

# Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Tuesday 22 April 2025

## **PRESENT**

**Committee members:** Councillors Helen Rowbottom (Chair), Daryl Brown, Mercy Umeh 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:**

Marie Thomas (Resident)  
Benito Brown (Resident)

### **Officers:**

Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director of People)  
Sarah Sanderson (Interim Operational Director, Children and Young People Services)  
Peter Haylock (Operational Director for Education and SEND)  
Georgina Herry (Head of School Effectiveness)  
Debbie Yau (Committee Coordinator)

## **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Trey Campbell-Simon.

Nadia Taylor was attending remotely.

## **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### 3. **MINUTES**

#### **RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2025 be agreed as an accurate record.

### 4. **FAMILY HUBS REPORT**

Peter Haylock (Operational Director for Education and SEND) presented the report.

**NOTE: The presentation slides are attached in Appendix A**

Responding to Councillor Daryl Brown's question about managing the attendance, Peter Haylock noted that there was a booking system for parents to reserve a visit slot. Referrals were also arranged so that the right staff might provide the support via the hubs for parents in need.

Nandini Ganesh (Parentsactive Representative) asked whether people registering themselves or being part of a case management would be counted as using the Hubs. Peter Haylock noted that for people who had formally registered through the Power App, their activities at the Hubs would be recorded. For unregistered visitors without using formal services, their casual visits might not be captured. He remarked that the Hubs helped create the opportunities for families to access the needed services and support as early as possible. He remarked that this would be an indicator hard to measure, requiring longer running time to generate meaningful data. Replying to Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan's question, Peter Haylock said the Power App captured individuals' registration details and made referrals to the most appropriate service.

Noting that information about most of the Council's services would be provided at the Hubs, Councillor Mercy Umeh was concerned about the management of the information to meet the needs of families looking for support. Peter Haylock advised that the Hubs acted as an access point whereby the multi-disciplinary team would review the potential services that could meet residents' needs. Referrals could then be set up for the right people to provide assistance.

Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director of People) added that the services on offer at the Hubs were co-produced with residents, for example, via Family Voices who were heard at regular consultation forums. These services were very dynamic to meet family needs and had been evolving over the last two years to respond to the changing needs. Peter Haylock agreed to share more information about Family Voices after the meeting.

**ACTION: Peter Haylock**

Considering that services at the Hubs would probably be run on different days, Councillor Afzal-Khan asked whether a timetable was published online for the residents' reference. Peter Haylock noted that an up-to-date timetable of what's on at the Hubs was posted at the new Family Hub website.

**NOTE: Below are the online Hub timetables for the three sites:**

[Family Hub Old Oak Community Centre | LBHF](#)  
[Family Hub Tudor Rose Community Centre | LBHF](#)  
[Family Hub Stephen Wiltshire Centre | LBHF](#)

Noting the registrations at the Family Hubs had grown from 371 in 2023/34 to almost three folds of 961 in 2024/25 but the number of 'children seen' for the same period only increased twice, the Chair brought this up and discussed with Peter Haylock. Peter clarified after the meeting that registrations were a one-off data entry whereas 'children seen' was the number of times children engaged in activities across the year (this could include the same child accessing multiple times). The average engagement rate for each child would be around 10 times over the year. The number of individual families seen at the Hub was higher than 'children seen' was due to some adults/parents accessing activities without children (such as pre-natal, debt and welfare services etc).

On Nandini Ganesh's question as to why Stephen Wiltshire Family Hub had only grown a little from 541 to 686 since launching, Peter Haylock noted this Hub was running as a children's centre previously so many of the visitors were existing users of the services.

#### *Questions from the floor*

Marie Thomas (Resident) was concerned the Hubs were not advertised properly and known to only a small group of people. For example, the monthly letters from the Housing Services received by the Estate she lived on or the housing forum she attended never mentioned about the Hubs that advice on housing matters could be provided. She called on stepping up communications in sharing the good news.

