

SAFEGUARDING SUB (COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Thursday, 23 November 2023

Minutes of the meeting held at Guildhall at 2.00 pm

Present

Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chairman)

Deputy Anne Corbett

Mary Durcan

Eamonn Mullally

Helen Fentimen (Deputy Chairman)

Officers:

Chris Pelham	-	Assistant Director, People, Community and Children's Services
Rachel Talmage	-	Community and Children's Services
Theresa Shortland	-	Community and Children's Services
Debby Rigby	-	Community and Children's Services
Ellie Ward	-	Community and Children's Services
Mandy Horsburgh	-	City of London Police
Julie Mayer	-	Town Clerks
Shohel Ahmed	-	City and Hackney Adults Safeguarding Board
Jim Gamble, QPM	-	Independent Safeguarding Children Commissioner
Anna Jones	-	Designated Nurse for Looked after Children

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Joanna Abeyie, Benjamin Murphy and Ceri Wilkins. The Chair welcomed Eamonn Mullally to his first meeting of the Sub Committee

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED, that – the Minutes of the Meeting held on 19th June 2023 be approved.

4. CITY OF LONDON POLICE VULNERABILITY DEEP DIVE

This Sub Committee received a report of the Commissioner, City of London Police in respect of supporting and safeguarding vulnerable people. The report provided an oversight of strategic governance, current and future demand and collaboration taking place across the following strands:

- A. Domestic Abuse (including Honour based abuse and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM))
- B. Sexual Violence
- C. Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Protection
- D. Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking

E. Hate Crime

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. When domestic abuse cases are reported directly to the Police and not via a third party agency, as was the case during the pandemic, this can distort the data. The City of London Police (CoLP) are committed to pro-active engagement with the third sector to get a truer representation across all areas of vulnerability.
2. The COLP are committed to joint working and a whole systems approach, evidenced by a good conversion rate from charging to prosecutions, even if the victim cannot support the prosecution. A self-audit was underway in respect of improving prosecution levels and the journey for victims of sexual offences. Victim support also conduct victim surveys.
3. The CoLP also have a good track record for prosecutions for stalking and harassment. As coercive behaviour can be very difficult to spot, all officers receive mandatory training.
4. Public Protection Notices (PPN1) forms are submitted when an officer or staff member attending a call, or dealing with a crime, identifies any degree of vulnerability with a child. The form is risk assessed and passed to the relevant agency for action. Due to the demographics in the City, the forms are often completed for children who are non-residents, before being transferred to the relevant local authority for action.
5. There is evidence of increasing vulnerability in society but conversions to actual suicides remain low, evidenced by joint work in crisis management and interventions at an earlier stage. Post incident management procedures follow, which might also warrant a Serious Case Review at the Adult Safeguarding Board. Whilst an individual's borough of residence is key in a review, there is cross-borough and partnership working. The Chair asked if the next report to the Sub Committee could include data on mental health and suicide, noting that this would need to be in the non-public part of the meeting.
6. Data in the report in respect of hate crime pre-dated the current Gaza conflict. There has been a small rise in anti-semitism and islamophobia, which is being monitored and reported to the Police Authority Board. Community tensions are also monitored.

The Chair thanked the Police for attending this meeting, noting that there would be a police presence at all future Safeguarding Sub Committee meetings.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

5. CITY AND HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23

The Sub Committee received the Annual Report of the Independent Chair, City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board, as required under S43 of the Care Act 2014. The report outlined the key achievements and priorities for the forthcoming year, together with an overview of the safeguarding data for the London Borough of Hackney. The Chair commended a detailed and helpful report and Members welcomed the case studies.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

6. **ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q2 2023/24**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which provided an update on safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service during the first six months of 2023/24. In response to a question, Members noted that oil filled heaters are still available for vulnerable adults via the Fire Safety and Self-Neglect panel.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

7. **VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2022/2023**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which presented an overview of the activities and impact of The City of London Virtual School for the Academic Year 2022/2023. The report also provided information on the priorities for this Academic Year - 2023/2024.

In response to a question, Members noted that less than 5 children in the City are home educated but there was a slight increase during the pandemic.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

8. **INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO), ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2022-2023**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which provided an overview of the Independent Reviewing Service in the City of London for 2022–2023. The report also identified the strengths of last year's practice and areas of development for 2023–2024.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

9. **CITY OF LONDON CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP, ACTION FOR CHILDREN, ANNUAL SURVEY 2022-23**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, in respect of the Action for Children Annual Feedback Survey. Members noted that the exercise was undertaken in July 2023 and the report set out the responses and feedback received.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

10. CARE LEAVERS COMPACT

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Pan London Care Leavers Compact, which provides a framework for developing consistency, breadth and quality in the support offered to City of London Corporation care leavers.

RESOLVED, that:

1. The progress made on the six commitments, which all London Local Authorities have been invited to sign up to, be noted.
2. The Community and Children's Services Committee be recommended to sign up to the six commitment set out in the Compact, together with an additional policy to adopt 'Care Experience' as a protected characteristic.

11. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE SELF EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Self Evaluation Framework, as part of the Annual Engagement Meeting (AEM) with Ofsted, which take place between inspections.

During the discussion the following points were noted:

1. The 34% of negative feedback might be due to perception, as the quality of support offered by the COLC is exceptionally high. This is most likely to arise from expectations in respect of housing needs and specialist advice.
2. There had been a perception of the Team's lack of diversity but it is very diverse across age, gender and ethnicity.
3. There are challenges to housing expectations amongst care leavers, in terms of market provision and their desires to remain with peer groups, but this is a high priority in the Care Leaver Covenant and Service Development Plan. Social workers try to keep young people with foster carers for as long as possible but they are likely to seek independence by their late teens.
4. Some improvement in the availability of smaller units/studio flats is expected over the next couple of years, as more units on Golden Lane become available. Care leavers are also at the top of bandings when bidding for accommodation.
5. The Chair suggested, and Members agreed, that consideration be given to providing City Corporation owned accommodation to care leavers, as a half way house, before they move into tenanted properties. There was a further suggestion for this to include disability and other care needs.

