

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Monday 30 June 2025

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Helen Rowbottom (Chair), Daryl Brown, Mercy Umeh, Genevieve Nwaogbe and Aliya Afzal-Khan

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

Other Councillors: Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader)

Guests

Natalie Glasby (Head of Programmes, LMP Action CIC)
Marie Thomas (Resident)
Benito Brown (Resident)

Officers

Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director of People)
Peter Haylock (Operational Director for Education and SEND, Children's Services)
Sarah Sanderson (Operational Director, Children and Young People Services)
Marcus Robinson (Strategic Commissioner, Children's Services)
Debbie Yau (Committee Coordinator)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for lateness was received from Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan.

The Chair took the opportunity to welcome a new member, Councillor Genevieve Nwaogbe who was attending the Committee meeting for the first time and to thank Councillor Trey Campbell-Simon for his contributions in the past.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2025 were agreed as an accurate record.

4. SUMMER IN THE CITY

Marcus Robinson (Strategic Commissioner, Children's Services) briefed the Committee on the report, including an overview of the Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme, its link to wider strategies, Summer in the City 2024 and the co-produced themes for the Summer in the City 2025.

Natalie Glasby (Head of Programmes, LMP Action CIC) remarked that the LMP Action CIC had been working with the Council in rolling out the HAF programme for the past four years which now became a brand in the borough. She highlighted the following:

- The themes for Summer in the City 2025 were co-produced with the Youth Council and Youth Board, i.e. exploring our environment, levelling up, building connections, celebrating creativity, and belonging everywhere.
- There would be 27 providers this year offering programmes for different age groups to be held in locations spanning across the borough, including the three Family Hubs.
- All providers were able to offer spaces to children and young people with SEND, with specialist providers organising events particularly for them.
- It was a requirement for providers to add their accessibility arrangements and SEND support on Plinth which was a new booking system allowing parents to filter appropriate provisions.
- Community Day to launch Summer in the City 2025 would be held on 19 July and all were welcome.

Councillor Mercy Umeh appreciated the Council's efforts in organising activities and events for the children and their families during summer holidays, which was not available in the past.

Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan expressed appreciation that the events would span across the north, centre and south of the borough. Addressing her question on the theme of levelling up, Natalie Glasby noted that as suggested by the Youth Board, levelling up events would enable young people accessing new opportunities and engaging themselves in new and different things.

On Councillor Afzal-Khan's further question about marketing among parents of local maintained schools, Natalie Glasby said that all the details were forwarded to parents of all schools in school zone around mid-June for their booking of activities/events commencing mid-July.

Nandini Ganesh (Co-optee) recalled that before deploying Plinth, Parentsactive had made past contributions of producing a booklet listing all the Summer in the City activities to make the events more accessible. In this regard, Natalie Glasby advised

that a small number of physical booklets of activities/events were printed now for events and some premises like the Children's centres. Moreover, while residents were encouraged to use the Plinth, they could still make bookings by contacting the providers directly. On Nandini's further questions about the age range of activities, Marcus Robinson noted that the age ranges each provider could accommodate were clearly indicated in Plinth, with specialist providers accommodating young people up to 25 years old.

Sharing members' sentiments about the amazing programme, Nadia Taylor (Co-optee) asked to what extent the activities were shaped and co-produced. Natalie Glasby noted that co-production happened more proactively starting from last year when they had joined the meetings of the Youth Council and Youth Board to appreciate the areas of wanting in the borough.

As regards Nadia Taylor's concern about funding, Marcus Robinson responded that Summer in the City programme was predominately funded through the Department for Education with some additional funding from the Council and various grant schemes. Nadia considered it necessary to secure more funding support from different sources having regard to the ever-growing richness and popularity of activities and events on offer.

Questions from the floor

Noting that there would be 27 providers offering different programmes for the Summer in the City 2025, Marie Thomas (Resident) said as a member of a tenant's association, she had not come across any related information. Moreover, as she noticed, the Family Hubs were still unknown to many residents, especially those who did not live near the hubs.