Peter Haylock noted there was significant increase in the number of users to the Hubs over the last two years because the Hubs had done a lot of e-marketing including the banner of the Hubs at the bottom of Children Services' emails. Despite physical posters and leaflets were less effective nowadays, he agreed to pick up promotion with the residents' associations.

#### **ACTION: Peter Haylock**

Echoing the need to step up promotion of the Hubs at residents' meetings, Benito Brown (Resident) asked whether the Hubs would help families with children being excluded from schools. Peter Haylock responded that while the Hubs could support families with children being excluded from schools and a youth club would be developed to meet this need, the Hubs would not offer education provision for the excluded children as this was taken care of by the academies.

In this connection, Jacqui McShannon invited the two residents for a tour visit of the Tudor Rose Family Hub.

On promotion of the Family Hubs, Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader) noted that ads about the Hubs' services around housing, health and education would be targeted at families in the areas. The Hubs would also ensure their constant presence at the TRA meetings and collect residents' feedback for service improvements.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee noted the report.

### **5. VIRTUAL SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24**

Sarah Sanderson (Operational Director, Children and Young People Services) presented the report on behalf of Amelia Steele, Head of Virtual School who had sent her apology.

**NOTE: The presentation slides are attached in Appendix B**

Noting that the percentage achieving grades 5 or above in English and Mathematics for 16 LBHF CLA pupils at Key Stage (KS) 4 was 31.25%, the Chair expressed concern that more than two-third of the cohort did not achieve Grade 5. Peter Haylock referred to the same Grade 5 E&M for all LBHF schools at KS4 with the outcome pitched at 64.4%. He reflected that CLAs at Virtual School were facing significant challenges and the achievements of each student should be celebrated individually.

Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan appreciated the transformative effect of enrichment activities. She asked if the Virtual School had tracked the uptake of enrichment activities by CLAs at their own schools. Jacqui McShannon (Executive Director of People) advised that this was monitored in a variety of ways through the Personal Education Plan and the Virtual School teacher allocated for a group of children. An independent reviewing officer was also assigned for every child to review the Care Plan twice a year which shall cover enrichment activities both at and outside school.

Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader) remarked that the Council also supported CLAs to join extracurricular activities within their own schools including providing funding/ bursaries and other supports.

Nadia Taylor expressed her thanks for an excellent presentation on school performance and the enrichment activities for the children in the Virtual School. She asked whether there were any mechanisms to promote and facilitate peer to peer support and encouragement for CLAs whereby they might have ways to connect, given their shared experience, outside of school.

Peter Haylock understood the CLAs connected through the enrichment activities and there were opportunities for conversations to take place as a group at summer trips. Jacqui McShannon added that the Care Leavers' Hub also encouraged young people to connect with their peers.

### *Questions from the floor*

Benito Brown (Resident) considered more local apprenticeship opportunities should be offered for young people for them to become skilled professionals like plumber.

Councillor Sanderson invited Mr Brown to write to Councillor Zarar Qayyum, Cabinet Member for Enterprise and Skills who shall provide the relevant data. She added that the Council had done a lot under the Industrial Strategy looking at different pathways including apprenticeship for young people to go into employment.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Committee noted the report.

## **6. EDUCATION PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR ACADEMIC YEAR 2023/24**

Georgina Herry (Head of School Effectiveness) introduced the report which was a positive picture for outcomes in H&F at every Key Stage (KS), including early years, year 1 phonics, KS2 attainment (expected and greater depth standards), KS2 SEND attainment, KS4 performance (Progress 8, Attainment 8, Grade 5 E&M and EBacc entry), SEND KS4 performance, and KS5 performance (average point score, average grade). She also briefed members on attendance, elective home education (EHE) and children missing in education, exclusions, and priorities for 2024/25.

**NOTE: The presentation slides are attached in previous item**

Georgina Herry took the opportunity to note the work of H&F school leaders and staff in achieving the positive outcomes despite the challenging environment nationally. Their hard work paid off in ensuring the children thrived in the local area.

