

SAFEGUARDING SUB (COMMUNITY & CHILDREN'S SERVICES) COMMITTEE

Thursday, 14 November 2024

Minutes of the meeting of the Safeguarding Sub (Community & Children's Services) Committee held at the Guildhall EC2 at 11.00 am

Present

Members:

Ruby Sayed (Chairman)

Helen Fentimen OBE JP (Deputy
Chairman)

Anne Corbett

Deputy Ceri Wilkins

Jacqui Webster

Officers:

Shohel Ahmed

Laura Demetriades

Hannah Dobbin

Kirstie Hilton

Mandy Horsburgh

Greg Knight

Rory McCallum

Chris Pelham

Debby Rigby

Marta Thlon

Ellie Ward

- City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board Manager
- Community & Children's Services Department
- Community & Children's Services Department
- Community & Children's Services Department
- City of London Police
- Community & Children's Services Department
- Senior Professional Advisor, CHSCP
- Community & Children's Services Department
- Community & Children's Services Department
- Senior Nurse for School Nursing and Looked after Children
- Community & Children's Services Department

1. APOLOGIES

There were no apologies.

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

There were no declarations.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED – That public and non-public summary of the minutes of the meeting held on 2 July 2024 be agreed as a correct record.

4. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE SELF-EVALUATION 2024

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the Department of Community and Children's Services (DCCS) assessment of the quality and impact of its services.

It was noted that the report detailed the current state of safeguarding services for children across all age groups and categories. It was submitted to Ofsted as part of an inspection in September, and the service received an outstanding grading.

Key highlights from the self-evaluation included:

- The strength of the early help service, which provides practical support for families, such as income maximisation and parenting support.
- The effectiveness of spotting special educational needs (SEND) early.
- The strong care leaver offer.

A Member asked officers to provide more details on the care leaver offer. It was noted that the care leaver offer was highlighted as being particularly strong, providing comprehensive support to young people transitioning out of care. Additionally, a Members asked how the early help service support families. Officers noted that the early help service offers practical support such as income maximisation, bedtime routines, and parenting play modelling.

5. VIRTUAL SCHOOL HEADTEACHER ANNUAL REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/2024

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning an overview of the role and impact of The City of London Virtual School for Children with a Social Worker for the academic year 2023/2024.

Members noted the report covered the work that took place between September 2023 and August 2024. It highlighted the growth of the virtual school's remit, now covering all children with a social worker, including care leavers up to 25 and beyond, not just children in care.

Key highlights from the report included:

- The service is strong and well-resourced, providing a flexible offer for an ever-changing cohort.
- Increasing the offer in P/E and sport, as many young people are interested in fitness and team games.
- Collaboration with the Music Service to increase music instrumental lessons for interested young people.
- Partnerships with King's College and Teddy University to offer degree-level engineering courses.
- The successful onboarding of four apprentices for the City of London during the last academic year.

In response to questions raised by Members, officers noted that the award ceremony held earlier this week was a lovely event showcasing the achievements of young people. It was suggested that more Members of the Committee be invited to future events to meet the young people. Members were informed that ideas for residential trips come from various sources, including recommendations from the Children in Care Council network and suggestions from young people.

6. **CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the City of London Corporation role as a corporate parent, and the outcomes that have been achieved for the children in care during the period April 2023 to March 2024.

Officers introduced the report which sets out the achievements and work done in the past year, as well as the strengthening of processes around the corporate parenting role.

Key highlights included:

- The recognition of three City of London young people as shining stars at a Pan London awards ceremony.
- The agreement by the Court of Common Council to secure the experience of carers being akin to a protected characteristic.
- The review and launch of a revised children in care pledge last November.

In response to questions raised by Members, officers noted that the new policy recognising care experience as akin to a protected characteristic has been signed off by the Grand Committee (Community & Children's Services Committee), which has been helpful in working with other departments, such as housing, to provide more opportunities for care leavers.

Officers noted that although only 86% of health assessments are carried out within the timescale, some assessments were delayed by a couple of days due to clinic capacity or interpreter availability, but these delays did not have a material impact on the children. It was suggested that the corporate parenting report should be sent to a full Common Council meeting for information to impress upon Members the importance of their statutory responsibility.

