

Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee Agenda



To: Councillors Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Chair), Councillor Maddie Henson (Vice-Chair), Sue Bennett, Gayle Gander, Eunice O'Dame, Helen Redfern, Manju Shahul-Hameed and Catherine Wilson

Co-optee Members

Josephine Copeland (Non-voting Teacher representative), Elaine Jones (Voting Diocesan Representative (Catholic Diocese)) and Paul O'Donnell (Voting Parent Governor Representative)

Reserve Members: Adele Benson, Mike Bonello, Stuart Collins, Patsy Cummings, Sean Fitzsimons, Mark Johnson, Holly Ramsey and Luke Shortland

A meeting of the **Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee** which you are hereby summoned to attend, will be held on **Tuesday, 18 April 2023 at 6.30 pm. Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX**

Katherine Kerswell
Chief Executive
London Borough of Croydon
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

Tom Downs
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www.croydon.gov.uk/meetings
Thursday, 6 April 2023

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AGENDA – PART A

1. Apologies for absence

To receive any apologies for absence from any members of the Committee.

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2023 as an accurate record.

3. Disclosures of Interest

Members are invited to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests (DPIs) and other registrable and non-registrable interests they may have in relation to any item(s) of business on today's agenda.

4. Urgent Business (if any)

To receive notice of any business not on the agenda which in the opinion of the Chair, by reason of special circumstances, be considered as a matter of urgency.

5. Exclusions Update (Pages 17 - 26)

For the Sub-Committee to receive a presentation and update on Exclusions and Suspensions in Croydon. This item was deferred from the last meeting on the 28 February 2023.

6. Elective Home Education (Pages 27 - 50)

For the Sub-Committee to receive a briefing on Elective Home Education (EHE), including the data showing the number of Children and Young people receiving EHE.

7. Experience of Care Leavers

For the Sub-Committee to receive a report which will provide an opportunity to look at the experiences of Care Experienced Young People. *(To Follow)*

8. Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education Dashboard (Pages 51 - 54)

To receive the Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education Dashboard.

9. Cabinet Response to Scrutiny Recommendations (Pages 55 - 60)

The Children & Young People Sub-Committee is presented with an up to date list of responses from Cabinet to recommendations made by the

Sub-Committee to note.

10. Work Programme 2022/23 (Pages 61 - 66)

The Children & Young People Sub-Committee is asked to: -

1. Note the most recent version of its Work Programme, as presented in the report.
2. Consider whether there are any other items that should be provisionally added to the work programme as a result of the discussions held during the meeting.

11. What Difference has this Meeting made to Croydon's Children

This item is an opportunity for the Children & Young People Sub-Committee, at the conclusion of the meeting, to review the difference made to Croydon's children from the meeting.

12. Exclusion of the Press and Public

The following motion is to be moved and seconded where it is proposed to exclude the press and public from the remainder of a meeting:

“That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information falling within those paragraphs indicated in Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.”

PART B

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 2

Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 28 February 2023 at 6.30 pm in Council Chamber, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillors Councillor Richard Chatterjee (Chair), Councillor Maddie Henson (Vice-Chair), Sue Bennett, Mike Bonello, Gayle Gander, Helen Redfern, Manju Shahul-Hameed and Catherine Wilson

Co-optee Members

Josephine Copeland (Non-voting Teacher representative), Elaine Jones (Voting Diocesan Representative (Catholic Diocese)) and Paul O'Donnell (Voting Parent Governor Representative)

Also

Present: Councillor Maria Gatland (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)
Councillor Ola Kolade (Cabinet Member for Community Safety)

Apologies: Councillor Eunice O'Dame

PART A

10/23 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eunice O'Dame, for which Councillor Mike Bonello was in attendance as a substitute

11/23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on the 17 January 2023 were approved as an accurate record.

12/23 Disclosures of Interest

Cllr Henson declared that they were a Council Trustee of the Church Tenements Charity that had provided grant funding to Croydon Drop-In.

13/23 Urgent Business (if any)

The Chair asked officers to provide the Sub-Committee with an update on the implications to the Council of the announcement that the Mayor of London would be funding Free School Meals in 2023/24. The Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education informed the Sub-Committee that this

meant that there would be guaranteed funding for Free School Meals for Croydon Primary School Children in 2023/24, but it was not known if this would continue into 2024/25. Members heard that an exercise to ascertain a rough estimate of the annual cost to continue this had been undertaken, and that it was thought that this figure would be around £5.6 million a year.

The Vice-Chair asked what impact this would have on school budgets, as it was likely to provide a saving. The Corporate Director Children, Young People & Education explained that, as this it was still at a very early stage, it was not yet known, but that in other authorities where universal Free School Meals were being offered the expenditure came from the General Fund. The Sub-Committee heard that the implications of extending the offer would likely be looked at through the Schools Forum. Members asked whether schools had the resources and capacity to deliver the number of Free School Meals required at short notice, and heard that this was not yet known.

14/23 Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAHMS) Update

The Sub-Committee considered a paper set out on pages 19 to 80 of the agenda, which provided a summary of the activity of Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health (EWMH) services for children and young people residing and receiving education in Croydon. The report also provided an update on the position with current waiting times, access and performance. The Senior Commissioner for Children and Young People's Mental Health introduced and summarised the report. The following representatives were also present and introduced themselves: Karen Stott, Chief Executive for Off the Record; Gordon Knott, Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In; Harold Bennison, Service Director of CAMHS, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust (SLaM); and Rod Booth, Director of Performance and Partnerships, SLaM.

The Vice-Chair asked if practitioners felt there were gaps in the current service offer and heard from the Chief Executive for Off the Record that there had been a large increase in demand for services since the pandemic; as a result of this, the length of counselling had been shortened to a standard offer of six. The Sub-Committee heard that young people and practitioners had identified that there were gaps for those in need of more substantial support, but who did not meet the threshold for CAMHS services. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In explained that Off the Record were trialling the 'First Contact Method', 'Waiting List Groups' and carer helplines, but ultimately these were not substitutes for one-to-one support and did not reduce waiting lists. Members heard that there was good partnership working across the groups to try to identify and mitigate gaps in the offer where possible. The Service Director of CAMHS explained that NHS funding for CAMHS was around 1% of the total NHS budget, and it was known that this was often not sufficient to meet current need; many services had seen a doubling or more in the level of demand since the pandemic. The Sub-Committee heard there were gaps in a lot of the services being offered, but that in-patient care was meeting current demand. It was stated that while the gaps were known, and a

national issue, work was being done to target resources where they could do the most good to meet local priorities whilst utilising hotspot and equalities data.

Members asked about the Mental Health Support Teams in Schools (MHSTS) programme and heard that 45 schools in Croydon were receiving this service, jointly delivered by SLaM, Off the Record and Croydon Drop-In in different waves focussing on different areas. The SLaM wave focussed on School Exclusions, Off the Record and Croydon Drop-In jointly delivered a wave focussed on serious youth violence and a new wave had been introduced focussed on COVID recovery. The Sub-Committee heard that practitioners were based in the schools for a day a week for secondary schools, and for half a day for primary schools. Kooth, an online resource, was available for the schools who were not in the MHSTS programme.

The Sub-Committee asked how young people or parents were signposted to the right services or point of entry and heard from the Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In that school communications were used, as well as the usual marketing, advertisements, social media, word of mouth and service websites. Members heard that it could be confusing for parents and carers, and services tried to redirect service users to more appropriate services where appropriate.

Members asked about the long waiting times for assessments, and how long it took from assessment to receiving services. The Service Director of CAMHS explained that the majority of the longest waits were around the neurodevelopmental pathway and that this was linked to the work being done to change the Autism diagnosis pathway. The Sub-Committee heard that an Autism diagnosis would lead to a number of support packages and was not a mental health condition for which there was a treatment pathway. To reduce Autism diagnosis wait times, work was being done to look at how the system should operate and how it could cope with the current demand, and then to see what was in place to deal with the backlog. Members heard that CAMHS had been working with a private sector company called 'Clinical Partners' to increase capacity, reduce the longest waits and ensure a system was in place to manage ongoing demand. On the mental health pathway, waiting lists were being managed with dynamic reviews of risk to ensure the most acute needs were met as a priority; there was a single point of contact that triaged service users to ensure individuals were directed to the correct services through partnership working. The Service Director of CAMHS explained that they were seeking to increase the use of apps and virtual waiting lists so that, once individuals were registered, they could be signposted to services and receive some support whilst they were on waiting lists.

The Sub-Committee asked if there was a knock on effect to Children's Social Care from CAMHS not having as much capacity as would be desired. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that there were higher levels of mental health distress since COVID, both nationally and locally, which was a feature in safeguarding referrals. Members heard that this was a challenging aspect of safeguarding and required strong partnership working; where needs were acute the Director of Children's Social Care often met with Service

Director of CAMHS to review cases to see where fast-tracking access to acute provision was needed. The Sub-Committee heard there was a need for every professional and parent to learn to recognise signs of mental distress and to upskill workers in contact with children to provide interventions. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that there was a Clinical Practice Team and qualified therapists in Croydon who worked directly with families and looked after children; there was also ongoing work focussing on suicidal ideation.

The Sub-Committee commented on the prevalence of teachers in signposting to mental health services, and service users often being fearful of self-referring incorrectly. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In agreed and explained that they were piloting a Parent/Carer helpline to try to help with this. Members noted that it was likely there were more children and young people in need of referrals than was currently known.

Members asked about the introduction of Family Hubs, and heard that an early adopter Hub would be started in Summer 2023; a Best Start offer was being considered and an initial physical location was being investigated. It was not known how many Family Hubs there would be, but these would be spread across the borough. Family Hubs would be delivered in a partnership approach to provide support to families with a 'one-stop shop'. The Sub-Committee heard that some practitioners would operate in Hubs, alongside staff who could signpost families to other services. Members expressed an interest in visiting hubs once they were up and running. Members asked how families would know where to find Family Hubs and heard from the Director of Education that communications would go out through the partnership, but it was recognised that this was a shift in the way services would be delivered and this would be communicated through a number of platforms.

The Sub-Committee asked where parents/carers could go initially to find support services for mental health for children and young people if they did not want to go through their school. The Service Director of CAMHS explained that often this happened through General Practitioners (GPs), but acknowledged the difficulty of taking the first step to getting support; work was being done to look at cases where young people's first interactions with services were a result of presenting at the hospital Emergency Department to see where interventions could have happened earlier. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that digital poverty, children not being in education settings and having parents with English as a second language were the biggest barriers to finding support services easily. The Director Quality, Commissioning & Performance agreed and explained that support services needed to be multi-channelled and highlighted the importance of Early Help; it was explained that Early Help directories were being refreshed constantly to try and ensure parents and young people received help as early as possible. The Director of Performance and Partnerships, SLAM explained that there were planned trials and projects to integrate mental health support specialists into GPs and to draw as much funding from the NHS into these projects as possible.

Members asked what was available for young people whilst they were waiting for assessments. The Service Director of CAMHS, SLaM explained that there was not a lot that was offered for these individuals but that there were attempts to make it clear how long people would be on the waiting lists, however, there were not sufficient resources in place to do much more. The Sub-Committee asked if it was possible to capture the impact of long waiting times on young people and heard that it was clear longer wait times often led to an increased cost of intervention at a later stage. The Chief Executive for Off the Record explained that they had set up a 'First Contact Team' to try and quickly meet with, assess and provide short term interventions for young people, and it was found that this had reduced counselling waiting lists. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In explained that there were welfare check-ins for those on the waiting list for counselling that took place roughly every four weeks.