In reply to the questions of the Chair and Councillor Aliya Afzal-Khan, Peter Haylock (Operation Director for Education and SEND) noted that the English Baccalaureate (EBacc) entry was a suite of qualifications ensuring students were covering a broad and balanced curriculum (which was equivalent to 5 GCSEs in English, Maths, Science, Languages and Humanities). Peter stressed that the national data measured the entry not the performance with a view to ensuring students were moving away from a narrowed curriculum.

Responding to the questions of Nandini Ganesh (Parentsactive Representative), Georgina Herry confirmed that the data included those special schools' pupils who had taken GCSE subjects. As regards H&F schools, Peter Haylock advised that the schools were located within the borough, but the students might be out-of-borough residents. He also confirmed that falling school rolls was still a problem with significant decrease in the recent two years.

In this connection, Councillor Alex Sanderson (Deputy Leader) noted this was a nation-wide and global trend due to decreasing birth rates. There had been a 20% reduction in London's under 5s in the last decade. The local authority was commissioning more family homes but there were not enough children to fill the many school places.

Noting the number of known EHE children spiked at summer 2021 likely due to covid-19, Councillor Afzal-Khan queried why there was another spike in summer 2024 and sought reasons for the trend. She was also concerned about the monitoring of the children's education under EHE.

Peter Haylock remarked that the local authority was not allowed to ask the parents why they had opted EHE. On monitoring, the same safeguarding process used throughout was applicable to EHE children which had been carried out with increased provision.

In terms of EHE, the Chair observed the same trend nationally. Councillor Sanderson noted it could be due to a variety of reasons and the local authority had paid close attention to this cohort's safeguarding by meeting and working with the families to achieve the best outcomes.

Noting the absence of attainment data for KS3, Councillor Afzal-Khan considered the local authorities could not step in and help pupils during this 5-year period after the baseline testing at KS2 and before obtaining the GCSE attainment at KS4.

Georgina Herry noted that there was no externally published data at KS3 but individual schools had closely monitored pupils' entry performance and assessed them at appropriate junctures with a view to providing additional support early. In addition to attainment, the local authority also looked at the progress over their time in secondary schools. Progress 8 at KS4 reflected how pupils were doing from the KS2 baseline and schools were keen to track and get the support they needed as early as possible.

Councillor Afzal-Khan noted from Appendix 1 (page 60) that Progress 8 and Attainment 8 for some schools were far below the national levels. She asked if this was consistent and whether strategies were in place to help these schools, noting there was a school leadership cohort that could help and guide each other. Peter Haylock echoed that H&F's secondary head teacher network was very strong and the recent brought in 'rise' programme was a school improvement service that the local authority might identify and talk with schools in need.

As regards the Chair's suggestion of adding an explainer to facilitate parents making informed choices, Peter Haylock said this was up to the academies in presenting their data and parents might be looking at wider set of things about the schools. Georgina Herry added that there were online tools assisting parents to compare the schools.

#### *Questions from the floor*

Marie Thomas (Resident) was proud of the education outcomes in H&F schools and keenly hoped to ensure the H&F teachers were retained. She questioned the schools' readiness in delivering healthy living curriculum like oral health and toilet training to early years.

Georgina Herry assured that a lot of work around health promotion had been done by the public health team which worked with school nurses on oral health, asthma, diabetes and healthy eating. She added that while it was a national trend for children to start schooling without toilet training, there were toilet training sessions for parents and carers to help pupils' readiness for school.

Peter Haylock expressed his appreciation to the hard work of Georgina Herry and her small team done for the primaries and secondaries covering a wide range of areas from school performance to personal hygiene.

Councillor Sanderson echoed and thanked for the huge amount of work done to make sure H&F schools were all on a continuous improvement journey. She also took the opportunity to congratulate Parentsactive for receiving the Civic Honors Award. Members applauded again at the nomination cited by Councillor Sanderson. Nandini Ganesh thanked everyone and noted they would be celebrating their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary soon.

## **RESOLVED**

That the Committee noted the report.

## **7. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 30 June 2025.

Meeting started: 7.03 pm  
Meeting ended: 8.37 pm

**Chair** .....

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