

London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham
**Children and Education
Policy and Accountability
Committee
Minutes**



Monday 13 June 2016

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Caroline Needham (Chair), Alan De'Ath, Elaine Chumnerly, Caroline Ffiske, and Donald Johnson

Co-opted members: Dennis Charman (Teacher Representative), Nandini Ganesh (Parentsactive Representative), and Nadia Taylor (Parent Governor Representative)

Other Councillors: Councillor Sue Macmillan (Cabinet Member for Children and Education)

Officers: Clare Chamberlain (Interim Executive Director of Children's Services)

1. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR AND CO-OPTED MEMBERS

RESOLVED

1. That Councillor Caroline Ffiske be re-appointed as Vice Chair for the 2016/17 Municipal Year.
2. That the following co-opted members be re-appointed for the 2016/17 Municipal Year:
 - Eleanor Allen, London Diocesan Board for Schools
 - Nandini Ganesh, Parentsactive Representative
 - Philippa O'Driscoll, Westminster Diocesan Education Service Representative
 - Nadia Taylor, Parent Governor Representative
 - Vic Daniels, Parent Governor Representative
 - Dennis Charman, Teacher Representative (for one meeting, after which a replacement would be sought)

2. MINUTES

Under Item 9, Schools Organisation and Investment Strategy, members asked that the following paragraph be added:

"Councillor Alan De'Ath noted his concern about the Government's requirement for apprenticeships to be contingent on English and Maths GCSE A to C because of the potential for less academic young people to be excluded."*

RESOLVED

The minutes of the previous meeting, held on 13 June 2016, were approved and signed by the Chair.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Eleanor Allen and Philippa O'Driscoll.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Maeve Crawford, resident, addressed the committee and asked members to look into the provision of relationship education for young people in the borough. Research had shown this type of education could; reduce violence in relationships, reduce rates of pregnancy, increase attainment, and promote less risky behaviours – overall contributing to improved mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Councillor Alan De'Ath responded that one of the recommendations of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health task force (Item 8 in the minutes) focused on improved training for staff to deliver relationship education. He suggested this was an area that could be examined in greater detail by officers.

Councillor Sue Macmillan said that, from her experience of speaking with young people across the borough, there was huge demand for more education about relationships. She noted that while schools were primarily responsible for this area the Council could make schools aware of the available information on this topic and the benefits for their students.

Nadia Taylor said she believed relationship education should be a core part of the PSHE curriculum and felt the Council should make a recommendation to the DfE to that effect.

The Chair noted that she had recently attended an Early Intervention Foundation meeting that was considering whole schools initiatives and the associated outcomes. She asked that an item on relationship education be added to the committee's work programme for September and invited Maeve Crawford to provide input into the report.

6. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Clare Chamberlain introduced herself to the committee as the Interim Executive Director for Children's Services and presented the report updating members on items of note since the previous meeting. She highlighted the section on the Partners in Practice initiative (section 5 of the report) that the Council was working on with the Department for Education. Hammersmith and Fulham and its partner boroughs were considered as exemplars for social care practice and had put in a joint bid to fund a centre for social work training to support other local authorities. She also noted that new contracts had gone live for schools meals and the travel care and support service and looked to be going well.

Councillor Alan De'Ath noted the positive news that Ark Swift Primary Academy and Sir John Lille had both received 'Good' ratings from Ofsted in their most recent inspections, moving up from 'Inadequate' and 'Requires Improvement' respectively.

Councillor Caroline Ffiske asked officers to go into more detail on each of the bullet points in the year end summary of Family Services data (5.4 of the report).

- Point 1 - Clare Chamberlain noted that despite an ongoing reduction of referrals there had not been a similar reduction in the number of child protection investigations because the numbers of children at risk from harm had not reduced.
- Point 2 – The new child protection case conference model (called the 'Signs of Safety') was far more approachable and engaging for parents and therefore more successful in reducing the number of plans.
- Point 3 – It was noted that around four or five years ago there had been a Government drive to raise the number of adoptions that then levelled out over subsequent years. Recent court judgements had lowered the number over the past two years.

Dennis Charman highlighted the section on Ofsted judgements on local schools (4.2 of the report) and noted that improvements were attributed solely to the leadership in schools rather than the teachers and other members of staff. He also requested that the academy white paper and the national funding formula should be considered together as an item for discussion in the Autumn term.

ACTION: David Abbott

Councillor Marcus Ginn, referring to 4.3 of the report, asked if all schools in Hammersmith and Fulham would be converting to academies. Councillor Sue Macmillan responded that messages from Government had not been clear and the full detail of the proposals would not be known until the white paper was published. She noted that since the Government's original announcement in this area she had led two working groups with schools to consider their options in the new landscape and schools would continue to meet to discuss the best approach.

Councillor Alan De'Ath asked if a school's conversion to an academy would have an impact on their admissions criteria. Councillor Sue Macmillan assured members that there would be no change in the admissions criteria.