Members were informed that corporate parenting training has been delivered, but there is a challenge in widening the interest among the broader Council membership, with some resistance to making training mandatory. The suggestion of creating an online training package for members who cannot attend meetings was found helpful, and there are plans to investigate this.

7. **SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS 2024-27**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning the Department's Sufficiency Strategy for Children in Care and Care Leavers 2024-27.

Officers outlined the department's approach to ensuring its statutory duty to provide suitable placements for children in care and care leavers. The strategy details the approach to sourcing, contracting, and quality assurance, along with an action plan for 2024-2027.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The strategy was provided to Ofsted as part of the recent inspection, and members of the commissioning team were interviewed. The conclusions were that there are robust arrangements regarding commissioning, sourcing, and quality assurance of placements.

A Member enquired if there were there any gaps identified in the strategy that need to be addressed. Officers said that generally, no gaps were identified. The arrangements are robust, with access to placements across London through a commissioning alliance framework. Officers additionally informed Members that there are additional resources available that can be called upon as needed, ensuring that the needs are met without any identified gaps.

8. **2023–24 PRIVATE FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning how the City of London has complied with its duties regarding private fostering and details the activities undertaken to promote awareness of the notification requirements.

Members were provided with an introduction to the private fostering annual report. It was noted that there were no private fostering notifications in the last year. The report highlighted the issue of underreporting in private fostering and the ongoing efforts to raise awareness.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The comparison with Hackney, which tends to have between 11 and 50 young people in private fostering.
- The continuous efforts to raise awareness through standard safeguarding training, the private fostering app, and updated leaflets and posters.

A Member asked how the City of London Corporation can reach out to informal fostering arrangements within families. It was suggested to use different parts of the services within the corporation, such as newsletters, to get information directly to families. The voluntary sector was also mentioned as a good vehicle for capturing data and reaching out to families. In response to a question raised by a Member, officers noted that there are systems in place to respond to any private fostering notifications and provide the appropriate support to the child and private foster carers.

9. **CICC SAILING TRIP FEEDBACK 2024**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning feedback from a sailing trip undertaken in 2024.

Members were provided with an introduction to the feedback from the Children in Care Council (CICC) sailing trip. The trip was described as a unique and well-received experience for the young people involved. The feedback highlighted the positive impact of the trip on the participants, including the strengthening of relationships and increased confidence.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The trip was a unique experience that involved a 3:30 AM shift for the young people, which they managed well.
- The relationships built during the trip were evident at the celebration event, showcasing the positive impact on the young people's confidence.

A Member asked how the ideas for the residential trips are generated. Officers noted that ideas for residential trips come from various sources, including recommendations from the Children in Care Council network and suggestions from young people.

10. **EDUCATION AND EARLY YEARS SERVICE SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning highlights developments and progress in several key areas.

Members were provided with an update on the education team's efforts in fulfilling its safeguarding responsibilities. A key highlight was the new statutory obligation to work closely with schools under the "Working Together to Improve School Attendance" guidance. This closer collaboration with schools has led to a better understanding of the factors behind non-attendance and has facilitated joint efforts to address these issues.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- Efforts to identify patterns and trends concerning children and young people with special educational needs (SEND), who represent one of the most vulnerable groups.
- Emphasis on addressing disproportionality within schools and the rise in the number of children experiencing social, emotional, or mental health needs.
- Awareness of the delay in diagnosing girls with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) until secondary school age.
- Concerns regarding the vulnerabilities of children using the internet and social media platforms, as well as the development of artificial intelligence.

Members noted that the education team is addressing the vulnerabilities of children using the internet and social media platforms by partnering with INEQE to offer training to schools on their monitoring and filtering processes. This ensures that digital and technological standards align with the "Keeping Children Safe in Education" guidance for 2023. Officers added, to support children transitioning from primary to secondary school, the virtual school conducted a transition project in the summer term with The Aldgate School to prepare young people in year six for secondary transition. The impact of this project would be measured throughout the term.

It was noted that the team is also considering any correlation between these transitions and exclusions, particularly how school policies can support or not support children who find certain environments challenging. Additionally, the team is in conversation with SAC about potentially rolling out a trauma-informed training program across the corporation.