The Senior Commissioning Manager for Children & Young People Mental Health explained that the 'Talk Bus' was used to get to hard-to-reach children and young people. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-Ins explained that the bus operated twice a week to try to reduce the pressures on the hospital emergency department and that mental health services in Croydon were currently more joined up than they had been in the past.

The Sub-Committee asked what the financial impact was to the Council as a result of unmet mental health needs leading to increased social care demand. The Director of Children's Social Care responded that this was very hard to quantify, but that there was a specific support offer to families awaiting Autism assessments. Members heard that mental health issues for young people with Autism were often a result of operating in a world that did not account for neurodivergence, which could cause significant stress and difficulty. The Corporate Director for Children and Young People highlighted the huge pressures on social care and mental health services and the importance of being transparent about this between partners.

Members asked about the pressures on services following the wind down of the Community Fund in 2023 in a context of existing funding pressures for services. The Sub-Committee heard that this would reduce the capacity of services, and that the 'Talk Bus' would likely see 1500 less young people than in previous years. The picture was difficult nationally and it was increasingly hard to bring in additional grant funding to supplement Council funding; the NHS were being looked at to supplement reduced funding from other areas. The Sub-Committee asked about the future of the 'Talk Bus' post March 2023, and heard the funding bids to continue this work had been developed over the previous 12 months. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In explained that money had been saved over a number of years to replace the 'Talk Bus' with a more eco-friendly bus, and this had now been ordered; this was a shared community resource and every effort to continue funding it would be made. The Director of Performance and Partnerships, SLaM explained that all the organisations represented at the meeting worked together in partnership to deliver services and unlock resources to direct them where they were needed. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In explained that they had received

funding from the National Lottery to build a 'sensory room' for neurodiverse young people to use before counselling sessions. Members heard that a joint project between Drop-In, Off the Record and CAMHS on custody suites would be undertaken to provide counselling to young people.

The Vice-Chair asked about the possible implementation of a cap for Croydon Drop-In and the implications of the headquarters being on the Council asset disposal list. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In stated that new premises were being considered in case the headquarters were sold, but that this would be disruptive for services and service users. On the cap, Members heard this was a very sensitive and drastic measure and that any decision on this would not be taken lightly.

The Chief Executive for Off the Record Croydon explained that Off the Record had adopted a new vision statement about building a compassionate mental health community for children and young people, and the importance of delivering this in partnership. The Chief Executive of Croydon Drop-In agreed and explained that increasing demand on services was thought to be a socio-economic issue related to a large number of factors. The Service Director of CAMHS noted the importance of supporting staff in delivering services, and of providing support to families and carers to try to reduce the use of institutional solutions. The Senior Commissioner for Children and Young People's Mental Health added that the commitment to partnership working to address the needs of children and young people in the borough remained and that a number of new services and projects were being looked into. The Director Quality, Commissioning & Performance thanked the representatives in attendance and acknowledged their hard work in Croydon. Members heard that there were opportunities as a part of the South West London Integrated Care Board to think creatively about how to deliver services, learn from colleagues and achieve a fair level of funding for Croydon. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People commended the fantastic work of the partners and thanked them for attending the Sub-Committee.

Conclusions

The Sub-Committee were grateful for the open and honest answers given by SLaM CAMHS and its commissioned provider partners in the meeting.

The Sub-Committee commended the work being done by SLaM CAMHS and its commissioned provider partners in a challenging national and local context.

The Sub-Committee concluded that CAMHS should be included on the work programme for 2023/24.

The Sub-Committee concluded that the Cabinet Member should continue to explore alternative funding streams for Children and Young People's mental health services that had previously relied on the Community Fund.

The Sub-Committee requested that a summary of current signposting for Children and Young People's mental health services be provided.

15/23 Police Representation and Multi-Agency Working

The Sub-Committee considered a paper set out on pages 81 to 86 of the agenda, which explained the partnership between the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) Directorate, specifically Children's Social Care, and Police colleagues. The Director of Children's Social Care introduced the item and the Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention summarised the report.

The Sub-Committee asked about the meaning of 'low-risk domestic abuse' referenced in the report, how this escalated, the consequences for children living in these situations, and what was around the perpetrators. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that the Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) Team received 'MERLIN' reports from the police which were graded on risk, and it was then decided whether Social Care intervention was required. Detective Inspector Hart explained that calls to households could take the form of a 'non-crime domestic situation' where a report was written and any children at the address spoken too; this would be recorded as a low-risk incident. Members heard that Operation Encompass enabled referrals at low risk to be processed through the MASH Team, and then highlighted to safeguarding leads at schools of children in these households. The Sub-Committee heard that if there were four low-risk calls in a 12 month period then this would increase the associated risk and escalate a case to be discussed at the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) to decide follow up actions with partners. Members highlighted the fear that victims of domestic violence had of taking any action against their perpetrators, and asked what support and resources were provided to victims. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that the strength of Operation Encompass was that it engaged the partnership, who were working with families and young people at a universal level, to enable discreet conversations to take place, for example, through designated safeguarding leads in schools who already had established relationships with families.

Members asked if anyone in Croydon had been charged with domestic abuse with a child as a victim from witnessing domestic abuse in their household. The Detective Inspector responded that it was unlikely that this had happened specifically, but the impact on children in a household would be used to form part of the larger picture around domestic abuse cases. The Sub-Committee asked if there were any cases where the police would discourage domestic abuse victims from pressing criminal charges. The Detective Inspector stated that this was not the case, and that the police were working in close partnership with the Family Justice Service and Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVA) to provide support to victims. It was acknowledged that with very historic cases, or cases with very little evidence, that the police might not be able to take cases any further even with best efforts. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that domestic abuse had been included in the report as it could be a contributing factor to presenting youth safety needs.

Members asked about the Youth Integrated Offender Management Partnership, and heard that the young people worked with were generally in the age range of 18-25. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that police analysts had been integrated into this work, and that applying this intelligence had significantly reduced numbers of young people in the programme.

The Sub-Committee asked what was being done to increase trust amongst communities who had lost confidence in the police. Inspector Morteo responded that the new Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis, Sir Mark Rowley, had launched a 'Turnaround Plan' featuring nine priorities, and that he was very open on trust and confidence. The Sub-Committee heard that there was a commitment to removing 'bad officers' and eliminating misconduct, and that there was more work happening with community groups than ever before. Members heard that it was thought that current methods of measuring trust and confidence were not sufficient, and needed to be improved. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety explained that the Youth Safety Plan was in development at the Council, and increasing trust amongst young people in the police was key to this being successful. Members heard that the Cabinet Member for Community Safety had been working closely with the police and local communities and that open conversations had been key in responding to an incident where the Central Police Team had conducted a Stop and Search where a young person had been put to the ground. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety explained that a new initiative had started that saw community members providing training to the police, to try to build trust between communities and the police. The Detective Inspector added that there were weekly meetings with partners to discuss 'every child every time' and what was being done by the police on a daily basis to increase police transparency. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that the 'Complex Adolescents Panel' was a partnership group that met a weekly basis and considered exploitation within individual children's cases; the police co-chaired the Panel to enable shared accountability in developing and driving child safety plans. Members commended the role the police were playing in partnership working but recommended that the police do more to inform the wider community about the work they were doing.

The Sub-Committee asked about hotspot areas where children were more at risk and how this was monitored and mitigated. The Inspector explained that these hotspots moved depending on the time of year, school terms and what assets the police put into certain areas. Members heard that these hotspots were identified and monitored through intelligence sharing and crime reports. There had been a three-week operation focussed around Church Street to tackle schoolchild robbery, as levels of this offence were heightened in Croydon and across London. Neighbourhood Safety Officers were often deployed to hotspots and, where needed, central assets could be requested to Croydon to provide additional resource. The Inspector stated that work with other statutory organisations, such as the Council, was the best they had seen it. Members heard that there were 16 Schools Officers in priority schools who performed high visibility patrols and had been involved in the Church

Street operation. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that they had been working closely with the Violence Reduction Network and police to develop a locality based response model that recognised emerging needs and provided intervention and support to children and young people in these hotspot areas; it was recognised that intelligence sharing with the police was vital in targeting support and intervention where it was most needed. The Youth Engagement team had been engaged in Church Street to try to minimise anti-social behaviour and risk.

Members commented on the need for more joined up thinking in the way that young people were dealt with to acknowledge their previous experiences and trauma. The Director of Children's Social Care agreed and explained that the Youth Engagement Team were very skilled at engaging young people to create teachable and reachable moments where valuable conversations could happen to change the perception and experience of the police for young people. The Director of Children's Social Care explained that there was a lot of joined up working that happened during 'Complex Strategy Meetings' that considered groups of young people whilst looking at 'places and spaces' as a focus for that work. It was acknowledged that this was a very difficult, fluid and complex area of work in the child protection landscape, where the focus on moving from prevention, to intervention, to arrest was happening simultaneously around different groups. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety commented on the complex relationship between being an observer, victim and perpetrator of violence. The Sub-Committee heard that the government had launched the 'Serious Violence Duty' that made links between youth violence and domestic abuse; the Safer Croydon Partnership would be developing a risk profile followed by a strategy and action plan for Croydon that brought these elements together. The Council is developing a Youth Safety Plan, and would be developing a Domestic Abuse Strategy, and the Cabinet Member explained that they were cognisant of linking in all of these elements to ensure the safety of children and young people.

The Inspector reassured the Sub-Committee that there were no probationary officers in Safer Schools roles in Croydon, following a recent high profile case that had been reported. Members heard that education on 'Adultification' training had been provided to officers through Council workshops and had provided valuable learning. The Inspector explained that the police worked very hard with colleagues on the Youth Offending Team to keep children and young people out of the criminal justice system, and that this was one of their key objectives. The Detective Inspector explained that they felt it was a very positive time to be engaged in partnership working, which had been galvanised by the pandemic. The Head of Service Access, Support and Intervention explained that partnership working enabled an environment where respectful challenge could take place, incorporating direct feedback from young people. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People explained that they had visited the Youth Offending Team and Youth Court and had been encouraged by what they had seen. The Sub-Committee heard that the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People had also observed the Complex Adolescent Panel and Croydon Safeguarding Partnership where the police were valued partners. The Cabinet Member for Community Safety

thanked police partners for attending the meeting and commended the work being done in the Safer Croydon Partnership to ensure children and young people felt safe in Croydon.

Conclusions

The Sub-Committee were grateful for the police representatives attending the meeting and giving detailed answers to Members questions.

The Sub-Committee concluded that they would like to visit some of the meetings attended by police to observe partnership working in action.

16/23 Exclusions Update

RESOLVED: That the Sub-Committee defer this item to the next meeting.

17/23 Update on Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children in Education

The Sub-Committee considered a paper set out on pages 87 to 92 of the agenda, which provided information on the support available for children arriving in the borough on asylum schemes; information on access to education; and information to demonstrate that schools were being properly funded for taking in Ukrainian refugees as per national government support schemes. The Early Help Service Manager introduced and summarised the report.