Nadia Taylor, referring to the section on the Children and Social Work Bill, asked if officers could expand on the exemptions referred to in 5.8 of the report. Clare Chamberlain responded that Hammersmith and Fulham would be one of the authorities to benefit from the exemptions – it would give the service the power to innovate by relaxing some regulations. She noted that a more detailed report on this would come to a future meeting.

Vic Daniels, noting that the new schools meals contract had a greater focus on healthy eating and freshly prepared food, asked if there were any concerns about the state of school's kitchens and what the Council did to ensure they were kept up to standard. Councillor Sue Macmillan responded that the Council was currently in the process of launching a competitive tendering process to re-procure the school meals equipment and maintenance contract.

RESOLVED

The Committee requested that an item be added to the work programme on the implications to the local authority of the Government's white paper on education and the national funding formula.

7. CABINET MEMBERS UPDATE

Councillor Sue Macmillan welcomed Clare Chamberlain, the Interim Executive Director of Children's Services and noted that she had led on the Focus on Practice initiative that had made a real difference, improving outcomes with families.

Councillor Macmillan informed the committee that since the previous meeting she had visited Sullivan Primary School, William Morris Sixth Form, Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre, and Ark Swift Primary Academy. She went to the Early Help south localities office to speak with staff and see the service in action. She also visited Ealing's care leavers hub – a drop-in centre for care leavers that provided valuable support for young people, e.g. advice about housing and employment. They even put on a roast meal on Sundays. She noted that she would like to emulate that type of service in Hammersmith and Fulham.

Councillor Macmillan highlighted the school meals mobilisation and the change to the travel care and support service at Jack Tizard School, noting that the schools involved had been very positive and no complaints had been received. She extended her thanks to all officers involved.

8. **CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH TASKFORCE REPORT**

Councillor Alan De'Ath presented the report of the Child and Adult Mental Health taskforce. He informed the committee that, in response to national concerns about mental health provision for young people, a taskforce was set up to:

- Summarise the local need for mental health and wellbeing provision.
- Assess the services available in Hammersmith and Fulham which support good mental health and emotional wellbeing for young people.
- Identify any gaps.
- Comment on whether young people and professionals had access to the right provision and services.

The taskforce members met with local providers including Rethink, the Centre for Mental Health, West London Mental Health Trust, and GPs. They also met with schools, including the Bridge Academy, Lena Gardens, Brackenbury, and Jack Tizard – and young people, including the Youth Council who helped produce a survey that yielded over 3000 responses.

The taskforce produced recommendations on the following themes:

- Access to Services, Information and Support Needs to Improve
- Training Needs to be Strengthened and Sustainable
- Transitions Arrangements
- Hammersmith & Fulham Transformation Plan
- Mental Health Challenge

Councillor De'Ath noted that mental health was a vast subject area and the taskforce was an initial look at the issue – all of the areas in the report could be examined further by the Council when looking to improve services. He thanked all of the people involved in the taskforce.

Nandini Ganesh asked if SEN schools and families had been involved in the taskforce and noted that there was confusion between autism and mental health issues in younger people. Cllr De'Ath responded that one of the recommendations of the taskforce was to increase understanding of mental health issues to address this problem. She also raised concerns that Hammersmith and Fulham did not have a behaviour and support team to carry out intervention work and that the CAMHS waiting list was too long – when people needed help they tended to need it relatively quickly. Cllr De'Ath responded by saying that CAMHS was not always the best place to address people's issues, there were a range of other services but people needed a better understanding of what was available and the best pathway. He noted that currently most of the funding was spent at the extreme end of the care pathway whereas more should be spent earlier, on preventative care and support to stop major issues developing.

Dennis Charman made the following points:

- The report should be sent to all schools in the borough for information.
- There was a mismatch between the measures of deprivation the Government used to determine levels of funding that were reducing and the increasing levels of mental health need.

- There was more work needed to determine why need was growing.
- The proposal for school based services and signposting was a good solution to the problem of the lack of awareness of disparate providers.
- However, if schools would be providing services and looking for early signs of mental health issues they needed to be properly resourced.
- In cases where school-age children receiving support were re-housed, he asked if there was continuity of provision and how that transition was handled.

Councillor De'Ath said the report would be revised and circulated to schools. He believed that the increasing need was due, in part, to better identification and awareness of mental health issues, the impact of the recession, housing, and job security. He agreed that schools needed to be properly resourced to deliver services and that more training and a different approach to looking for the early signs of mental health issues could have a significant impact on outcomes. School staff should be given mental health training as a matter of course, similar to how child protection training is now a standard expectation. Regarding young people moving home, he noted that there was a significant communication gap between CAMHS, schools, and social services but in theory cases should be transferred from one local CAMHS service to another.

Councillor Elaine Churnery asked that the report was also sent to all Chairs of Governors and noted she would be putting it on the agenda at her next Governor's meeting to discuss the school's pathway for concerns about mental health issues. She added that it would be useful to know the pathway for all schools.

Nadia Taylor said she was concerned that the Local Authorities contribution to mental health service funding was so (relatively) small given the increasing need.

