

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON

REPORT:	Children & Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee
DATE OF DECISION	10 September 2024
REPORT TITLE:	CYPE (Children, Young People and Education) Transformation
CORPORATE DIRECTOR / DIRECTOR:	Debbie Jones Corporate Director – Children, Young People and Education
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LEAD MEMBER:	Cllr Maria Gatland Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
CONTAINS EXEMPT INFORMATION?	NO
WARDS AFFECTED:	All

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

- 1.1 IMPOWER have been commissioned as the strategic delivery partner for the Children, Young People and Education (CYPE) directorate. This report provides an update to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee on the Strategic Delivery Partnership work, including an overview of the three-year programme, governance, work to date, the quick wins plan and feedback from staff. The report also includes information about the impact of IMPOWER's work in other local authorities.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For the reasons set out in the report (and its appendices), the Children and Young People Scrutiny Sub-Committee is recommended to:
- 2.1.1. Note the update provided on the CYPE (Children, Young People and Education) Transformation Programme

3. BACKGROUND AND DETAILS

3.1 To accelerate the pace and increase the impact of the transformation the Children, Young People and Education Directorate (CYPE) has engaged a strategic delivery partner, IMPOWER Consulting, to work with colleagues across the directorate, the wider council, its partners, and the community. IMPOWER bring additional capacity, skills, and knowledge to the transformation programme to help CYPE identify opportunities and address challenges it faces to deliver effective services for children, young people and families within in the future funding envelope to ensure a sustainable and effective future for Croydon.

3.2 Overview of CYPE Strategic Delivery Partnership

3.3 The IMPOWER team has rapidly mobilised since the programme started in mid-June 2024. The work is divided into a number of phases over three years:

- **Amplified Analysis (June – September 2024):** looking across the service from the work to date to identify opportunity and inform a robust transformation plan. This includes utilising a range of IMPOWER's Applied Analytics tools to support this insight.
- **Quick wins (August 2024 – January 2025):** Immediately identifying, agreeing and beginning delivering on opportunities for early impact and 'quick wins'. Combining Croydon's context with those areas, such as placements, where we know that immediate cashable savings can be realised.
- **Delivery (November 2024 – March 2026):** Following the Amplified Analysis phase, a robust transformation will be agreed. IMPOWER will deliver interventions across the agreed area, with the aim of scaling and spreading change, better outcomes and savings in as much as the service as possible.
- **Sustainability (April 2026 – March 2027):** For the final year of the contract, IMPOWER will be ensuring that the impact to date is sustained and that different ways of working are embedded into business as usual by Croydon Council.

3.4 **Social value:** In addition to this work, IMPOWER are proud to have committed to an ambitious programme of social value for Croydon including volunteering in local community projects, readiness for work workshops and work placements.

3.5 The following objectives have been agreed for the Amplified Analysis phase of the programme:

- Develop a collective understanding of the CYPE (Children, Young People and Education directorate) budget, how that benchmarks and the influencing factors driving spend and cost
- Identify opportunities for cashable savings
- Understand CYPE demand and workflow and opportunities to do things differently to improve outcomes and reduce demand / costs
- Robustly quality assure existing opportunities and transformation activity to validate plans and identify opportunities to do things better, differently, and/or to go further and faster

- Identify, agree and mobilise quick win interventions that will deliver cashable savings and build confidence in the programme by January 2025

3.6 Governance

3.7 Governance arrangements have been confirmed for the CYPE Strategic Delivery Partnership. Key decisions related to the programme will be made by the CYPE Transformation Improvement Oversight Group (TIOG). This is supported by weekly meetings between IMPOWER and the Senior Responsible Officer for the programme, and regular 1-1s with key senior leads within CYPE and the wider Council.

3.8 IMPOWER also meet regularly with the other two Strategic Delivery Partners (BCG and Newton) to ensure alignment across all transformation activity.

3.9 Amplified Analysis update and activity

3.10 The Amplified Analysis activity has included:

- Establishing robust governance arrangements for the programme.
- Extensive stakeholder engagement including: Lead Member, Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, Eleanor Brazil, senior leaders across the Council and CYPE and attendance at Mayor's Advisory Board, CMT, CYPE DMT (Directorate Management Team), and the leadership teams of Children's Social Care, Education, and Quality, Commissioning and Performance Improvement. As well as attendance at service and team meetings across CYPE, and involvement in all staff and CYPE webinars to ensure staff are aware of the programme and have the opportunity to be involved.
- Detailed data analysis and review of information about transformation and improvement activity in Croydon to date.
- Operational service reviews across the CYPE directorate.
- Prevention spend mapping activity within the CYPE directorate and across the Council to better understand the broader spend on prevention activity across the whole Council. This will enable a clear picture of what prevention activity is currently being provided, at what cost and highlight opportunities to improve in specific areas.
- A number of deep dives focused on agreed priority areas: children's social care placements, fostering, traded services, maximising income/funding, early intervention, workforce, and travel to school.
- Detailed analytics activity including journey mining to understand CYPE demand and workflow, and opportunities to do things differently to improve outcomes and reduce demand/costs.
- CYPE budget review and benchmarking activity, including linking with Croydon's Department for Education statistical neighbour authorities to compare and contrast key budget lines where Croydon is an outlier (above or below).

