

	<p style="text-align: center;">London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CHILDREN AND EDUCATION POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">19 JANUARY 2015</p>
<p>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE</p>	
<p>Report of the Executive Director of Children's Services</p>	
<p>Open Report</p>	
<p>Classification - For Information Key Decision: No</p>	
<p>Wards Affected: All</p>	
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report provides a brief overview of recent developments of relevance to the Children's Services department for members of the Policy and Accountability Committee to consider.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. The Committee is asked to review and comment upon the contents of this report.

3. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

SAFEGUARDING – FEMALE GENITAL MUTILATION (FGM)

- 3.1. A pilot has been running from September 2014 at St Mary's Hospital which seeks to improve the number of referrals made by midwifery services when women they support have been subject to FGM. The hospital holds a monthly FGM clinic and the pilot has established a meeting chaired by a specialist worker from Children's Services to review all cases where the

mother is expecting a female baby or already has a girl. The evidence shows a correlation between the mother have experienced FGM and there being a heightened risk of her female offspring suffering such abuse. The meeting discusses such cases, enabling specific concerns to be triaged and a joint decision on what follow up is required by whom. Many of the cases require social work assessment because of the risk of FGM in the families' extended networks. All cases where a mother has suffered FGM and is expecting a girl are passed to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The pilot has also developed links with relevant community organisations so that women can be offered culturally sensitive support. The pilot, which initially focused on Westminster City Council, has recently been awarded with funding from the Department for Education which will enable it to be implemented in Hammersmith and Fulham. It has also been nominated for an award by the British Journal of Midwifery.

CORPORATE PARENTING

- 3.2. Children's Services are exploring options to enable foster carers living in Hammersmith and Fulham to be reimbursed for Council Tax payments they make while providing a valuable service for some of the borough's most vulnerable children. Hammersmith and Fulham, like other London boroughs, faces challenges in recruiting sufficient local foster carers which can result in looked after children being placed in other local authority areas away from family networks, existing school places and other key services. Consideration is being given as to how best to amend existing allowances for foster carers, to reimburse council tax for foster parents who live in, and foster for, the borough. It is hoped that such a scheme may encourage other suitable local families to consider becoming foster carers.

HOMELESS 16 AND 17 YEAR OLDS

- 3.3. The 'Southwark Ruling' (2009) placed the responsibility for assessing homeless 16 and 17 year olds with Family Services. In response to this ruling we created a dedicated Youth Homelessness team of two senior social workers who work jointly with Housing Options (PATHS). One of the social worker posts is jointly funded by Family Services and Housing Options, and PATHS also has a specialist housing advisor for 16-25 year olds. These staff members work together to provide a coordinated service to homeless 16 and 17 year olds, delivered jointly by the two departments.

All 16 and 17 year olds who present as homeless will be first seen by one of the Youth Homelessness social workers. The social worker will discuss the wider issues and any concerns with the child; review the history on file to check for any historical or current vulnerability; and make contact with the parents, friends, family members and any relevant agencies. If the Youth Homelessness Social Worker has assessed a 16 or 17 year old as unable to return to the family home or live with other relatives, the child will then be seen jointly by the Youth Homelessness Social Worker and

PATHS to ensure that the young person is given clear and comprehensive information about their future housing and/or care options.

Following this meeting, the 16 or 17 year old could either be placed into supported accommodation pending the outcome of a Child and Family Assessment, or into a foster placement if deemed in need of care. We do not place 16 or 17 year olds into Bed and Breakfast accommodation. We have commissioned a range of supported accommodation projects in the borough to provide a safe and supportive environment to help the young person build up their confidence and independent living skills. A further assessment will be carried out when a young person has been identified as ready to move on into their own tenancy.

We know that people of this age who go into the care or homelessness systems have poorer life-outcomes in the longer term, and so Family Services will aim to help the family address issues to prevent homelessness if it is safe and appropriate to do so. The team provides a wide range of support such as mediation work with young people and their families to ensure that children return home where this is deemed to be in the best interest of the child. Family Services will then provide on-going support through appropriate community based teams to prevent any future family breakdown.