Members asked how concerns that children could be behind, due to missing years of schooling, could be addressed and noted that this could present a barrier to integration,. The Director of Education explained that children who came to the country at a young age picked up English much more quickly than older children did. The Sub-Committee heard that the interim provision had been provided to develop English-speaking skills to aid in the transition to mainstream schools, and it was being looked at whether this would be reintroduced. The Sub-Committee heard that, whilst this was challenging, schools in Croydon were very open and welcoming, and it was more likely that children's experiences and trauma would create barriers; because of this it was important that support for children's mental health and wellbeing was in place. Members heard that it was a school's decision whether to support an application for a child to enter education at a year below their curriculum age, and this could be very challenging for older children, with a number of factors needing to be considered. The Director of Education explained that it was most important to support children in reaching their full potential in light of whatever decision was made.

The Sub-Committee asked how confident the Council was that all the available funding was being received to support Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children. The Director of Education confirmed that this was the case, and work was being done to pass this funding on to schools directly. Members

heard from Co-optee Josephine Copeland that integration had been successful at their school, but it was important that 'English as a Second Language' was a focus to ensure that lessons accounted for all of the children. Members heard that funding could be an issue as it did stretch resources with the example given of increased mental health needs. The Director of Education explained that the per-pupil funding was lagged, and that children arriving and leaving between census days could lead to a situation where funding was not received for these children. Members heard that this could create challenges but that support was provided wherever possible, however, school funding was complicated and sometimes did not account for pupil movement. The Director of Education stated that the Department for Education notified Local Authorities of available funding streams. The Early Help Service Manager explained that there had been a small grants funding process in late 2022 for voluntary sector organisations to provide additional services to, and activities for, the asylum-seeking community to provide opportunities outside of their accommodation.

Members asked about families who had their accommodation moved, and whether there were efforts made to ensure that children did not have to change schools. The Director Quality, Commissioning & Performance explained that initial accommodation or contingency hotels were provided by the Home Office while asylum claims were assessed, and the Council did not have control of when this changed. It was explained that the Council was making representations to the Home Office on this that explained how disruptive this could be for children and families and asking what could be done to mitigate this in future.

The Sub-Committee asked how children were referred to 'Virtual Schools'. The Director of Education explained that every Local Authority operated a 'Virtual School' and each had a Head Teacher, which was a statutory role. The 'Virtual School' was responsible for the attendance of, and outcomes for, Care Experienced Children and children who known to Social Care; this sat above the physical schools where the children were enrolled. Each child had a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which was overseen by a social worker, a named advisor in the 'Virtual School', and the Council in its role as a Corporate Parent. In Croydon, the model used was like an ordinary school with leads for each Key Stage and a focus on youth not in employment, education or training (NEETs).

Members asked how spending time outside of their main school setting affected the ability of children and young people to integrate. The Director of Education stated that this depended on each individual child, but that the idea of the interim provision had been to provide a short-term placement until the child was able to enrol at a mainstream school; this had also been to help the development of English skills. The provision had been located in St. Andrews School and a number of children had ultimately transitioned onto mainstream schooling at St. Andrews, which had been positive, as many had already integrated with their peers.

18/23 Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education Dashboard & Health Visiting KPI Data

The Sub-Committee considered a report set out on pages 93 to 100 of the agenda, which provided the Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education Dashboard and Health Visiting KPI Data for Quarter 3 2022/23.

Members asked about the inclusion of Care Experienced Young People data on the Dashboard, including pathway plans and caseloads. The Corporate Director of Children, Young People and Education agreed that this could be reviewed, but that overlap with the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel should be considered.

On CYPE 24, the Sub-Committee heard that a detailed explanation of these figures had been given at the [last meeting](#) of the Sub-Committee.

On CYPE 01, Members commended the improvement on this indicator.

Members commented on using the Dashboards to help develop the work programme. The Corporate Director for Children, Young People and Education explained that they received weekly performance information on all of the indicators to track the trends; in conjunction with this, a monthly performance meeting also took place to scrutinise this information. Members thanked officers for the Health Visiting Data and heard that this would be provided on a quarterly basis.

19/23 Work Programme 2022/23

The Sub-Committee noted the report.

The meeting ended at 9.32 pm

Signed:

Date:

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Exclusions and suspensions in Croydon

CYP Scrutiny Sub-Committee, 28th February 2023

Overview:

Exclusion and suspensions:

- Key facts.
- Croydon perspective: data trend over the last 4 academic years and to-date.
- Croydon's response to exclusion and suspensions and the Task and Finish report.

Exclusions and suspensions - key facts

- Pupils can be excluded from school either permanently (**exclusion**) or for a fixed period (**suspension**).
- Annual publication of validated DfE national data (academies and LA maintained schools)
 - *Released summer following each academic year [most recent 2020/21]*
 - *Includes primary and secondary schools data.*
 - *Permanent exclusions data shown as total number and % of total pupil numbers.*
 - *Suspensions data shown as total number and % of total pupil numbers (includes pupils with 1+ suspension as a % of total pupil numbers).*

Exclusions and suspensions over the last 4 academic years

Volume of fixed term and permanent exclusions 2018/19 to 2021/22

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Number of suspensions (fixed term exclusions)	1665	1400	1470	653
Number of permanent exclusions	43	41	27	27
Number of permanent exclusions reinstated	2	2	0	0
Number permanent exclusions withdrawn	8	4	2	5

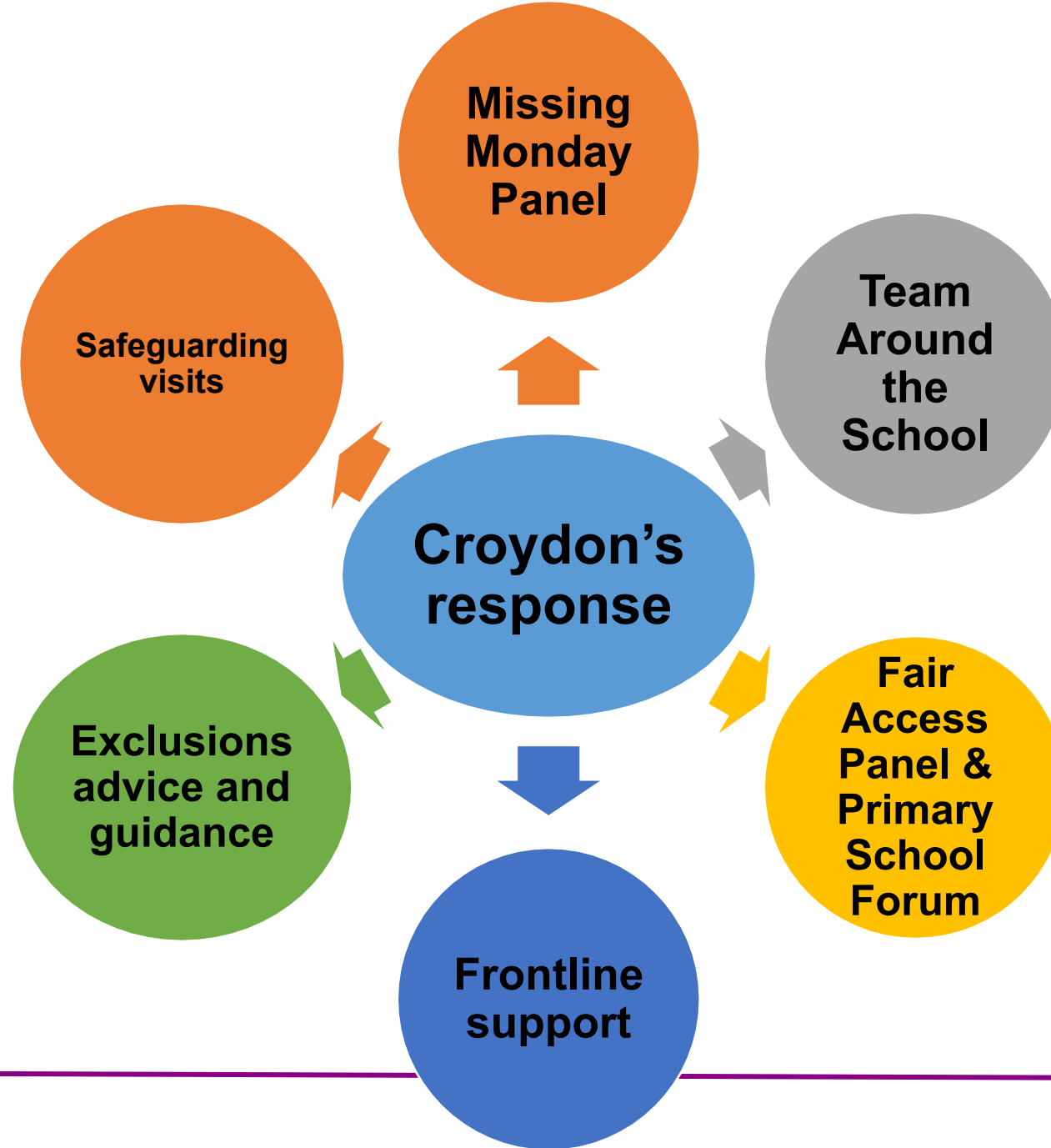
Exclusions and suspensions: our national standing

Indicator Title	2022/23					
	Timeframe	Target	Croydon position	Statistical Neighbour	London	England
Permanent exclusions from schools as a percentage of the school population	2020/2021	0.06	0.03*	0.03	0.03	0.05
Suspensions (fixed term exclusions) from schools as a percentage of the school population	2020/2021	3.76	3.46**	2.78	2.79	4.25

*2019/2020 = 0.05 / ** 3.39

One of the key drivers for change...

In line with the national situation, Black Caribbean pupils in Croydon still have the greatest level of disproportionately high levels of exclusion from school. Black Caribbean pupils made up 44% of permanent exclusions from Croydon schools during the 2021/22 academic year, **but** Black Caribbean pupils account for 10.5% of the Croydon school age population.



Missing Monday Panel: review of children absent from education, at risk of exclusion or who are missing from school roll (ensure safeguarding is prioritised by schools).

Team Around the School: multi-agency* support group intervention at the earliest point of concern. (* LA, partner organisations, schools)

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Fair Access Panel & Primary School Forum: brokering of managed moves to other mainstream schools or AP setting.

Frontline support: holistic support for pupils* and their families delivered by Attendance & Inclusion Officers. (* 1:1 and thematic workshops and group intervention)

Exclusions advice & guidance: offered by the Strategic Lead for Attendance & Exclusions, Attendance & Inclusion Officers and the Children with a Social Worker lead.

Safeguarding visits: close working with education safeguarding colleagues to align workstreams in order to early identify and quickly respond to concerning trends or incidents.

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Children & Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee
DATE OF DECISION	Tuesday 18 April 2023
REPORT TITLE:	Elective Home Education Briefing
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Debbie Jones, Corporate Director CYPE Shelley Davies, Director of Education
LEAD OFFICER:	Sarah Bailey, Head of Access to Education
LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Maria Gatland, Lead Member CYPE
AUTHORITY TO TAKE DECISION:	For information
KEY DECISION?	No
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	No
WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1 SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report to Scrutiny Committee provides an overview of matters related to Elective Home Education (EHE) children of compulsory school age, covering:

- National context, policy and proposed changes
- Local (Croydon) policy and practice
- Current and historical EHE data – number of children and reasons for EHE in Croydon
- Local arrangements for managing risks

2 NATIONAL POLICY & CONTEXT

2.1 National Context

Educating children at home, works well when it is a positive, informed and dedicated choice. Legally, any parent in the United Kingdom can choose to provide an education for their child at home. This is a right enshrined in law. Parents do not have to register their child at school.

