeting, together with the possibility of ringfencing apprenticeships for care leavers.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE - MONTH 7 2022/23 (OCTOBER 2022)**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which updated Members on service performance across the Children and Families Service. It demonstrated where performance meets statutory obligations and targets and identifies where action was taken for improvement in specific areas.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

13. **LOCAL AUTHORITIES DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO) ANNUAL REPORT 2021 TO 2022**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which advised Members of the Local

Authorities Designated Officer (LADO) activity between April 2021 and March 2022, which has been incorporated in the LADO Annual Report.

Members noted that a number of referrals over the past year had come from agencies in the City, which supply professionals for education, health and social care positions. Whilst a referral might have come from an incident in another local authority, the LADO is still notified in terms of managing the risk associated with an allegation. There were no referrals from the Police and the LADO has arranged a meeting to explore closer working and the provision of training, where required. The Assistant Director, People, advised that there is a wider issue in terms of engagement between the Police and the LADO process but the City and Hackney's commitment to addressing this has been noted by the Safeguarding Partnership Board.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

14. PRIVATE FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT 2021 TO 2022

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, noting that there were no private fostering arrangements identified in the City of London for 2021 to 2022.

Members noted that the City of London Corporation had met the National Minimum Standards for Private Fostering by raising awareness. There were difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic due to the limited opportunities to have face-to-face contact. However, the City of London has been promoting private fostering through the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) app and the distribution of leaflets to partner agencies. There have also been opportunities to raise awareness with partners through multi-agency meetings.

The LADO advised that she works closely with lead officers in Tower Hamlets, noting that a lot of residents use the local Mosque. The Chair commended this initiative, as some terminology might be unfamiliar to minority communities and religious/community leaders are well placed to provide reassurance in terms of where support can be offered.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

15. OFSTED FOCUS VISIT INSPECTION OF CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP

The Sub Committee received a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in respect of Ofsted's two-day Focus Visit of Children's Social Care and Early Help services in November 2022. The purpose of the visit was to look at services for children in need of help and protection via the 'front door' of the service. As part of the Ofsted inspection framework, a Focus Visit does not generate a judgement but identifies strengths and areas for improvement. These were set out in the published letter, appended to the report.

Members noted that the visit had generated positive feedback across all inspected areas, with no areas for improvement identified. The Sub Committee congratulated the team on this excellent achievement.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted

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

There were no questions

17. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERS URGENT**

There were no items.

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.

Item	Paragraph
19-25	1 & 2

19. **COMPLEX NEEDS NATIONAL REVIEW**

The Sub Committee considered a report of the Interim Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services, in respect of the Complex Needs National Review. Members noted that local authorities were directed, by the National Child Safeguarding Review Panel, to carry out quality reviews of all placements of children with disabilities and complex health needs, in registered settings which provide care and education. The Assistant Director advised that no significant concerns had been found.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

20. **CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20 AND CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY UPDATE. - NON PUBLIC APPENDIX**

The Sub Committee received a non-public appendix in respect of agenda item 5

21. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2022/23 - NON-PUBLIC APPENDIX**

The Sub Committee received a non-public appendix in respect of agenda item 6

22. **VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2021-2022- NON PUBLIC APPENDIX**

The Sub Committee received a non-public appendix in respect of agenda item 7

23. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE - MONTH 7 2022/23 (OCTOBER 2022)- NON PUBLIC APPENDIX

The Sub Committee received a non-public appendix in respect of agenda item 8

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

In response to a question, the Sub Committee noted that the Bridging Hotel would be closing at the end of February 2023, and most of the City Corporation's Afghan guests had either permanent accommodation or been moved, temporarily, to another bridging hotel. Members were assured that this process had been managed sensitively with other local authorities and agencies.

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

There were no items.

The meeting ended at 2.45 pm

Chairman

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