Marcus Robinson highlighted the diverse marketing means, including promotions on the Council's magazine being delivered to every household, the vinyl banners at the parks and the front page of the website. In addition to marketing among school parents, they had also worked proactively with the 27 providers which were very well connected with local communities/residents who might not visit the Council's website regularly. While improvements had been made to marketing the programme over the years, Marcus welcomed new marketing ideas especially those enabling a more diversified reach to low-income families.

Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader) remarked that H&F probably had the best offer across the country in terms of HAF programme which was accessible to all children and young people in the borough, rather than just those who were eligible for free school meals as in the case of some neighbouring boroughs. The Council, along with getting some grant funding, had also put a lot of resources and regarded this a significant piece of investment with a view to transforming the borough's children and young people during summer. This was particularly helpful to families struggling with the cost of living. Councillor Sanderson added that all information pertaining to Summer in the City programme was available on the Council's website and available in 128 different languages.

Benito Brown (Resident) called for more marketing at schools to promote the HAF programme in April/May among parents so that more new faces could be seen joining the activities.

Councillor Sanderson remarked that although the HAF programme in the borough was open to all, it was primarily targeted at 6000+ students on free school meals, and they would probably be seen age through the system. And it was good to see students who had enjoyed the activities were returning year-on-year. She emphasised that the HAF programme had been very widely promulgated with marketing growing every year to ensure the information had reached as many people as possible.

Summing up, the Chair thanked everyone and said she would be joining the Community Day on 19 July 2025.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

5. CO-PRODUCTION IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES

Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director of People) highlighted that H&F children, young people and families were seen, heard and valued, their participation in everyday, honest and interactive conversation with staff had influenced frontline practices and led to the development of strategic policies. For example, the Summer in the City programme was extensively co-produced with lots of different stakeholders, and the partnership approach had enabled the Council to make continuous improvement.

Sarah Sanderson (Operational Director, Children and Young People Services) remarked that staff across Children's Services were passionate about engaging with the H&F children, young people and families. For example, the series of workshops delivered by the Corporate Parenting Board for children looked after and care experienced young people had offered them the opportunity to meet directly with Board members and influence the Council's broader offers. The improved joint housing protocol resulted from their feedback on independent living arrangements and the quality assurance provided by the young inspectors was a case in point. The engagement of foster carers/parents for senior leaders and members to hear the support they needed had influenced the foster recruitment approach and the development of services for foster carers/parents.

Peter Haylock (Operational Director for Education and SEND, Children's Services) referred to the meetings in the past few working days when different versions of co-production had happened. At the meeting with key stakeholders and groups reviewing mental health services within education and SEND, a lot of really good questions and information were shared resulting in a clear set of actions to be taken forward. He had also met with the Youth Council reviewing their priorities to be presented at a meeting of Full Council later. For example, how the priorities were delivered while holding the officers to account, how the Youth Hub would sit alongside the local and SEND offers under the Family Hubs.

Jacqui McShannon highlighted that some co-production had led to concrete and tangible outcomes, such as the Care Leavers' Hub which was designed by young people, the evolving Transitions Team, the developments in foster care using different models, the involvement of young people at interview panels for key posts, the early intervention strategy, the shaping of Family Hubs by Family Voices in designing the delivery of services, the wonderful sets of podcast recently launched by the Youth Council and so on. She emphasised that co-production *per se* was very dynamic and had changed hugely in the past five years that it was now embedded in everything done by the Children's Services at all levels through the daily conversations held individually or in groups with children, young people and their families. Looking ahead, co-production would play an important role in speech and language review, Children Social Care Reforms, development of Family Voices and delivery of the HAF programme.

Nandini Ganesh (Co-optee) said that she and members of Parentsactive did enjoy co-production in partnership with the Council and were very keen to be more informed about the outcome of their co-production efforts.

Jacqui McShannon remarked that there were various ways of observing the outcomes of the co-production journey. Sometimes, it was a report like the outcome framework of education and SEND presented to this Committee, the development of Youth Council and Family Hubs with evolving range of activities, or one-to-one feedback. Notwithstanding, co-production had insinuated its journey into a way of thinking which kept evolving in itself. Partners' participation at strategic meetings would also allow them opportunities to evaluate the outcomes.

Sarah Sanderson added that co-production was an on-going process, for example, the young inspectors might give further comments on the furniture setting of the Care Leavers' Hub originally designed by the care experienced young people.