There are many reasons for parents/carers choosing to home educate. The following reasons are suggested in the DfE guidance as possible rationales for EHE:

- Ideological or philosophical views which favour home education, or wishing to provide education which has a different basis to that normally found in schools.
- Religious or cultural beliefs, and a wish to ensure that the child's education is aligned with these.
- Dissatisfaction with the school system, or the school(s) at which a place is available.
- Bullying of the child at school.
- Health reasons, particularly mental health of the child.
- As a short-term intervention for a particular reason.
- A child's unwillingness or inability to go to school, including school phobia.
- Special educational needs, or a perceived lack of suitable provision in the school system for those needs.
- Disputes with a school over the education, special needs or behaviour of the child, in some cases resulting in 'off-rolling' or exclusion.
- Familial reasons which have nothing to do with schools or education (e.g., using older children educated at home as carers).
- As a stopgap whilst awaiting a place at a school other than the one allocated.

2.2 Current National Policy

Elective Home Education guidance is non-statutory but based on section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states: "Parents have a right to educate their children at home". Parents have a right to educate their children at home, and the government wants the many parents who do it well to be supported.

It is recognised that parents devote time, financial resources and dedication to the education of their children. Most parents who take up the weighty responsibility of home education do a great job, and many children benefit from being educated at home.

The Department for Education's (DfE) guidance (April 2019) available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/elective-home-education> provides guidance for Local Authorities in relation to their powers and duties for EHE children, and guidance for parents to ensure they understand their obligations. This includes the requirement that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable

- to age, ability and aptitude, and
- to any special educational needs, he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise "

There is currently no statutory legislation for insisting that families must register with their local authority or follow any specific framework, curriculum or educational ideology in the UK.

The legal responsibility for a child's education remains with the child's family, meaning the local authority is limited in regulatory powers around education. Families can choose any methods they wish for educating their children and these do not have to reflect traditional, established notions of education as "schooling." Indeed, many families choose to home educate specifically because of a particular philosophy around education that differs from the beliefs held by the state and schools. Some

Elective Home Education is known as “de- schooling” or “unschooling” and looks very different to the practices a traditional educator may expect to see.

As there is currently no legal requirement to register as EHE, local authorities may only become aware of electively home educating families when a family de-register from a school. This means there is a percentage (Guidance suggests 10-20% families nationally) who are not known to the LA at any given time.

Since publication of the April 2019 Guidance, there has been an increased national focus on examining risks and support for families to strengthen home education requirements. This included an Education Committee examination and a consultation on proposed legislation for children educated outside of school. The aim of the consultation was to ascertain views on the proposal of a Children Not in School register, which would enable LAs to employ safeguarding and educational responsibilities more robustly for those children and young people who are not based in education settings.

The Government’s response to the consultation was published in February 2022. It set out the Government’s continued intention to legislate for a register of children not in school, and that the Government would engage further with LAs and the home educating sector in developing its proposals.

In May 2022, the Government published a Schools Bill which included provisions for a home-schooling register. Some elements of the wide-ranging Schools Bill proved controversial and the Bill was abandoned in December 2022. However, the Education Secretary has said legislating for a register remains a priority, with some work being done in preparation for this.

2.3 National Proposed Changes

In August 2022, and in response to the outcome of the consultation and related proposals, local authorities were informed of the need to collect and submit data (termly) about electively home educated children to the Department for Education (DfE).

Collecting this data is intended to help local authorities to understand the true numbers of EHE children in their area as well as helping the government to understand EHE numbers nationally and at local authority level, informing policy development aimed at supporting local authorities and future changes to the EHE framework.

Whilst this aggregate data collection is voluntary, we have provided this on all requested occasions to date. This request for termly data collection will likely continue until the implementation of the strengthened Children Not in School measures.

Croydon’s EHE officer now ensures that our information collection and data recording aligns to what is required by the DfE.

3 CROYDON POLICY & CONTEXT

3.1 Croydon Policy & Practice

Although local authorities have no formal powers or duty to monitor the provision of education at home, we recognise the need to have oversight of EHE and have therefore developed and implemented a local policy framework to identify, monitor and review our EHE cohort.

Our policy (Appendix A), last reviewed in September 2022, has been designed on the basis of the DfE's non-statutory guidance. The overall process is as follows:

- i. On receiving notification from a parent / carer to electively home educate, a form is sent for completion. The form should be completed for any child or young person aged 5 – 16, who has either been withdrawn from school or who has never been registered at a school.
- ii. Once notified of a parent's / carer's intent to electively home educate, the EHE Lead makes initial contact with the parents / carers to explore and establish the parents' / carers' position and gather initial information, e.g. reason to EHE, intention / example of intended or actual educational activity.
- iii. Based on what is established as per bullet point ii, we offer information, advice and guidance to the next steps.
- iv. Where parents intend to continue to home educate, the case will be monitored by the EHE Lead. This may include, but is not restricted to, assessing whether the learning is appropriate, i.e. the LA will make a judgement based on the learning outcomes for the child or young person, rather than on the different way of educating a child or determining whether the Section 7 requirement is met - that the education is occupying a significant proportion of the child or young person's life.

We collect reasons for school de-registration on our parental registration forms (see table 2). This information allows us to identify when a family feels they have been pressured or failed by a school, enabling cases to be investigated by Access to Education team officers as appropriate. This offers a key first level of challenge to the illegal practice of 'off-rolling' of pupils by schools.

3.2 Staffing

Since July 2022 (the creation of the new Service – Access to Education), there has been one officer managing our work with our EHE cohort and families. Appointment for Lead EHE postholder has been made in March 2023. Additional funds have been secured for an additional staff member and recruitment to this role will commence shortly, which will increase capacity from 1FTE to 2FTE. However, it must be noted that this level of staffing remains problematic when compared to our statistical neighbours, who have approx. 1 FTE officer per 200 cases – we currently have 600 cases suggesting resource of 3FTEs is required to meet needs.

Since the long-standing EHE monitoring teacher left in July 2022. We have had a seconded staff member in position pending completion of service restructure and recruitment processes. Due to capacity limitations, reviews are currently only conducted bi-annually and then, only for those cases where there is either no information recorded or a specific concern. Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and Children's Social Care (CSC) cases are prioritised for annual review.

From Sept 2023 it is hoped that a full capacity team (2FTE) will be able to conduct bi-annual reviews of all 600+ cases.

Capacity remains a challenge, particularly if there is an increase in EHE children and/or changes in national policy requirements are more resource intensive.

3.3 Volume of EHE children in Croydon: Current and historical trends

Since the commencement of the Covid pandemic we have experienced an increase in the number of children who are EHE (as per reported nationally), with a slight fall this year from last two years peak.

Table 1: Number of EHE registered children 2020 to 2023

31 st March 2020	31 st March 2021	31 st March 2022	31 st March 2023
379	604	623	600

As at the 31st March 2023, 15 EHE children have Children's Social Care involvement (at Child in Need Section 17). As is common practice, during this current academic year, a small number of families whose children were subject to Child Protection Plans, when expressing parental intent to home educate were challenged robustly and have remained registered at their respective schools. Advice and support were given to Social Care, as per Croydon's EHE policy.

As per the numbers below, the top reason given by families for becoming EHE so far, this academic year is Philosophical/ideological (60). This reflects national trends.

Table 2: Parental reasons given for newly registered EHE academic year 2019/2020 to present day (March 2023):

Reason	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Distance or access to school	3	3	0	1
Religious or cultural beliefs	4	4	1	3
Philosophical or ideological views	49	42	110	60
Dissatisfaction with the education system	3	11	8	4
Dispute with the school	9	2	26	4
Bullying	2	28	19	8
Short term intervention for a particular reason	32	12	37	1
A child's unwillingness or inability to go into school	5	8	7	10
Special Educational Needs	5	5	8	7
Familial	6	4	12	9
Health	3	5	12	6
Covid-19 related	0	152	13	0
Stop gap- school place preference	8	15	25	0
No reason given	0	0	0	13

Totals	129	291	278	126
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Numbers of EHE notifications, when compared to this point last academic year, have fallen by over 50%. The reasons for this are not fully known, however clearly this is linked to the pandemic related spike in 2020/21 and 2021/22 as notifications are now back in line with pre-pandemic levels.

3.4 Managing Risk

It is important to note that there is no causal or inherent safeguarding risk in families electively home educating. Most families respond to the LA's informal enquiries positively and provide information that satisfies the EHE Officer.

Routine challenge is now made when families wish to home educate as a stop gap- whilst waiting for a school of preference. This has seen positive results, with children remaining registered within our schools. Direct work has taken place between the Access to Education Staff and prospective EHE families has taken this academic year, where the reason to home educate appears to have been made under duress. For several families, the barriers education have been identified, allowing these children to remain registered at their respective schools.

On occasions where a family do not respond at all, or do not satisfy our enquiries, they will not be maintained on our register as EHE. Our concerns are passed to the CME (Child Missing Education) and Admissions teams to follow up. There is current discussion taking place to identify additional avenues, such as the Fair Access process, to ensure swift returns to education where appropriate. Our Fair Access process exists to ensure children who do not have a school place are offered a place at an appropriate school as soon as possible.

Where these measures do not result in a satisfactory response, or a school place being allocated, we can issue a statutory "School Attendance Order" which has legal weight to insist the parent registers their child with school. This year in Croydon we have not needed to do this.

Any specific safeguarding concerns arising about EHE families during contact with EHE staff are reported to Children's Social Care (CSC) via MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) in the usual way.

When a family who are on the EHE register have CSC concerns at Children in Need (CiN) Section 47 threshold* (currently 15 families), the EHE officer is made aware by the CiN Chair and may be required to add their expertise and thoughts to the CiN plan. The Social Worker (SW) will be expected to liaise with the EHE officer, where this is the case.

**A Section 47, known as a Child Protection enquiry, is carried out if there is risk of a significant harm to a child or children.*

When a family on the EHE register become monitored by CSC on a Section 47 Child Protection Plan - the Chair of the conference will make this known to EHE officer and the EHE registration will cease. Arrangements for education in an appropriate school will then be supported by the complex admissions team. This is covered in the

Croydon EHE policy (Appendix A: sections 9.4 – 9.7) which has been signed off by Croydon Safeguarding Children Partnership.

Similarly, the current (2019) DFE guidance on EHE contains the following wording:

“However, the past few years have seen a very significant increase in the number of children being educated at home, and there is considerable evidence that many of these children are not receiving a suitable education. There is a less well evidenced but increasing concern that some children educated at home may not be in safe environments.”

In response to this, when the EHE officer identifies any potential concern (e.g., non – responsiveness or other MASH /CSC concerns) they will use the existing referral systems to refer any concerns.

Where necessary - because it is evident that a child is simply not receiving a suitable education at home and the use of school attendance powers is not achieving a change in that situation - the local authority should be ready to use its safeguarding powers as explained in this guidance. The overriding objective in these cases is to ensure that the child’s development is protected from significant harm.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Not applicable, report is for information

5 CONSULTATION

Not applicable, report is for information

6 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

Children and young people in Croydon have the chance to thrive, learn and fulfil their potential

7 IMPLICATIONS

Not applicable, report is for information

8 APPENDICES

Appendix A: Croydon Elective Home Education Policy (Updated September 2022)

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Elective Home Education Croydon Council

May 2019
Review date: September 2022

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Elective Home Education (EHE)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1** Elective Home Education ('EHE') is the term used by the Department for Education ("DfE") to describe a parent's decision to provide education for their children at home instead of sending them to school. It is not home tuition provided by the local authority (LA), or where the LA provides education otherwise than at a school.
- 1.2** Home-educated children are those who, for a range of reasons, are being educated at home and in the community by parents, or tutors, and are not registered full time at mainstream schools, special schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRUs), colleges, or children's homes with education facilities or education facilities provided by independent fostering agencies.