Since January 2014, the Homeless Young People and No Recourse to Public Funds Team has had contact with 83 young people, 69 of which were homeless 16 or 17 year olds and 15 of which were young people with no recourse to public funds. The outcomes of these contacts are outlined in the table below:

Outcome	
Homeless assessment and statutory review team	6
No Further Action	6
No Further Action - Referred to Home Office	6
Returned to Other LA	13
PATHS	11
Residing with other Friends or Family	4
Returned home	17
Returned home with a referral to Family coaching	2
Returned home with a referral to Localities	4
Section 20 under consideration	1
Section 20	4
Referred to FSCP	1
Support under section 17	1
Assessment currently on-going	4
Still at home but will move Leaving care	1
Referred to Contact and Assessment Team	2
Total	83

FOSTERING RECRUITMENT EVENTS

- 3.4. In order to address the specific needs within the borough, two fostering recruitment events have been arranged to encourage members of the Somali community to consider becoming foster carers.

At the time of writing, one of these events has taken place on 23 December at Hammersmith Town Hall and another is scheduled for 8 January. These events have been advertised on Somali television channels and in local community newsletters.

The response to the first event was very positive, with 30 people attending from across the Somali community. The fostering team are currently following up with those people who have registered their interest to become a foster carer.

WHOLE SERVICE REVIEW OF FAMILY SUPPORT LOCALITIES SERVICE

- 3.5. The Family Support Localities Service was recently very pleased to have received external confirmation and recognition by a team of independent auditors, that it is a strong performing service that it delivering good quality services to children and families within Hammersmith & Fulham. This is the first independent in-depth audit and evaluation of the whole service since it was established three years ago in June 2011. A team of independent auditors spent a total of three months undertaking a detailed review of the Family Support Localities Service, which included case audits, rich case analysis and questionnaires sent to children and parents and stakeholders.

In summary, the service was found to be consistently 'above the line' in every area of its work, and the auditors were impressed by the quality of the practice and the management, and by how the different elements within the service worked well with each other. *"There was a high degree of conformance to specification. Workers and supervisors knew what systems and processes they were following and followed them rigorously"*. It is a service that has a clear vision and a strong focus upon achieving positive outcomes for families. The auditors also noted the positive and effective relationships with service users. *"This is backed up by the feedback from clients and especially from children and young people. There was a relatively high return on questionnaires from clients. All scores were above the line and the scores for the children and young people were particularly high"*.

The report reflects the hard work and dedication shown by staff within the Family Support Localities Service and provides a strong basis on which to continue to strengthen early help support and preventative services to children and families within Hammersmith and Fulham.

COMMISSIONING – PASSENGER TRANSPORT

- 3.6. Following recommendations made by the Passenger Transport Working Group, consultation is taking place with all parents and carers or advocates for adult service users with a closing date of 7 January 2015. The purpose of the consultation was to clarify the views of those using the transport services and stakeholders such as schools about possible changes to the existing contract. The results of the consultation will inform a cabinet paper scheduled for 2 February 2014.

COMMISSIONING – SCHOOL MEALS

- 3.7. The Pre-Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ) was released on 25 November 2014. Ten providers applied at the PQQ stage and are currently being considered by the Evaluation Panel, which comprises Council officers and representatives from the Schools Working Group. The evaluation process is quality focussed and will continue until early January 2015. Only Contractors who can demonstrate that they are able to deliver high quality school meals will get through the PQQ stage and will be invited to compete for the contracts.

The procurement has been divided into two 'lots', one for primary, nursery and special schools and one for secondary schools. It is anticipated that in by 15 January 2015, 8 providers will be shortlisted to compete for entry to the framework for Lot 1, and 6 providers will be shortlisted to tender for the framework for Lot 2. The commencement date for the new contract is scheduled for September 2015, with three months (June, July and August 2015) timetabled for decommissioning and mobilisation. A detailed project plan is being developed for the decommissioning and mobilisation phases.

EDUCATION – SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING AND CAPITAL INVESTMENT

- 3.8. The 'School Organisation and Investment Strategy' is being revised, using the latest data submitted to the DfE. This will be brought before the committee for consideration in February.

The following major developments have recently been completed, are in progress, or are awaiting approval:

Burlington Danes Primary Academy.

This new two-form entry primary academy will open on the Burlington Danes site in temporary accommodation for September 2015. The new primary academy building will be completed for September 2016.