Peter Haylock said that the outcome could be evaluated by the success or otherwise of young people in H&F, the areas of concern pointed out by key stakeholders in annual reviews, and the actions to be taken forward to achieve the desired results. He noted that H&F's outcomes had been positive.

Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan agreed that co-production was embedded in everything ran by the Children's Services which had very extensive and comprehensive feedback loop. She called on more transparency in reporting the co-production process.

Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader) said the Council was very focused in reporting the positive outcomes but sometimes, it was harder to put into a report the wider breath of the reach of co-production that transformed lives in fabulous ways. She referred to the housing offer for care experienced leavers. On these young people's feedback, the setting up home fund was increased by £1000 in addition to the provision of flooring and white goods. One of the young people providing the feedback said it was so good to know that what he said mattered.

Appreciating the responses of officers and members to her question and the young people's feedback, Nandini Ganesh suggested including in the next report one to two outcomes of things co-produced by Parentsactive and other partners.

Question from the floor

Marie Thomas (Resident) and Sarah Sanderson discussed about the recruitment approach of foster carers across West London.

On Marie Thomas' question whether young carers were part of the co-production, Jacqui McShannon said that the co-production process with young carers was very dynamic. To improve the uptake of more young carers, senior officers were involved in discussions with current young carers on their needs, which included a range of bespoke programmes and access to universal services. Sarah Sanderson noted the over-subscription of children looked after to the Summer in the City activities, including a camping trip with the young carers. She believed that the participation of senior officers at the activities and talked to the stakeholders alongside them would bring significant impacts.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

6. PREPARATION FOR ADULthood IN H&F

Peter Haylock (Operational Director for Education and SEND, Children's Services) introduced the report, highlighting that the key part of the Preparation for Adulthood (PFA) plan was linked to the SEND strategy with a view to strengthening young people's voice in their own transition planning. The feedback from children, young people and their families had resulted in three priority workstreams:

- a. Workforce – growth of a new Transitions Team.
- b. Pathways – a co-produced PFA Pathways and Protocol guide accessible to all.
- c. Provisions – young adults were supported with the right provision for transitioning through the services.

Moving forward, the focus of key actions would be around a permanent recruitment drive for the Transitions Team, engagement with key stakeholders and partners to ensure placement sufficiency within the Adult Social Care for the next 12 months particularly the toolkit around employment and the travel training plans. He referred to the case of Monique who had gone through the supported internship programme which was designed for young people between 16 and 25 years old with an Education, Care and Health Plan (pages 46 – 54). After the programme, young people had the opportunities to talk to employers in job fairs, do CV workshop and move towards their goals and aspirations

Peter Haylock added that the Children's Services would continue to work with internal teams and external partners to develop pathways and provisions to support young people who might have the opportunities to be a real success.

Councillor Mercy Umeh appreciated the supported internship experience shared by Monique who had learned a lot and became more confident. She was pleased to see that Monique was now ready to move on with the skills acquired.

Nandini Ganesh (Co-optee) was proud to note the growth of the Transitions Team which was a positive outcome of co-production with Parentsactive. She looked forward to the Team's continual working on employment like supported internship.

Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan asked about the different pathways and the number of offers that had been taken up by young people. In response, Peter Haylock noted that the supported internship pathway was people-led and about 15 to 30 pupils would be offered to take up this one-year programme. After completing the programme, they would then move on to employment or other types of supported apprenticeships. In terms of the Adult Social Care pathways, the new Transitions Team was working with approximately 150 young people at the moment before they progressed to adulthood.

RESOLVED

That the Committee noted the report.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 3 November 2025.

With the Chair's concurrence, Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director of People) took the opportunity to give some of the most recent highlight of the work of the People's Department which had involved many stakeholders, partners, colleagues and community, including Parentsactive celebrating its 25th birthday in May 2025, Foster with West London team hosting a visit from Minister Janet Daby in May 2025 by H&F, Foster Care Fortnight and Ed Miliband, Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, visited Jack Tizard School for its H&F Community Energy Scheme.

Meeting started: 7.03 pm

Meeting ended: 8.14 pm

Chair

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