2.0 Principles

Croydon Council believes in the value of school-based education but respects the conditional rights of parents to elect to educate their children at home. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children receive a suitable education. Where parents choose to home educate, Croydon Council considers it to be desirable for parents and the LA to work together, to find an appropriate balance between parental autonomy and the LA responsibilities for the education of children in its area.

- 2.1** Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child receives an efficient full time education suitable to his or her age, ability, aptitude and any special education needs, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. (Education Act 1996 based on the wording of the 1944 Education Act.) Education is statutory, attendance at school is not. Many parents make a success of home education and provide their children with at least a satisfactory provision. Home education needs a holistic approach to issues of suitability, attendance, welfare and safeguarding to ensure a good education outcome. LAs have the same safeguarding responsibilities for children educated at home as for other children.

3.0 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to clarify for schools, parents, carers, guardians and related agencies, the framework by which the LA carries out its statutory responsibilities and to encourage good practice by setting out the legislative position and the roles and responsibilities of the LA and parents in relation to children of compulsory school age educated at home. The policy sets out parents' rights to educate their children at home, together with the legal duties and responsibilities of Croydon Council. It also sets out the arrangements Croydon Council will make in order to carry out its legal duties.

4.0 Who are the children and young people on EHE?

Over the last few years there have been between two hundred and three hundred children being electively home educated in Croydon. Parents have chosen to take this responsibility for a variety of reasons.

4.1 The main reasons given for children on the EHE register are:

- The parent has a desire to educate their child in a way that they think is best, in line with their own social or religious philosophy.
- The child has been unhappy at school. In these cases, schools may have failed the child.
- The child was not allocated a place at the school of choice. In these cases, parents often want to access a school place and view EHE as a stop-gap measure or, possibly, a way of applying pressure on the local authority to provide the place they seek.
- The parents are dissatisfied in some way with the school the child was previously attending. This may be associated with bullying or a perceived failure on the part of the school to deal with concerns.
- The parents wish to avoid a potential prosecution for poor attendance or non-attendance.
- Parents seek to avoid a threatened permanent exclusion.

4.2 Many families make a pro-active decision to home educate. Educating children at home works well when it is a positive choice and carried out with a proper regard for the needs of the child. However, some families may feel that electing for home education is the only available option when it appears that school issues cannot be resolved or where personal circumstances mean that attending school regularly is problematic. Pressure should never be put on parents by a school to home educate and remove a child from a school to avoid a formal exclusion or because a child is having difficulty with learning or behaviour. This practice – sometimes called ‘off-rolling’ – is unacceptable. This is particularly important for children in years 10 and 11 who are already preparing for public examinations.

4.3 The local authority must establish whether a family is genuinely providing education or whether it is simply avoiding engaging with the school system. In the latter case officers must consider both child protection and educational issues and respond accordingly within the legal frameworks available.

4.4 A child is of compulsory school age from the school term after his/her 5th birthday until the last Friday in June of the academic year in which they reach the age of 16. There is no obligation to provide education before or after this period.

5.0 Choosing Home Education

5.1 The monitoring and support teacher for EHE understands that there is no one ‘correct’ educational system. All children learn in different ways and at varying rates. It is vital that parents and children choose a type of education that is right for them, and it is important the monitoring and support teacher for EHE

understands and is supportive of the diversity of many differing approaches or 'ways of educating' which are all feasible and legally valid. The LA should not assume that because the provision being made by parents is different from that which was being made or would have been made in school, the provision is necessarily unsuitable.

5.2 The role of the monitoring and support teacher for EHE is not to tell parents how to educate their children or to promote registration at school. It is to identify and deal with children who, for any reason and in any circumstances, are not receiving an efficient suitable full-time education. Establishing a positive relationship between the local authority monitoring and support teacher for EHE and the home-educating parent – where that is possible – will allow the local authority to better understand parents' educational provision and preferences and offer them appropriate support.

5.3 Parents who choose to educate their children at home must be prepared to assume full financial responsibility, including bearing the cost of any public examinations.

5.4 Where young people are entering EHE during Key Stage 4, particular attention will be given to ensuring appropriate learning pathways are discussed with relevant parties. There is an expectation that clear plans will be in place for securing progression to post 16 learning or employment with training, and, recognising the vulnerability of becoming NEET ("not in education, employment or training") for young people who exit school at this late stage.

5.5 Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 provides that:

"The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable –

(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and

(b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise."

5.6 An "efficient" and "suitable" education is not defined in the Education Act 1996 but "efficient" has been broadly described in case law as an education that "achieves that which it sets out to achieve". Implicit in this is that parents should know and articulate what they set out to achieve through the education they provide. A "suitable" education is one that should enable a child to participate fully in life in the UK by including sufficient secular education. The local authority should be enabled by parents to assess the overall time devoted to the home education of a child in terms of the number of hours per week and weeks per year when judging suitability.

5.7 It is essential to establish at an early stage what the parents' objectives are (what they set out to achieve). Only in this context can the **efficiency** of the provision be judged. The **suitability** of education is based on the particular

circumstances of each child and the education provided. In line with the European Convention on Human Rights that 'no person shall be denied the right to education', Croydon Council maintains an expectation to see evidence of literacy and numeracy objectives and outcomes in home education.

- 5.8** Wherever possible, parents should be encouraged to discuss an intention to home educate children before putting it into effect. Parents will be offered support and advice based on the individual family's motivations, for example by explaining the very substantial time commitments involved in delivering home education properly and potential alternatives to home education should be explored.
- 5.9** Where parents are looking to home educate due to a breakdown in relations at the school and the parents are notifying of intent to home educate for these reasons, there should be a presumption that mediation will be explored prior to a final decision being made on whether to remove the child from the school roll. The LA would expect all Croydon schools to have had a discussion with parents, signposting them to support and guidance before making any formal decision.
- 5.10** When a parent withdraws a child from school, the local authority must be informed of the deletion from the admission register when this takes place at a non-standard transition time. The local authority will ask for any further information which would suggest that a child may be home educated. Croydon Council must make arrangements to find out so far as possible whether home educated children are receiving suitable full-time education and is entitled to make informal enquiries of parents to establish what education is being provided.
- 5.11** If a child attends a special school and this was arranged by the local authority, then the permission of the local authority must be obtained before the child's name can be removed from the admission register.
- Special schools should not automatically remove a child from their roll because a parent states that s/he intends to opt for home education.
 - Parents must seek the consent of the local authority before making arrangements to home educate. Until this is provided and the local authority has approved the educational provision for the child, the child should be expected to attend school as normal. Failure to attend without reason should be treated as unauthorised absence.
- 5.12** If a child is registered at a school as a result of a school attendance order the parents must get the order revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the child to receive suitable education otherwise than at school, before the child can be deleted from the school's register and educated at home.
- 5.13** The local authority may also receive information that a child is either not attending schools and/or being home educated from other agencies. These

include: the Admissions team, Social Care, Truancy Patrols, GP and Health services, Housing or other Local Authorities.

5.14 The local authority has a moral and social obligation to ensure that a child is safe and being suitably educated. If it is not clear that that is the case, Croydon Council will act to remedy the position.

- If it is unclear whether a parent is simply absenting a child from school or providing education, the situation should be explored and clarified as a matter of urgency.
- While a child remains on a school roll, the school should treat any ambiguous failure to attend as an unauthorised absence. On this basis an attendance officer can legitimately visit the home to explore the reasons for the absence. Schools are advised to seek this service where any ambiguity over education provision exists.
- If a child is not on roll at a school, the Children Missing Education Officer will investigate.
- It will not be assumed that home education is being provided until a parent states that this is the case.

5.15 A child with an EHCP/statement of special educational needs can be educated at home. Any assessment of the home education will be linked with the process of keeping a child's special needs provision under review. The EHCP will simply set out the type of special educational provision which the authority thinks the child requires but will state in a suitable place that parents have made their own arrangements under s.7 of the Education Act 1996.

6.0 EHE referral process

If a child is registered at a school and the parents withdraw to home educate, the school should notify the local authority of children removed from its admission register giving the child's full name and address of the parent with whom the child normally resides and give home education as the reason, if notified of this by the parent.

6.1 Schools are strongly advised to offer to meet with the parents to discuss and resolve any issues about school and the child's needs that might influence the parents' decision to continue with their child's attendance at school or to home educate.

6.2 The EHE monitoring and support teacher will monitor data and highlight schools considered to have larger than average numbers of children leaving to EHE and report the findings of this data.

6.3 If a parent feels that the child's current school is not suitable, then the school and the parents should meet to discuss and explore what alternatives might be available before taking any decision to home educate. Once a parent has withdrawn a child to home educate, if they change their mind there is no guarantee that a place will still be available at the school; an application

would have to be made in the usual way through the local authority's process for in-year admissions.

7.0 Oversight of EHE

The local authority is entitled to make informal enquiries of parents to establish what education is being provided and contact will be made with parents if the local authority becomes aware that a child is being educated at home – or may be so:

- Initial contact will be made by the monitoring and support teacher for EHE. This will be aimed at establishing the position, gathering initial information and providing help if the parent is actually seeking a school place.
- Where parents intend to continue to home educate, the case will be monitored regularly by the monitoring and support teacher for EHE.

7.1 A home educated child may return to school at any time but only if there is a place within a school. Parents should discuss this with the school admissions team.

7.2 The type of educational activity can be varied and flexible and the local authority will make a judgement based on outcomes rather than on a different way of educating a child. It is recognised that home-education does not need to have any reference to the National Curriculum; and there is no requirement to enter children for public examinations. Parents are **not** required to:

- acquire specific qualifications for the task
- provide a broad and balanced curriculum
- have premises equipped to any particular standard
- set hours during which education will take place
- make detailed plans in advance
- give formal lessons
- mark work done by their child
- formally assess progress or set development objectives
- reproduce school type peer group socialisation
- match school-based, age-specific standards

7.3 Full time does not mean being bound by school hours and terms, as this measurement of contact time is not relevant to home education where there is often almost continuous one-to-one contact. However education which is not occupying a significant proportion of a child's life will probably not meet the s.7 requirement.

7.4 If an EHE child decides to take GCSEs, then parents should make their preparations as early as possible. It is sensible to start planning when their daughter/son is in Year 9 (the school year in which they become aged 14).