11. CITY OF LONDON POLICE VULNERABILITY REPORT 2024

The Sub-Committee received a report of the City of London Police concerning details how the City of London Police (CoLP) identifies, supports, and safeguards vulnerable people.

Members were presented with the City of London Police Vulnerability Reports for 2024. The report covered a wide range of responsibilities in the vulnerability area, including updates on data sets and various initiatives.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The importance of gathering anonymised data from the voluntary sector working with women and children, particularly in relation to honour-based abuse.
- The need to collect information from academies on child exploitation and child abuse.
- The use of heat maps to link data on sexual offences to ward maps, which could be useful for the new Destination City Advisory Board and licensing.

In response to questions raised by Members, officers noted that they would need to look into whether any information is being gathered from the voluntary sector working with women and children regarding honour-based abuse, as they were not aware of any such data being collected at that time. They added that while they have good links with academies, they have not received any actionable information on child exploitation and child abuse at this stage.

Officers also agreed to speak to the analyst about linking the heat map on sexual offences to a ward map, as it should be possible to do so. Regarding work with hotels and massage parlours around vulnerable young women, Officers explained that they engage regularly with hotels through the Licensing Forum and provide updates on identifying different crime types. They also run Operation Make Safe to combat child sexual exploitation and act on signs of exploitation in massage parlours through various measures.

12. CITY AND HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Independent Chair of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Adults Board concerning an annual report detailing its achievements in adult safeguarding over the past year.

The CHSAB Manager, presented the annual report, highlighting key achievements, priorities for the upcoming year, and performance data. Key achievements included commissioning eight safeguarding courses attended by over 150 professionals, hosting webinars on various topics during Safeguarding Adults Week, and developing the Adult Partnership Assessment Tool Kit.

Officers noted that priorities for 2024/25 include improving the quality of mental capacity assessments, engaging more with people with lived experience, responding to the needs of vulnerable groups, supporting frontline practitioners,

and delivering recommendations from safeguarding adult reviews. Members noted that performance data showed that 49 safeguarding concerns were raised, with 25 leading to a Section 42 inquiry. The most prevalent types of abuse were self-neglect and financial or material abuse.

13. THE CITY & HACKNEY SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP (CHSCP) ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

The Sub-Committee received a report of the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Partnership (CHSCP) concerning an annual report for 2023/24 outlining the statutory safeguarding arrangements in the City of London and Hackney.

Members were provided with an introduction to the CHSCP Annual Report 2023/24. The report highlighted the key achievements and priorities of the partnership over the past year. It emphasised the importance of safeguarding children and the collaborative efforts made by various agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of children in the City and Hackney.

Key highlights from the discussion included:

- The report detailed the work done to improve safeguarding practices and the positive outcomes achieved through multi-agency collaboration.
- The importance of continuous improvement and the need to address emerging challenges in safeguarding children.

A Member asked what the key achievements of the CHSCP over the past year were. Officers highlighted the key achievements include improved safeguarding practices, positive outcomes through multi-agency collaboration, and addressing emerging challenges in safeguarding children.

The Sub-Committee asked what the priorities for the CHSCP for the upcoming year are. Members were informed that the priorities include continuing to improve safeguarding practices, addressing emerging challenges, and ensuring the safety and well-being of children through collaborative efforts.

14. CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICE PERFORMANCE - MONTH 3 2024/25 (JUNE 2024)

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning updates Members on service performance across the Children and Families Service.

15. ADULT SOCIAL CARE SAFEGUARDING PERFORMANCE REPORT Q1 2024/25

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Executive Director, Community & Children's Services concerning safeguarding performance across the Adult Social Care Service during Q1 of Year 2024/25.

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 was no urgent 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 meeting held on the 2 July be agreed as a correct record.

20. **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE EXPERIENCED YOUNG PEOPLE- PROVIDER ANNUAL REPORT 2023- 2024**

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Homerton Healthcare NHS Foundation.

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

There were no non-public questions.

22. **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 urgent business to be considered in non-public.

The meeting closed at 12.23 pm

Chairman

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