Pope John RC School

Pope John School is being expanded to become a two-form entry school to meet demand for places in the area. The new building is due to be complete in September 2016.

To meet the previously identified demand for secondary school places the following schemes were agreed and building works are currently on track:

Sacred Heart RC School

30 extra places being created for September 2015

Lady Margaret CE School

30 extra places were created for September 2014

William Morris Sixth Form

To meet the increasing need for specialist provision for 16-25 year-olds with special educational needs, building work is taking place to allow 50 extra SEN places to be provided. This work is due to be completed by September 2016.

Queensmill Special School

The school moved from Fulham into its new specially-designed building in Askham Road, Shepherds Bush, following a £11m project, part funded by the Council. It has spacious classrooms, a garden, playground, wet-room and state-of-the-art interactive sensory room. It also allows some students to attend an extended school day and offers overnight respite for families.

Bi-Borough Alternative Provision Hub School

The Council has agreed in principle to create a Bi-Borough Alternative Provision Hub School at the current Bridge Academy site in Finlay Street, Fulham. The School is operated by the Tri-Borough Alternative Provision Multi Academy Trust (TBAP MAT). The Trust also hopes to create a new Post-16 AP Free School at the site. The target date for the new school building is 2018 and the feasibility study is currently underway.

EDUCATION – IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ACT

- 3.9. The key developments since the previous update (provided to the Committee on 18 November 2014) are as follows:

Single assessment process

Education, Health and Social Care 'Statutory Assessment and Resource Allocation Panels' have been established which meet on a weekly basis. The first cohort of children and young people are currently going through the new statutory 20 week assessment process.

To date the borough has received a total of 21 requests for assessment. Ten of these requests have been agreed and are now going through the full assessment process, while eight have not been progressed to full assessment and will receive Special Educational Needs (SEN) support from the provision which is normally available in the local offer. Three cases are still to be considered by the panel. So far it appears that the

number of requests received has increased since the implementation of the new legislation on 1 September 2014.

A Complex Needs Panel has been established which considers cases from Education, Health and Social Care where provision costing in excess of £50,000 per year is requested. Officers from Education, Health, Family Services and Adult Social Care are represented on all panels along with headteacher representatives from local schools. The panel meets on a monthly basis and the first two panels have now taken place, considering a total of two cases from Hammersmith and Fulham thus far.

Transfer process from statements to Education Health and Care (EHC) Plans

All children and young people with a statement of SEN are entitled to transfer to an Education Health and Care Plan via a 14 week transition process. Local Authorities have three years to undertake this process.

Advice has recently been received from Independent Parental Special Educational Advice (IPSEA) regarding the proposed local process for transfers. This has led to a revised approach whereby only those in years 11, 13 and 14 will go through the process. This means that fewer young people are being transferred from a statement to an EHC Plan in the first year of the legislation but more transfers will be undertaken in 2015/16 and 2016/17 than was originally envisaged.

Developing Post 16 provision

As the age range of eligibility to a formal assessment and support plan has been extended to include young people up to the age of 25, there is a greater need to ensure that there is a high quality offer of courses and support for young people with SEN and disabilities in local further and higher education institutions.

Work is taking place with providers and adult social care commissioners to map the current Post 16 offer for young people with SEN and disabilities and will make recommendations regarding future developments in this area. This work has already resulted in the development of a pilot Post 16 programme for young people with complex needs at a local special school and has increased engagement with further education colleges, raising their knowledge of the duties and expectations of them under the new legislation.

4. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. As this report is intended to provide an update on recent developments, there are no immediate equality implications. However any equality issues will be highlighted in any subsequent substantive reports on any of the items which are requested by the Committee.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1. As this report is intended to provide an update on recent developments, there are no immediate legal implications. However any legal issues will be highlighted in any subsequent substantive reports on any of the items which are requested by the Committee.

6. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

6.1. As this report is intended to provide an update on recent developments, there are no immediate financial and resource implications. However any financial and resource issues will be highlighted in any subsequent substantive reports on any of the items which are requested by the Committee.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000
LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT

No.	Description of Background Papers	Name/Ext of holder of file/copy	Department/ Location
1.			