- 7.5** It is essential to find out where their daughter/son can sit the examinations. This must be an accredited centre. They should contact their local school or further education college to see if it will accept external candidates. Parents will have to use the same syllabus/exam board as the school/college. They can also look on the internet for accredited examination centres under the chosen examination board.
- 7.6** Parents will need to ask how much the school/college/ examination centre will charge, as they will also, under current legislation, have to pay the exam board fees. The local authority is currently unable to provide this funding for GCSEs if a child is receiving EHE.
- 7.7** Croydon offer information, advice and guidance to EHE young people about pursuing IGCSE examinations as private candidates through an alternative learning provision. It is the parents' responsibility to identify exam boards and syllabus material and to prepare their child for the IGCSE exams. Parents are responsible for meeting deadline dates and the costs for registering for the IGCSE exams through the alternative learning provision.
- 7.8** Local Authorities have a duty to try and identify children not receiving a suitable education. Section 436A of the Education Act 1996:
- “A local education authority must make arrangements to enable them to establish (so far as it is possible to do so) the identities of children in their area who are of compulsory school age but —
- (a) are not registered pupils at a school, and
 - (b) are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school.“
- 7.9** Section 437 (1) Education Act 1996 provides that “if it appears to a local authority that a child of compulsory school age in their area is not receiving suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise, they shall serve a notice in writing on the parent requiring him to satisfy them within the period specified in the notice (which must be no less than 15 days) that the child is receiving such education.” This is because where no other information suggests that a child is being suitably educated and where the parents have refused to answer, the only conclusion which the local authority can reasonably come to, if it has no information about the home education provision being made, is that the home education does not appear to be suitable.
- 7.10** The LA may make enquiries of parents who are educating their children at home to establish that a suitable education is being provided. This was established in case law (Phillips v Brown, Divisional Court [20 June 1980, unreported] Judicial review by Lord Justice Donaldson) which said ‘an LEA is entitled, though not required, to make **informal** enquiries of parents’. However, parents will be under no duty to comply. In his judgement, Lord Donaldson said, however, that it would be ‘sensible for them to do so’. If parents ‘give no information or adopt the course ... of merely stating that they are discharging their duty without giving any details of how they are doing so,

the LEA will have to consider and decide whether it ‘appears’ to it that the parents are in breach of Section 36 of the 1944 Act [now Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act]’

7.11 Information provided by parents should demonstrate that the education actually being provided is suitable and address issues such as progression expected. It should not be simply a statement of intent about what will be provided, or a description of the pedagogical approach taken. Croydon Council expects parents to offer satisfactory home education from the outset and to have made preparations with that aim in view. The local authority recognises that time lost in educating a child is difficult to recover.

7.12 Section 437(3) Education Act 1996 provides that if a parent fails to satisfy the local authority within the specified period that their child is receiving a suitable education, it has the power to issue a “school attendance order” requiring that their child become a registered pupil at the school named in the order

7.13 The local authority has general duties to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (see section 175 of the Education Act 2002 and sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004). The Monitoring and support teacher for EHE, along with all employees of the local authority, has a responsibility to ensure all children are safeguarded and their welfare promoted throughout their work. Section 175 (1) provides:

“A local authority shall make arrangements for ensuring that their education functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children”.

7.14 Sections 17 and 47 of the Children Act 1989 provide the local authority with a power to insist on seeing children in order to inquire about their welfare where there are grounds for concern, although such powers cannot be used in order to establish whether the child in question is receiving suitable education at home.

7.15 Officers must act upon any concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm, in accordance with Croydon Council’s child protection procedures. A failure to provide suitable education is capable of satisfying the threshold requirement contained in s.31 of the Children Act 1989 that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm.

7.16 The local authority will do all it can to provide some oversight of each case of home education which comes to its attention. This is viewed as important in order to safeguard children and to ensure that a suitable educational experience is provided, so children are enabled eventually to take their place in society and to contribute to it. Oversight also provides the opportunity to offer parents advice and to signpost opportunities available, particularly if a change in the child’s circumstances occurs.

8.0 EHE procedures

In order to comply with its duty to intervene if it appears that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving a suitable education and to adequately plan for support for families, the local authority policy is to maintain a record of children known to Croydon Council being educated at home. This is a list of the children known to Croydon Council only and therefore not an exhaustive list of all children educated at home in Croydon. Families who have children who have never been on roll may also register to access advice and support.

- 8.1** In all cases where it is not clear as to whether home education is suitable, the local authority will attempt to resolve those doubts through informal contact and enquiries. The local authority's 436A duty forms sufficient basis for informal enquiries and Croydon Council has a duty to make arrangements to identify children not receiving education.
- 8.2** Croydon Council will ask parents for information about the education they are providing. Parents are under no duty to respond to such enquiries but if a parent does not respond, or responds without providing any information about a child's education, then it is reasonable for the local authority to conclude that the child does not appear to be receiving suitable education. Parents can respond to a request for information about their child's education provision by writing to or by meeting the EHE monitoring and support teacher and presenting examples of work. Many people find a home visit helpful, but parents may wish to meet at another venue.
- 8.3** The first meeting will be used partly to establish a positive relationship with the family and the child. The main priority is to gain a picture of what has been done so far and what the parent's objectives are for the future (what they set out to achieve). Subsequent judgements will be made in the light of parents' stated objectives.
- 8.4** Parents may welcome the opportunity to discuss the provision that they are making for their child's education during a home visit but parents are not legally required to give the local authority access to their home. They may choose to meet a local authority representative at a mutually convenient and neutral location instead, with or without the child being present, or choose not to meet at all. Parents will be asked to provide evidence that they are providing a suitable education. Parents might prefer to write a report, provide samples of work, or have their educational provision endorsed by a third party (such as an independent home tutor).
- 8.5** Croydon Council has identified a criteria for judgement on which to reach the decisions as to whether or not the education being provided is suitable:
- Education should enable a child to participate fully in life in the UK.
 - Education should not be in conflict with 'Fundamental British Values' as defined in government guidance.
 - No person shall be denied the right to education and this assumes effective teaching of literacy and numeracy.

- Education is suitable to a child's ability and aptitude. It is reasonable to assume that this would entail making progress between reviews at a rate which appears to be in line with a child's apparent ability.
- Suitable education is not simply a matter of academic learning but should involve socialisation. Contact with peers and the development of emotional resilience should be regarded as essential elements of equipping a child to his/her place in modern civilised society.
- The environment in which education is being provided will be taken into account in assessing suitability.
- Education should promote the fulfilment of learning potential through the provision of some challenge to a child across a reasonably wide range of learning.
- Parents should be able to quantify and demonstrate the amount of time for which a child is being educated, indicating how education is occupying a significant proportion of a child's life.

Whilst the National Curriculum and national standards provide a benchmark for schools, these do not apply to EHE. The monitoring and support teacher for EHE must be cautious about making assumptions that particular skills or knowledge should be gained by particular ages. There should be awareness, for instance, that in most European countries, children do not start formally to, read, write or calculate until the age of six-and-a-half or seven.

- 8.6** If it appears to the local authority that a suitable education is not being provided, the local authority will seek to gather any relevant information that will assist reaching a properly informed judgement. This will include seeking from the parents any further information that they wish to provide which explains how they are providing a suitable education.
- 8.7** In considering whether it is satisfied by the parent it is open to the local authority to consider any other relevant information available to it, including information provided by other agencies and other sources.
- 8.8** An evaluation report will be made and copied to the parents confirming whether a child is receiving suitable full-time education. It is legitimate to offer advice on realistic objectives for the next period of learning. Parents are not obliged to accept this advice.
- 8.9** Review records will be kept centrally in the named child's file. They are to be written after each review. A running record of contact dates and actions will be kept centrally.
- 8.10** The Monitoring and support teacher for EHE will maintain an annual/biannual oversight, consistent with the local authority duty under s.436A, to be available and offer support and advice and if necessary intervention if a change in circumstances occurs.
- 8.11** If it appears to the local authority that a child is not receiving suitable full-time education the local authority will send parents a formal notice asking them to

satisfy the local authority that their child is receiving suitable education, and if this is not forthcoming then the local authority will serve a School Attendance Order requiring parents to send their child to school. Once the School Attendance Order is issued it can only be revoked (cancelled) if evidence is presented to the local authority that a suitable education is being provided.

- 8.12** The LA's role is confined to situations where it is not satisfied that the education is full-time and suitable to the child's age, ability and aptitude. Croydon Council does not think this means that the authority should do nothing until evidence of failure by the parent materialises, but it does mean that the approach should be proportionate. Once the local authority is satisfied that a child is receiving a suitable education, Croydon Council maintains an oversight through informal enquiries every year/two years and if the outcome is satisfactory, continue to oversee that regular level of contact and assurance.

9.0 Safeguarding in EHE

Unsuitable or inadequate education can impair a child's intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development, and may therefore bring child protection duties into play. Croydon Council makes arrangements for ensuring that their educational functions are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting children's welfare and this includes children educated at home as well as those attending school.

- 9.1** If the child is known to be vulnerable, a refusal to cooperate is more serious in view of the potential safeguarding risks. A failure to provide suitable education is capable of satisfying the threshold requirement contained in s.31 of the Children Act 1989 that the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. 'Harm' can include the impairment of health or development which means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioural development. If the authority cannot obtain sufficient information to determine whether the significant harm threshold is met, Croydon Council will consider employing its powers under Part 5 of the Children Act 1989. To establish education suitability the local authority will request that both the child and evidence of learning are seen.
- 9.2** Croydon Council strongly encourages parents to participate in a meeting in order that they receive the full support available. However unless there is any other matter which suggests that the child is not receiving a suitable education otherwise than at a school, there is no requirement for such a meeting.
- 9.3** Looked After Children – it is the local authority's opinion that a Looked After Child should not be home educated as they are the responsibility of the local authority as the corporate parent.
- 9.4** Child Protection Plan (CPP) – home education cannot be seen as a protective factor for a child. A child being educated at home is not necessarily being seen on a regular basis by professionals such as teachers and this logically increases the chances that any parents who set out to use home education to

avoid independent oversight may be more successful by doing so. Services are less likely to become aware of the signs of abuse or neglect.

- 9.5** Where a child is made subject to a child protection plan or is already subject to a child protection plan, the conference chair will make clear that if the parent has already declared EHE, or states an intention to do so, the risk will be re-considered in light of this information with the likelihood that the child is considered unsafe as a consequence. The chair will therefore immediately ensure that the plan is changed or reviewed to protect the child which will include a stop to EHE with immediate effect. The chair will outline what harm is likely, what the risk is and how it is increased as a result of continuing to educate the child at home. The resulting plan will reflect the necessary actions that need to be taken including the immediate review of the EHE declaration.
- 9.6** Where an education provision is not immediately available, the child protection conference chair and allocated social worker will ensure that the plan will include increased home visits to regularly check that the child is safe whilst not in education.
- 9.7** Child in Need (CIN) – for a child who is EHE and judged as a child in need, the CIN review chair will make clear that continuing EHE is a worry and put in their plan a requirement to convene a strategy meeting. This strategy meeting will include representation from education colleagues to inform the risk assessment. The strategy meeting will review whether continuing EHE is a factor to any further impairment to the child's health, wellbeing and development. Where it is reasoned so, at the next review meeting, the chair will make it clear that if EHE continues, the likely harm is increased and outline the reasons why. Where EHE continues this may include escalation to child protection status where the above child protection arrangements for children who are EHE will be implemented.

10.0 Special Educational Needs

Parents' right to educate their child at home applies equally where a child has special educational needs (SEN). This right is irrespective of whether the child has an EHCP or not. However, educating at home a child who has special needs is often more difficult than for other children.

- 10.1** If a child has an EHCP/statement of SEN and the parent chooses to home educate, information will be shared between the SEN casework officer and the monitoring and support teacher for EHE. Copies of annual reviews and any reports around the home education provision will be copied to the SEN case worker and the monitoring and support teacher for EHE.
- 10.2** Parents of any child subject to the statutory provisions of an EHC Plan (or Statement) who are considering whether to make their own arrangements should discuss this with their child's named SEN Caseworker to ensure that they are fully aware of alternatives (amended provision and/or change of placement) and their SEN statutory rights of appeal.