Councillor De'Ath responded that there was a widespread funding imbalance between money spent on children and young people versus that spent on adults, however there were no easy solutions for redress.

Councillor Marcus Ginn felt there was a clear argument for a greater level of early intervention funding as it reduced the number of adults that needed to be treated, at greater cost, in the future.

Councillor Sue Macmillan thanked Councillor De'Ath and the taskforce for their hard work putting together the report. She requested that it was added to the agenda for a future meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board so it could be discussed with the CCGs. She strongly agreed with the principle of early intervention but noted that the lag between investment and realised savings made it an increasingly difficult proposition in a climate of ongoing reductions to funding from Government. Despite these challenges, the administration was committed to improving mental health provision in the borough and were already looking at how the recommendations could be implemented.

Dennis Charman noted that there was a body of evidence supporting the idea that schools were becoming more stressful for young people, particularly with regards to exam pressures. Schools across the borough had developed

strategies to mitigate this but there was no forum to share best practice. He suggested a recommendation that encouraged collaboration on strategies between schools.

Councillor Caroline Ffiske requested a briefing on the public health budget and areas of potential crossover with Children's Services.

The Chair then invited questions from floor.

Shea Shimer Wong, resident, addressed the committee and informed members that she was developing a mental health mobile app that encouraged users to do a daily check-in and micro-blog their experiences. The app would then recognise early warning signs and suggests local support services to users. She welcomed the report and said she was keen to work with local schools to help them improve tracking of mental health concerns in their students.

Marie Thomas, resident and school governor, said she had seen children entering nurseries displaying mental health issues and too many young people with challenges in this area were lost in the system. The best way to tackle these problems was to see children regularly and identify problems at the earliest possible stage.

Councillor Macmillan agreed that early help services for 0-5 year olds had waned in recent years but ensured that the administration was committed to the area. There was an exciting project underway to join-up early help services and mental health would be a crucial element of that project.

The Chair said she would write to the young people involved in the work of the taskforce to thank them for their participation. She would also send the report to the Youth Council, including their lead member for mental health, to give them an opportunity to provide input.

RESOLVED

1. The Committee requested that a revised version of the taskforce report be sent to all schools and Chairs of Governors.
2. The Committee requested that the taskforce report be considered at the next appropriate Health and Wellbeing Board meeting.
3. That the Chair write to the young people involved in the taskforce and send the report to the Youth Council for their input.

9. SCHOOL HOLIDAY CHILDCARE PROVISION

Clare Chamberlain presented the report that outlined school holiday childcare provision in the borough. Additional information on provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities was circulated with drafts of the 'Summer in the City' activity leaflets.

Councillor Elaine Chumnerly noted that the report did not go into enough detail about the affordability of childcare, a case study of a typical family

would have been useful, as would information on where the Council could provide some support. She felt the report did not address the key problem with childcare provision – that it tended to be fractured, making it difficult for working parents to sustain appropriate provision over the long summer period.

The Chair requested a report looking at the future of childcare in the borough and asked that as part of the report, officers looked into the possibility of providing quality childcare provision in partnership with local employers. She also asked that the report include information on the support the Council gave, or could give, to working parents. The report was to be added to the work programme for the meeting in November.

RESOLVED

That the Committee requested a report, schedule for November, looking at the future of childcare in the borough. To include options for providing quality childcare provision in partnership with local employers and information on the support the Council gave, or could give, to working parents.

10. SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS FOLLOWING OFSTED INSPECTION OF FAMILY SERVICES

Clare Chamberlain presented the report that outlined planned service improvements to Family Services following the recent Ofsted inspection. She highlighted proposed changes to the emergency duty team – which would be moving from a single person to a broader on-call system to increase capacity. She also highlighted the additional of providing access to independent advocates as it was felt they added considerable value.

Dennis Charman noted that he supported the proposals in the report and asked that the committee reviewed progress against them in six months.

RESOLVED

That the Committee review the post-Ofsted service improvements in six months.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Alan De'Ath asked for a report on the admission policies of all secondary schools in the borough, including a map of their catchment areas and information on which primary schools the pupils came from. The Chair asked that the report included an overview of the most common questions that parents ask about school admissions policy and how the Council assisted parents to ensure everyone had equal understanding of the process.

ACTION: Wendy Anthony

Dennis Charman felt the Committee should consider the impact of the upcoming academies white paper and changes to the national funding

formula for schools. The new legislation represented a significant change to local oversight for schools and members should be briefed on how the Council sees its role going forward. A report would be added to the work programme for November.

ACTION: Ian Heggs

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Dennis Charman informed members that this would be his last meeting as he was retiring soon. He said it had been a privilege to represent the voice of teachers on the Committee. The Chair, on behalf of all members, thanked him for his valued service and wished him a very happy retirement.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 9.13 pm

Chair:

Contact officer: David Abbott
Committee Co-ordinator
Governance and Scrutiny
Tel 020 8753 2063
E-mail: david.abbott@lbhf.gov.uk