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Scrutiny Children & Young People Sub-Committee

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 2 November 2021 at 6.30 pm. This meeting was held remotely via Microsoft Teams.

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Robert Ward (Chair);
Councillor Sean Fitzsimons (Vice-Chair);
Councillors Sue Bennett, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Bernadette Khan, and Ola Kolade

Co-optee Members

Josephine Copeland (Non-voting Teacher representative), Mr Leo Morrell (Voting Diocesan Representative) and Ms Elaine Jones (Voting Diocesan Representative (Catholic Diocese))

Also Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming, Cabinet member for Children Young People and Learning.
Councillor Ian Parker
Roisin Madden, Director of Children's Social Care
Kerry Crichlow, Interim Director of Improvement and Quality
Sarah Bailey, Head of Access to Education
Rachel Flowers, Director of Public Health
Matthew Kershaw, Chief Executive, Croydon Health Service
Juliatt Penney, Head of Public Health Nursing, Croydon Health Service
Andrew Stenton , Association Director of Operations, Croydon Health Service

Apologies: Councillor Louisa Woodley
Paul O'Donnell

PART A

53/21 Apologies for absence

Apologies received from Councillor Louisa Woodley.
Apologies received from Paul O'Donnell

54/21 Minutes of the previous sub-committee meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 14 September 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

55/21 Disclosures of interest

There were no disclosures of interest.

56/21 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

57/21 Action list update

It was confirmed that all actions were up to date

58/21 Update on Antenatal and Health Visiting Visits

The Director of Public Health introduced the item. Following the introduction, the Associate Director of Operation, Croydon Health Service outlined details in a [presentation](#)

Following the presentation, Members has the opportunity to ask questions.

In response to queries raised by the Committee, the following was clarified:

- In order to provide reassurance despite the backdrop of challenges, that the action plan for 2021/22 was deliverable, officers said that a development plan was in place that was being monitored on a monthly basis. They worked closely with commissioners and were all committed to pushing the service forward
- If it was identified that they were not where they needed to be, the plan would be reviewed with further actions put in place where necessary. The importance of the issue was not underestimated and if changes needed to be made, they would be where appropriate.
- A decision was made for the project manager and analyst to be in post, initially for six months. This was a decision made between the health service and commissioners. This team would be tasked to assist in achieving robustness of data and ensure data was being collected and reported appropriately.
- In addressing planning strategy and resource allocation to cover statutory responsibilities, officers were confident that the budget would cover the ability to respond to mandatory responsibilities. The main challenge was in workforce availability which was essential in the ability to drive forward change and meet targets.
- Members were reminded that only a qualified Health Visitor could conduct statutory visits and carry out the necessary assessments and due to the national shortage there had been an impact in time scales. Whilst the service had adapted the way they work and had been utilising skill mix of staff where possible, the Health Visitor remained the accountable professional and had to maintain oversight.
- The service was now back to conducting face to face visits and no longer doing video consultations which were put in as a measure during the height of the pandemic. Thorough risk assessments were conducted prior to face to face visit in order to protect both staff and clients.
- There had been instances where visits had not taken place as whilst the service always strived to offer and undertake visits, parents were able to exercise the choice to not have one despite it being mandated. Some families chose not to engage and unless there were

safeguarding issues, which would trigger separate protocols, they could not be made to accept a visit.

- In order to maintain oversight over performance, the associate directors would have monthly meetings with commissioners and quarterly with directors. There would be a clear expectation for through discussions on data, improvement and what needed to be done if not achieving as expected. Having a Metrix would assist in keeping on track as they were also accountable to Public Health colleagues who review the data on a monthly basis.
- It was important to note that staff had been working tirelessly under extremely challenging conditions brought on by the pandemic. Their health and well-being was recognised and remained a priority. Practitioners has access to a wealth of support and services including regular 121 supervision with their line manager.

The Chair thanked officers for their engagement with the Sub-Committee

RESOLVED TO:

1. Note the content of the presentation and information provided
2. That an update be provided to the sub-committee in six months on progress.

59/21 Early Help CSC and Education Dashboard

The Sub-Committee considered a [report](#) which provided an overview of Service updates from Education and Early Help & children's social care, Budget updates and Children's Continuous Improvement Plan 2021- 2024. The Sub-Committee also considered the Early Help and Education Dashboards. An introduction to the items was provided by the Interim Director of Education and the Director of Children's Social Care

In response to queries raised by the Sub-Committee, the following was clarified:

- The two remaining children following the closure of Virgo Fidelis Schools that had not secured a place was due to the families not accepting offers of places despite being offered numerous places.
- The reason behind the completion of only 72% of assessment was a consequence of structural change in the department, this was now being improved on. Additionally there had been a higher percentage of agency staff supporting children and families had been subject to the locum staff leaving as well as sickness levels in the department.
- There had been a notable impact on the mental health of young people who were at crucial stages of their development without the support of schools, and peers during periods of the pandemic. All services, statutory and voluntary were working together to provide support to young people and their families.

RESOLVED: To note the content of the report and dashboards.