10.3 Local authority approval for removal from roll is not required for children with an EHCP who are registered at mainstream schools. Where parents elect to home educate a child with an EHCP who is registered at a mainstream school the school will remove the pupil from roll in the same way as for children who are not subject of an EHCP.

10.4 If a child is registered at a special school under arrangements made by Croydon Council, the child may not be removed from the admission register without the consent of the local authority. In deciding whether to give consent, Croydon Council will consider whether the home education to be provided will meet the special educational needs of the child. That consideration will take into account the additional difficulties of providing education at home to a child whose special educational needs are significant enough to warrant a place at a special school.

10.5 In cases where the EHC plan gives the name of a school or type of school where the child will be educated and the parents decide to educate at home, the local authority is not under a duty to make the special educational provision set out in the plan provided it is satisfied that the arrangements made by the parents are suitable. The local authority **must** review the plan annually to assure itself that the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and that the child's SEN continue to be met. Where the local authority has decided that the provision is appropriate, it should amend the plan to name the type of school that would be suitable but state that parents have made their own arrangements under Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.

10.6 In some cases a local authority will conclude that, even after considering its power to provide support to home-educating parents, the provision that is or could be made for a child or young person with an EHC plan does not meet the child or young person's needs. The local authority is required to intervene through the school attendance order framework 'if it appears...that a child of compulsory school age is not receiving suitable education'. 'Suitable education' means efficient full-time education suitable to the child or young person's age, ability and aptitude and to any SEN he or she may have.

11.0 If a child is not on a school roll

The Monitoring and support teacher for EHE will explore the options for access/signposting to other Council services and facilities for parents, within available resources, and to also seek to ensure EHE children have appropriate access to services and facilities from other agencies that would generally be delivered via school.

11.1 The Monitoring and support teacher for EHE will advise and assist families who request support with returning children to school or with identifying a school place.

11.2 If a parent is waiting for a school place at their preferred choice of school, they can elect to home educate whilst the child's name remains on the waiting list for their preferred school. School admissions will inform the EHE

monitoring and support teacher of this decision and the parents will be sent EHE guidance notes and the young person will be registered as EHE. It is the parent's responsibility to provide suitable and efficient education and to ensure that they understand the process involved to remain on the waiting list of their preferred school.

12.0 EHE Officer Contact:

Elaine Grant

Monitoring and support teacher EHE
Children Families and Education
Learning Access
2nd Floor, Zone D
Bernard Weatherill House
8 Mint Walk
Croydon. CR0 1EA

Tel: 07795 603476

email: elaine.grant@croydon.gov.uk

Further information can be found on the Elective Home Education page of Croydon Council's website www.croydon.gov.uk

13 Reviewing procedures and practices

Croydon Council will review this policy and practice in relation to EHE on a regular basis.

May 2019

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Children & Young People Sub-Committee
DATE	18 April 2023
REPORT TITLE:	Early Help, Children Social Care and Education Performance Dashboard
LEAD OFFICER:	Debbie Jones - Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education
PERSON LEADING AT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING:	Debbie Jones - Corporate Director, Children, Young People and Education
LEAD MEMBER:	Councillor Maria Gatland Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
ORIGIN OF ITEM:	Performance dashboards are provided for the Children & Young People Sub-Committee as a standing item on the work programme.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	The Children & Young People Sub-Committee is asked to review the performance dashboard provided for Early Help, Children Social Care and Education and consider whether there are any areas of concern that may need to be scheduled for further scrutiny at a future meeting.
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

1 EARLY HELP, CHILDREN SOCIAL CARE & EDUCATION PERFORMANCE DASHBOARDS

- 1.1 In order for the Children & Young People Sub-Committee maintain an overview of the performance of the Early Help, Children Social Care and Education services, performance data is provided in dashboard form at most meetings.
- 1.2 The performance dashboard is appended to this cover report.
- 1.3 If in reviewing the data provided the Sub-Committee identifies any area of concern that it feels may require further investigation this will be reported to the Scrutiny Work Programming Group by the Chair for further consideration.

2 HEALTH VISITING KPI DATA

- 2.1** The Sub-Committee received an update on Antenatal and Health Visiting at its meeting on 1st November 2022. Members concluded that commissioning data on Health Visiting should be shared with Members on a regular basis, and that an update on Health Visiting would be a six-monthly item on the Sub-Committee's Work Programme.
- 2.2** Health Visiting KPI Data covering the most recent Quarter will be provided when available. The data for Quarter 4 2022/23 is expected at the next meeting of the Sub-Committee.

3 APPENDICES

- 3.1** Appendix 1: Early Help, Children Social Care & Education Performance Dashboard

4 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 4.1** None

CROYDON CORPORATE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK														CROYDON www.croydon.gov.uk			
KEY																	
REF.	INDICATOR	LATEST DATA							PREVIOUS DATA		BENCHMARKING				COMMENTS ON CURRENT PERFORMANCE		
		Bigger or Smaller is better	Frequency	Timeframe	Target	Croydon position	Change from previous	RAG	Timeframe	Croydon position	Timeframe	Statistical Neighbours	London	England			
CYPE 01	Percentage of re-referrals within 12 months of the previous referral	Smaller is better	Monthly	Financial year to Feb 23	20%	19%	↔	Green	Financial year to Jan 23	19%	2021/22	18%	18%	22%	The proportion of assessments taking longer than 45 days to complete has been impacted by staff turnover and high volume of demand for statutory assessments. Managers continue to review all delayed assessments to ensure that services are in place where families require them prior to an assessment concluding. In addition to this, we are mindful of the need to support Family Assessment Service in transferring cases from their service to other parts of the practice system; the review and launch of the Transfer Protocol will support this, which will enable the service to focus on assessments.		
CYPE 02	Percentage of C&F assessments completed within 45 working days	Bigger is better	Monthly	Financial year to Feb 23	85%	80%	↑	Amber	Financial year to Jan 23	79%	2021/22	89%	86%	84%			
CYPE 03	Percentage of children for whom Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPC) was held in the month within 15 working days of the Strategy discussions	Bigger is better	Monthly	Financial year to Feb 23	77%	74%	↓	Amber	Financial year to Jan 23	75%	2021/22	74%	76%	79%	Any breach of the 15 day timeline is reviewed by Snr Managers to ensure safeguarding action is not impacted by the delay. Daily oversight is in place to robustly challenge and support effective planning during and following investigations under section 47 Children Act 1989. This oversight was increased in mid-February and has led to some improvement on the previous month and should continue on its upward trajectory in March.		
CYPE 07	Number of local CLA	Smaller is better	Monthly	Feb-23	450	430	↑	Green	Jan-23	436	2021/22	4,819	8,165	72,629	Threshold for all Local Authorities regarding UASC was raised to 0.1% of Child Population on 24th August 2022, taking account of census data this equates to 90 children minimum. Consequently our target has been adjusted to reflect this change and is now 95 children. With Lunar House situated in Croydon the council will always have an expectation of supporting the initial assessment of these asylum seeking and separated children liaising with other LA's regarding their transfer through the National Transfer Scheme.		
CYPE 08	Rate of local CLA per 10,000 under 18 years population	Smaller is better	Monthly	Feb-23	49.9	47.7	↑	Green	Jan-23	48.3	2021/22	53.3	39.9	60.1			
CYPE 09	Number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) CLA	NA	Monthly	Feb-23	95	99	↑	Green	Jan-23	104	2021/22	494	1541	5507	See above commentary for CYPE 09		
CYPE 10	Percentage of the under 18 years population who are UASC	NA	Monthly	Feb-23	0.105%	0.110%	↑	Green	Jan-23	0.115%	2021/22	0.05%	0.08%	0.05%	See above commentary for CYPE 09		
CYPE 11	Average Caseload per allocated Social Worker in Children's Social Care	Smaller is better	Monthly	Feb-23	17.0	16.8	↑	Green	Jan-23	17.0	No comparable data available						
CYPE 12	Juvenile first time entrants to the criminal justice system per 100,000 of 10-17 year olds	Smaller is better	Monthly	Financial year to Feb 23	262	209	↑	Green	Financial year to Jan 23	212	2021	207	184	147	Historically having a large youth population and a borough land size being second largest in London has meant Croydon's throughput of first time entrants to the criminal justice system has been higher than the London average. The Youth Offending team has assisted in the implementation of Community Resolutions (an alternative to arrest for small cannabis amount which was a leading offence type) since October 2021 and have already begun to see a significant number of young people being diverted away from the system. This together with a decline in first time entrants following the lifting of COVID restriction means we could see the Croydon rate be in line the London average for the first time by December 2022.		
CYPE 13	Percentage of schools rated 'good' or 'outstanding'	Bigger is better	2 times per year	Aug-22	88%	88%	↓	Green	Aug-21	89%	Aug-22	93%	95%	88%			
CYPE 14	Overall absence rate from State-funded primary, secondary and special schools	Smaller is better	Termly	2020/21 Academic Year	4.62%	4.65%	↓	Amber	2018/19 Academic Year	4.57%	2020/21 Academic Year	4.74%	4.44%	4.62%	Due to the disruption faced during the Spring 2020/21 term, caution should be taken when comparing data across to previous years.		
CYPE 15	Persistent absence rate from State-funded primary, secondary and special schools	Smaller is better	Termly	2020/21 Academic Year	12.08%	12.20%	↓	Amber	2018/19 Academic Year	10.75%	2020/21 Academic Year	12.64%	11.32%	12.08%	Due to the disruption faced during the Spring 2020/21 term, caution should be taken when comparing data across to previous years.		
CYPE 16	Permanent exclusions from schools as a percentage of the school population	Smaller is better	Annual	2020/21 Academic Year	0.06	0.03	↑	Green	2019/20 Academic Year	0.05	2020/21 Academic Year	0.03	0.03	0.05	Like the previous year, the 2020/21 academic year was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools were open to all pupils in the Autumn term, however during the Spring term schools were only open to key worker and vulnerable children from January for the first half term, before all pupils returned during the second half term. During this period online tuition was provided for pupils. Schools were then open to all pupils during the Summer term. As with 2019/20, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, these restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.		
CYPE 17	Suspensions (fixed period exclusions) from schools as a percentage of pupils	Smaller is better	Annual	2020/21 Academic Year	3.76	3.46	↓	Green	2019/20 Academic Year	3.39	2020/21 Academic Year	2.78	2.79	4.25	See above commentary for CYPE 16.		
CYPE 18	EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) - Percentage of children achieving a good level of development	Bigger is better	Annual	2021/22 Academic Year	67.8%	67.4%	N/A	Amber	Not available - break in series		2021/22 Academic Year	68.0%	67.8%	65.2%	Our target has been revised/increased to the London average as a 'stretch' target as we have exceeded the national average. In 2021/22, the percentage of pupils achieving a good level of development in Croydon was 67.4% which is above the national average (65.2%) but slightly below London (67.8%) and our statistical neighbours (68.0%).		
CYPE 19	KS2 - Percentage of pupils achieving expected standard at KS2 in Reading, Writing and Mathematics	Bigger is better	Annual	2021/22 Academic Year	65%	60%	↓	Amber	2018/19 Academic Year	67%	2021/22 Academic Year	62%	65%	59%	Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the KS2 external assessments had not taken place in 2019-20 or in 2020-21. The assessments in 2021-22 were set at the same standard as 2018-19 and previous years in order to measure the effects of the pandemic on pupil achievement. The drop of 7%, as a result of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic was in line with that of other local authorities and national figures.		
CYPE 20	KS4 - Average Progress 8 score per pupil	Bigger is better	Annual	2021/22 Academic Year	-0.03	-0.02	↓	Amber	2018/19 Academic Year	0.07	2021/22 Academic Year	0.19	0.23	-0.03	In 2021/22 The average Progress 8 score in Croydon was -0.02, slightly better than the national average of -0.03. The Progress 8 score ranged from 0.8 to -0.89 across Croydon schools, this has undoubtedly been affected by the uneven impact of Covid-19.		
CYPE 21	KS4 - Average Attainment 8 score per pupil	Bigger is better	Annual	2021/22 Academic Year	48.8	47.4	↑	Amber	2018/19 Academic Year	45.5	2021/22 Academic Year	49.8	52.6	48.8	In 2021/22 the average attainment 8 score in Croydon was 47.4. This is the 2nd lowest compared to our statistical neighbours, and slightly below the national average.		
CYPE 22	KS4 - Percentage of pupils achieving grades 9-5 in English and Maths	Bigger is better	Annual	2021/22 Academic Year	49.8%	48.7%	↑	Amber	2018/19 Academic Year	40.5%	2021/22 Academic Year	52.3%	57.3%	49.8%	In 2021/22, the percentage of pupils achieving grades 9-5 in English and Maths in Croydon was 48.7%. This is the 3rd lowest compared to our statistical neighbours, and slightly below the national average, 67.7% of pupils gained at least a grade 4 in English and Maths in Croydon. There are wide variances in both measures across Croydon schools.		
CYPE 23	Proportion of 16 and 17 year olds who were not in education, employment or training (NEET)	Smaller is better	Annual	Average of Dec 20, Jan 21 and Feb 21	2.8%	1.8%	↑	Green	Average of Dec 19, Jan 20, Feb 20	2.3%	Average of Dec 20, Jan 21 and Feb 21	1.7%	1.8%	2.8%			
CYPE 24	Proportion of 16 and 17 year olds not known if in education, employment or training (NEET)	Smaller is better	Annual	Average of Dec 20, Jan 21 and Feb 21	2.7%	3.6%	↓	Red	Average of Dec 19, Jan 20, Feb 20	2.9%	Average of Dec 20, Jan 21 and Feb 21	3.2%	2.2%	2.7%	The NEET nor Not Known figures should not be considered in isolation. More often than not, if the destination of a Not Known young person is confirmed, they are in more cases than not, NEET. Whilst our NEET stat is smaller than target (CYPE 23) this invariably means that there are more young people whose destinations we have not been able to confirm, hence higher Not Known figures. Whilst the team does heavily focus on tracking work from Oct - March, the resource vs size of cohort is sparse. So that NEET caseworkers (who work directly with young people to support them [back] into education, employment or training) are not taken away from their core activity, we have historically hired an agency staff member over our busy period, to concentrate on tracking young people who are classified as Not Known. This allows for quick identification and referral to a caseworker. We were unable to do this during Dec 20 - Feb 21, due to lack of financial resource / permission to hire. Whilst caseworkers could help with tracking at times, it was imperative not to take them away at length from the core work. Whilst Croydon's Not Known position is above target, it must be noted that the figure is considerably lower than the more typical historical stats in excess of 10%, which did previously attract ministerial attention.		
CYPE 25	Number of children with an EHCP educated in-borough mainstream schools	Bigger is better	Monthly	Feb-23	N/A	1204	↑	N/A	Jan-23	1200	No comparable data available						
CYPE 26	Percentage of children with an EHCP educated in-borough mainstream schools	Bigger is better	Monthly	Feb-23	To increase	29%	↔	Green	Jan-23	29%	No comparable data available						
CYPE 28	Number of Education Health & Care Plans issued (excluding exceptions)	N/A	Monthly	Calendar year to Feb 23	N/A	42	N/A	N/A	Calendar year to Jan 23	22	2021	2538	5464	34249			
CYPE 29	Percentage of Education Health & Care Plans issued within 20 weeks (excluding exceptions)	Bigger is better	Monthly	Calendar year to Feb 23	62%	83%	↑	Green	Calendar year to Jan 23	68%	2021	61%	64%	60%	In February, all 20 EHCPs issued were on time.		