- Bringing subject matter experts into the IMPOWER core team where relevant, for example related to travel to school and the budget review and benchmarking activity.

3.11 The Amplified Analysis work will continue during September, alongside the quick wins delivery activity.

3.12 Quick wins plan and current activity

3.13 The quick wins programme plan was agreed by the Transformation Improvement Oversight Group on 1st August. The quick wins programme (August 2024 – January 2025) is focused on children's social care placements, using IMPOWER's tried and tested Valuing Care approach.

3.14 Valuing Care is an approach to better understand the specific needs of children in care and the level of needs. It has been developed in partnership with a number of local areas and has helped to:

- Understand how needs and outcomes change over time
- Prevent entry into care
- Support children out of residential and into family settings
- Improve matching with foster carers

3.15 On an individual level Valuing Care provides a holistic, nuanced picture of a child's needs. At a population level Valuing Care provides an understanding of the needs of all children as well as different cohorts of children. By using the Valuing Care approach it is possible to better understand the needs of children in care and compare this to cost. This analysis has helped re-shape placement sufficiency and has driven down spending in numerous local authorities.

3.16 There has been excellent engagement from the CYPE management team to enable progress in the rapid mobilisation and delivery of the Valuing Care activity focused on reducing spend on children's social care placements. The first cohort of 150 children has been agreed with the service and training sessions for social workers on the Valuing Care approach started in mid-August. Following the completion of Valuing Care profiles for this cohort, IMPOWER will undertake analysis of these profiles to identify and support the progression of opportunities for individual children within this cohort. This may include opportunities to support children to move from residential placements to family based (foster) placements, or to progress reunification with family members.

3.17 Feedback

3.18 Social workers and other staff have shared positive feedback following their involvement in training sessions on the Valuing Care approach. A selection of this feedback is included below.

"I can really see the value of doing this. None of the information we're putting into the tool should be new to us or come as a surprise, but articulates it in a better way"

"I'm so glad I came to this session. I'm hopeful that this will make a lot of good changes and I'm curious about seeing how it will make positive outcomes"

“I love the language in the guidance descriptions”

“It's really good for children to see the visual element, we can use it with care leavers to set goals and for them to see outcomes over time”

“I can really see the value of doing this. None of the information we're putting into the tool should be new to us or come as a surprise, but articulates it in a better way”

“I love how it focuses not just on the needs, but also on the strengths for each of the areas, it refocuses the conversation”

“I think it would be really helpful to identify cohorts who need the most attention.”

“This will give us a shared and consistent language”

“I can see why the tool is needed now, I'm having to look through loads of notes to find out what her needs are, I could see them at a glimpse”

3.19 IMPOWER are currently linking with the Participation Team to plan engagement with children and young people to ensure the child's voice is included in the programme.

3.20 Examples of impact in other local authorities

3.21 In 2023/24 IMPOWER delivered improved outcomes and life chances for a wide range of children and families, alongside reductions in cost:

Local authority	Children and young people's lives positively impacted	Cost savings delivered	Timescale
Cornwall Council	9	£2m	12 months
East Sussex County Council	9	£1.5m	9 months
Leicester City Council	24	£2.4m	18 months
North / West Northamptonshire Councils	48	£4.2m	18 months

“IMPOWER's work has been hugely valuable in reinforcing a positive strengths-based approach to understanding children's needs and setting out a way forward designed both to better meet those needs and reduce excessive spend by the council. The project has helped colleagues within and outside children's services, and members of the council, to understand what has been driving levels of spend on children's services and the most appropriate way to address this. Culturally, Valuing Care resonated with our relational 'Connected Practice' approach to social care and the tools are now helping to reinforce a strengths-based approach to care commissioning.”

Alison Jeffery, former Director of Children's Services, East Sussex County Council

3.22 The impact of the Valuing Care approach has also been recognised by Ofsted – for example in Lincolnshire County Council's Ofsted ILACS report:

“Before every review, social workers update the child’s assessment using the ‘valuing care’ tool. This assessment, undertaken jointly with and written to children enables an analysis of children’s changing needs.

Assessments are of a high quality and feed into meetings to review children’s progress and planning for children’s day-to-day and longer-term needs.

[This supports] Beautifully produced profiles, in which children’s strengths and needs shine through, are shared with foster carers at these events. Prospective carers are provided with information about the skills they will need and the support that will be provided to help the child to thrive.”

Section of Ofsted ILACS report for Lincolnshire County Council (where the Valuing Care approach is fully embedded in practice)

- 3.23** A short case study is included below from another local authority to show how Valuing Care helps individuals like Emily (*not her real name*) to reconnect with their families and return home.

Emily first came into care 12 years ago and, after a brief return home, came back into the care system in 2015 where she remained until earlier this year.

By the end of 2016, Emily had lived with five foster families; each placement breaking down. By 2023 she had also moved through four residential placements.

In 2023, a Valuing Care profile was completed for Emily and a comprehensive and detailed support plan was designed to help her return home which was in line with her and her birth family’s wishes. This plan involved a co-ordinated approach from early help, virtual school, outreach support from her residential home and support from an independent visitor as well as partnership working between the child and the family’s social workers.

In January 2024, Emily returned home. Within two weeks, the outreach support was removed as it was not needed. The family continue to be supported but both Emily, her mother and the team around them are confident this is a life-long move home.

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

10.1 None