6. This is a local survey so there is no like for like comparison as such. However, there are ways of drawing high level comparisons from regulation and inspection data. A Member advised of organisations in the market place which can draw comparative data from different surveys.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

12. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE AND EARLY HELP SERVICE DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2022-23

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the Development Plan, which was refreshed for 2023-24. The recommendations in the Plan had arisen from learnings from a complaint.

Members noted that the service had been graded as 'outstanding' but the Team continue to strive for 'exceptional'. There is particular vigilance and advocacy for groups that might experience discrimination.

In response to a question, the officer explained that there had been some vaccination reluctance since the pandemic. The Integrated Care Board and Public Health have launched a number of campaigns and are working with schools, particularly in light of the recent increase in measles infections.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted

13. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE - MONTH 6 2023/24 (SEPTEMBER 2023)

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services, which demonstrated where performance meets our statutory obligations and targets and identifies where action was taken for improvement in specific areas.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

14. WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services in respect of the work of the Early Years Service, in response to new guidance, and to meet the needs of our statutory school cohort by working together to improve school attendance.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. That national average stands at 93.6, with the Aldgate School at 96.3 (target of 97), noting that attendance is generally lower in the Autumn term.
2. 'Real time attendance' is now used, which enables persistent absences to be identified quicker. There have been no penalty notices this year but 12 warnings were issued last year.

3. There have been no requests this year for home educating.
4. Following the Chadrack Case Review in 2016, non-attendance procedures were enhanced to ensure that welfare and safeguarding are at the forefront. Families experiencing difficulties are always offered referral to Early Help or City Advice.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

15. THE CHILD Q UPDATE REPORT - WHY WAS IT ME?

The Sub Committee received a report of the Independent Safeguarding Children Commissioner in respect of the Child Q update report – ‘*Why was it Me?*’, which was published in June 2023. Members noted that the report provides an evaluation of progress against the Review’s initial 14 recommendations and looks at the work undertaken on wider community issues with trust and confidence in the police, schools and anti-racism.

During the discussion, the following points were noted:

1. New policies and procedures were being implemented across police forces in response to the report. The Head of Service Co-chairs the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Forum where training in adultification and safeguarding awareness has been at the forefront of searches and children being taken into custody.
2. This Review will continue to attract scrutiny from safeguarding practitioners and partners until evidence can be gained in terms of the outcome of actions and impacts arising from the recommendations.
3. The first set of recommendations are being tracked through the Case Review Sub Group, with clear reporting lines into the Executive.
4. The report and responses cross into work underway by the Police Authority Board but the Chair asked for the Sub Committee to be kept updated on progress.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

16. YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE ACTION PLAN

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children’s Services which provided an update on progress in the Youth Justice Service and summarises the inspection findings.

Members noted that, whilst there are currently no City of London Children in the Youth Justice System, the COLC commissions Tower Hamlets to run this service on their behalf. A few years ago the service was graded as inadequate but there have been significant improvements since. Members commended the monitoring and early intervention work in achieving this outcome.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

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

There were no questions

At 3.55 pm, Members agreed to extend the meeting to conclude the business on the agenda

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

The Chair was very pleased to provide the following updates :

- An agreement in principal for three City of London Corporation apprenticeships to be ringfenced for care leavers.
- The ‘*Bridge Across the City*’ Scheme to make the Financial Services Sector more open to care experienced young people.
- The ‘*Shining Stars*’ inaugural award ceremony for care experienced young people across London.

19. **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
20-24	1,2

20. **NHS NEL ICB (CITY & HACKNEY) CARE EXPERIENCED CHILDREN ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023**

The Sub Committee received the Children in Care Annual Report of the Designated Nurse and Doctor for the City of London and Hackney, which is a statutory requirement for all NHS Integrated Care Boards (ICBs).

The report covered the period April 2022 to March 2023 and provided an opportunity for the City of London Corporation to consider how health agencies are delivering on the duty to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all care experienced children, as required under ‘*Promoting the Health and Well-being of Looked after Children*’ (2015). This duty includes the commissioning of statutory initial and review health assessments (IHA, RHA) to meet the health needs of all children who are looked after by the City of London and who are placed in other areas.

Members noted that the report provided an update on the progress made against the care experienced children priorities agreed in 2022/2023. It also highlighted the many achievements of the team and concluded with a summary of key risks, priorities and the focus areas for improvement in 2023/2024.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

21. **SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY (SEND) - UPDATE**

The Sub Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community and Children's Services which provided statistical information about the number of children and young people with special educational needs and disability (SEND) who are known to the local authority (LA); those who receive additional support from the LA through an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) due to their complex needs, and those who are receiving SEN Support. Members noted that the City of London Corporation is in a very strong position as the schools share data.

RESOLVED, that – the report be noted.

22. **NON-PUBLIC APPENDICES**

The Sub Committee received the following non-public appendices

- 22.1 Adults Performance Report
- 22.2 Virtual School Headteacher Annual Report for Academic Year 2022/2023
- 22.3 Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), Annual Report for 2022-2023
- 22.4 City of London Children's Social Care and Early Help, Action for Children, Annual Survey 2022-23
- 22.5 Children's Social Care Self Evaluation Framework
- 22.6 School Attendance
- 22.7 Youth Justice

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

There were no questions.

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

One item was considered whilst the public were excluded.

The meeting closed at 4.15 pm

Chairman

Contact Officer: julie.mayer@cityoflondon.gov.uk