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Children & Young People Sub-Committee
DATE	18 April 2023
REPORT TITLE:	Scrutiny Stage 2 Responses to Recommendations arising from: Children & Young People Sub-Committee on 27 September 2022
LEAD OFFICER:	Tom Downs, Democratic Service and Governance Officer- Scrutiny T:020 8726 6000 x 63779
ORIGIN OF ITEM:	The Cabinet response to recommendations made by Children & Young People Sub-Committee is provided for information.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	The Children & Young People Sub-Committee is asked to note the response given by the Cabinet to recommendations made by the Sub-Committee and to consider whether any further action is necessary.
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1** The rights of scrutiny to make recommendations to the Cabinet, Council, non-Executive Committee, Partner Agency or Partnership Board is set out in Section 8 of Part 4E – Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules of the Council’s Constitution.
- 1.2** When making a recommendation to the Cabinet, a response needs to be given within two months to confirm whether the recommendation has been accepted or not. If accepted, this response should include how the recommendation will be implemented.
- 1.3** To ensure the Committee can monitor the response given to its recommendations, this report will be included as a standing item on each agenda, setting out in Appendix A the response from the Cabinet to the recommendations of the Committee.
- 1.4** The Committee is asked to review the responses given and consider whether any further action is necessary.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 Note the responses given and consider whether any further action is necessary.

3 SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Scrutiny recommendations are contained in the schedule in the appendix to this report.
- 3.2 The detailed responses, including reasons for rejected recommendations and action plans for the implementation of agreed recommendations are also contained in the appendix.

4 APPENDICES

- 4.1 Appendix 1: Appendix 1: Scrutiny Stage 2 Response - Children's Centre Contract - Insourcing of the South Locality Children's Centre Delivery

Appendix 2: Scrutiny Stage 2 Response - Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education Dashboard

5 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

- 5.1 Report to Children & Young People Sub-Committee on 27 September 2022
<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=167&MId=3428&Ver=4>
- 5.2 Report to Cabinet on 22nd March 2023
<https://democracy.croydon.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=183&MId=2991&Ver=4>

Appendix 1 – Item: Children's Centre Contract - Insourcing of the South Locality Children's Centre Delivery

Considered by Children & Young People Sub-Committee on 27 September 2022

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (ie Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
1.	That the Sub-Committee be invited to visit the Children's Centres with the Cabinet Member in the North or Central areas, with a visit to a Children's Centre in the South once this has had a chance to bed in.	Councillor Maria Gatland Education	Partially Accepted The Sub-Committee can arrange to visit the Children's Centre through the Director of Education but these will not be joint visits with the Cabinet Member	Shelley Davis, Director of Education	N/A	TBC	TBC

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Appendix 2 – Item: Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education Dashboard

Considered by Children & Young People Sub-Committee on 27 September 2022

REC No.	SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATION	DEPARTMENT AND CABINET MEMBER RESPONDING	ACCEPTED / PARTIALLY ACCEPTED / REJECTED (inc. reasons for rejection)	IDENTIFIED OFFICER	ANY FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS	TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS IF ACCEPTED (ie Action Plan)	DATE OF SCRUTINY MEETING TO REPORT BACK
1.	That all future versions of the report provide commentary for any indicators with a RAG rating of red or amber.	Councilor Maria Gatland Children, Young People & Education	Accepted	Simon Townend, Head of Performance CYPE	N/A	By April 2023	TBC

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LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Children & Young People Sub-Committee
DATE	18 April 2023
REPORT TITLE:	WORK PROGRAMME 2022-23
LEAD OFFICER:	Tom Downs, Democratic Service and Governance Officer- Scrutiny T:020 8726 6000 x 63779
ORIGIN OF ITEM:	The Work Programme is scheduled for consideration at every ordinary meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.
BRIEF FOR THE COMMITTEE:	To consider any additions, amendments, or changes to the agreed work programme for the Committee in 2022/23.
PUBLIC/EXEMPT:	Public

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 In This agenda item details the Sub-Committee's work programme for the 2022/23 municipal year.
- 1.2 The Sub-Committee has the opportunity to discuss any amendments or additions that it wishes to make to the work programme.
- 1.3 The The Sub-Committee is able to propose changes to its work programme, but in line with Constitution, the final decision on any changes to any of the Committee/Sub-Committee work programmes rests with the Chairs & Vice-Chairs Group, following consultation with officers.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Sub-Committee is asked to:

- 2.1 In Note its work programme for the remainder of 2022-23, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
- 2.2 Consider whether there are any changes to the work programme that need to be reviewed.

3 WORK PROGRAMME

3.1 The work programme

The proposed work programme is attached at **Appendix 1**.

Members are asked to note that the lines of enquiry for some items have yet to be confirmed and that there are opportunities to add further items to the work programme.

3.2 Additional Scrutiny Topics

Members of the Sub-Committee are invited to suggest any other items that they consider appropriate for the Work Programme. However, due to the time limitations at Committee meetings, it is suggested that no proposed agenda contain more than two items of substantive business in order to allow effective scrutiny of items already listed.

3.3 Participation in Scrutiny

Members of the Sub-Committee are also requested to give consideration to any persons that it wishes to attend future meetings to assist in the consideration of agenda items. This may include Cabinet Members, Council or other public agency officers or representatives of relevant communities.

4 APPENDICES

4.1 Appendix 1: Work Programme 2022/23 for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee.

5 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

5.1 None

Children & Young People Sub-Committee

The below table sets out the working version of the Children & Young People Sub-Committee work programme. The items have been scheduled following discussion with officers and may be subject to change depending on any new emerging priorities taking precedent.

Meeting Date	Item	Scope
18/04/23	Elective Home Education	To receive a briefing on Elective Home Education (EHE), including the data showing the number of Children and Young people receiving EHE.
	Exclusions (Deferred from last meeting)	For the Sub-Committee to receive a presentation and update on Exclusions and Suspensions in Croydon.
	Experience of Care Leavers	To provide the Sub-Committee with a chance to look at the experiences of Care Experienced Young People.

Standing Items:

Early Help, Children's Social Care and Education Dashboard (including Health Visitor data) - review and consider whether there are any areas of concern that may need to be scheduled for further scrutiny at a future meeting.

Items of Interest

The following items haven't been scheduled into the work programme but are highlighted as potential items of interest to be scheduled during the year ahead.

Unallocated Items	Notes
Recruitment and Retention	<p>To review Staff Caseloads, AYSE Caseload Sharing and the number of supervisions carried out.</p> <p>To receive a breakdown of vacancies and caseloads by individual teams and to look at London Councils best practise for recruitment and retention.</p> <p>To undertake direct engagement with social workers</p> <p>To look at how feedback from exit interviews can be incorporated into retention strategies</p>
Apprenticeships & Youth Unemployment	To look at the offer of available apprenticeships in the borough and data on youth unemployment.
OFSTED Reports	To review any OFSTED reports as and when they are available.
Delivery of Early Years Strategy	To review the delivery and implementation plan of the Early Years Strategy
SEND Strategy	To review the renewal of the SEND Strategy
Surplus Schools Places	To review the Surplus Schools Places report
Free School Meal offer in Croydon	To scrutinise the provision of free school meals in the borough and why nursery children in our primary schools are not able to access this provision.

Antenatal and Health Visiting (Six Monthly)	To review shortfalls in the number of health visitors, antenatal and postnatal visits.
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