60/21 Service Impact and Budget Update

This item was taken as part of Agenda Item 7, minute no 59/21

61/21 Task and Finish Group Final Report: Exclusions and Off-rolling in Croydon Schools

The Chair of the Task and Finish Group, Councillor Jerry Fitzpatrick introduced the item and outlined details in a [Presentation](#)

Following the presentation, Members had the opportunity to ask questions

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Committee discussed the following:

- It was difficult to evidence off rolling in schools the Local Authority did not hold school registers as it was not compulsory for schools to provide this data, additionally if it was provided there was no resource available to monitor in the way and level of detail required. There was however concerns on all level including central government of the issue.
- It was important to understand the term 'Off rolling' in order to comprehend the issue it presented. There were currently several legal ways in which a child could come off the school roll. Off rolling is not a legal tern and it's a school initiated removal of a child without having gone through the legal process.
- On the issue of reintegration back into mainstream school of children referred to Pupil Referral Units (PRU), there was no headline figure and in 2019 the number of children was extremely low.
- Managed moves occurred for very young children and across the borough there appeared to be different practices within Fair Access Panels (FAP). Guidance on processes needed to be clearer to ensure practices were transparent and streamlined
- The evidence showed very positive arrangements between primary schools, in particular the inclusion peer group working between schools to keep children in school which had resulted in very few primary school exclusions
- There were some schools that stood out in the level of pupils that left the school and some schools that had high vacancies and as a result would accept children that had been excluded more readily. This in turn meant the schools faced multifaceted challenges as they may not necessarily have the expertise to deal with the challenges that come with the children.
- There was evidence to support that a high proportion of children that went through managed moves were documented as having special educational needs, emotional and mental health issues, had experienced child sexual exploitation or gang activity as well as many other issues.
- It was evident that the challenges faced by officers should be shared at school governor level as many were not aware of the challenges experienced

by officers on gathering information or of trying to get headteachers to accurately share data.

- It was encouraging that an information pack for parents and families on their rights was being developed

The sub-committee endorsed all the recommendations made

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED**: To agree the recommendations as set out in the report:

Recommendations One to Six (to the Director of Education)

Recommendation One

That the Scrutiny and Overview Children and Young People Sub Committee seek from the Director of Education an annual report on Exclusions and Managed Moves, such report to be presented at an Autumn meeting and separate from the Standards report, the report to include the following areas at least in relation to managed moves:

The number of managed moves agreed by the Fair Access Panel in the preceding academic year, including the provision of data as to the following characteristics of the children concerned: age, gender, free school meal eligibility, national curriculum year, SEND provision, ethnic group and level of deprivation - these are the characteristics which must be reported in respect of permanent exclusion

- the number of managed moves from a mainstream school to a PRU or other alternative provision
- the number of managed moves from a mainstream school to another mainstream school
- the number of managed moves which broke down during the 12 weeks probationary period
- an analysis of the reasons for the breakdown during the probationary period and information about the subsequent pathways of the children concerned
- the number of children reintegrated from alternative provision into mainstream, broken down into the number reintegrated who immediately prior to admission to AP had undergone permanent exclusion and the number reintegrated who immediately prior to admission to AP had undergone a managed move
- in respect of managed moves to mainstream schools the number from each presenting school, and the number to each receiving school

- such information as the local authority may possess about the number of managed moves not passing through the FAP process, including the characteristics set out in the first bullet point above
- the chart of givers and takers (that is, for each school, the number of children each school successfully presents to FAP, and the number each school accepts)
- the destinations of children who have been permanently excluded

Recommendation Two

The Director prepares a paper on managed moves for the consideration of key stakeholders in FAP which sets out factors perceived to conduce to both good and bad outcomes, and including some objective case studies

Recommendation Three

- The Director instigates an independent evaluation of how participants perceive the collegiality of the managed moves process, and what might be done to enhance it.

Recommendation Four

- The Director requests headteachers who are invited to the FAP to include information about the number of managed moves to and from their school in their termly report to their governing body, such as data to include all managed moves whether brokered through the FAP or in some other way.

Recommendation Five

- The Governor Supports Team briefs secondary school governors on managed moves and provides guidance as to how they might scrutinise the issue.

Recommendation Six

- The Director requests that the headteachers notify the Local Authority of a managed move they have arranged other than through FAP, such notification to be provided by the headteacher of the presenting school immediately after a starting date for the move has been agreed by all relevant parties.

Recommendations Seven and Eight (to the Secretary of State for Education)

Recommendation Seven

- There should be statutory or at least non-statutory guidance to school admissions authorities on the subject of managed moves.

Recommendation Eight

- There should be consideration of whether paragraph 3.16 of the statutory guidance for school admission authorities should be extended to refer to managed moves so that (the suggested inserted words are highlighted) the relevant part reads as follows:” no school should be asked to take a disproportionate number of children who have been permanently excluded from other schools, who display challenging behaviour, who are placed via the Protocol, **or who have been admitted as the result of a managed move**”

Recommendations Nine and Ten (to Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools)

Recommendation Nine

- The secondary school inspection framework should encompass managed moves

Recommendation 10

- Consideration should be given in the HMCI’s Annual Report to the provision of an overview of how schools are using managed moves

62/21 What difference has this meeting made to Croydon's children

Following discussions, it was agreed that:

- Members had become more strategic in their questioning which led to a more effective meeting and use of time
- The discussions as part of informal briefings were invaluable
- Members remained focused on the topics of discussion.
- Some of the reports and presentations were late which was unacceptable and would be communicated to officers
- Presenting officers needed to be smoother in their delivery
- The summary sent by the Chair to members ahead of meetings was useful
- The Chair had attended a recent refresher training course on effective chairing of meetings and the practices learnt would be beneficial in all future meetings.

63/21 Work Programme 2021-22

The sub-committee noted the work programme for the remainder of the municipal year.

The meeting ended at 9.15 pm

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Signed:

Date:

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