

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S

COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

1000 hours on Wednesday, 17 May 2023, Committee Rooms 3 & 4, Council House, Victoria Square, B1 1BB

Minutes

Present:

Councillor Kerry Jenkins (Chair)

Councillors: Debbie Clancy, Des Hughes and Shehla Moledina

Other Representatives: Osamugi Ogbe, Parent Governor, Rabia Shami, Parent Governor Representative, and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese

Also Present:

Cllr. Julian Pritchard (T&F Group)

Cllr. Paul Tilsley (Deputy Chair of the T&F Group)

Cllr. Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families

Damilola Agbato, Service Lead, Partnerships, Insight and Prevention (on-line)

Chris Baggott, Public Health Service Lead

Karl Beese, Commissioning Manager - Adult Public Health

Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Linda Burnett, Adult Social Care (on-line)

Razia Butt, Director of Children and Families

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children's Trust

Vanessa Cusack, Senior Commissioning Officer - Public Health, Adults Social Care (on-line)

Helen Ellis, Director of SEND and Inclusion

Adill Hadi, Senior Youth Worker

Emma Haley, Area Manager, Aquarius

Sue Harrison, Strategic Director of Children and Families

Colette Lloyd, Service Manager, Aquarius

Jadieal Millwood, Youth Officer with Strategic Lead for Youth Violence

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Soulla Yiasouma, Head of Youth Service

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Public-I microsite and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllr. Shabina Bano, Cllr. Jilly Bermingham, Cllr. Simon Morrall and Justine Lomas, Roman Catholic Diocese.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting, and none were declared.

4. ACTION NOTES

(See document No. 1)

RESOLVED:

That the action notes of the committee meeting held on 5 April 2023 were agreed.

5. ACTION TRACKER

(See document No. 2)

The Chair advised that there were a few outstanding actions: the SEND Sufficiency Report - and the timeline for when this would be available was requested, the recruitment and retention rates of teachers in the city in comparison to other areas, and confirmation of the number of reduced short break packages.

RESOLVED:

That the action tracker was noted, and the timeline for when the SEND Sufficiency Report would be available to be provided.

6. YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUBSTANCE USE SERVICE (10.05 – 10.45)

(See documents No. 3, 4 & 5)

Karl Beese, Commissioning Manager - Adult Public Health, Chris Baggott, Public Health Service Lead, Emma Haley, Area Manager, Aquarius, and Colette Lloyd, Service Manager, Aquarius, were in attendance for this item.

Also, Linda Burnett, Adult Social Care, Vanessa Cusack, Senior Commissioning Officer - Public Health, Adults Social Care, and Damilola Agbato, Service Lead, Partnerships, Insight and Prevention, were in attendance on-line for this item.

In addition, Members of the Children and Young People's Mental Health Inquiry from the Health and Social Care O&S Committee had been invited for this item and Cllrs. Julian Pritchard and Paul Tilsley were in attendance.

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting, and the first presentation was given by Karl Beese and Chris Baggott, which included an overview of the Young People's Substance Use Service, the additional funding from the Office of Health Inequalities and Disparities (OHID), and future plans – including the Triple Zero City Strategy which was approved by Cabinet on 21 March 2023.

The second presentation was given by Colette Lloyd from Aquarius, and included details of the service, OHID - extended offer, their service model, referral data, multiple complexities and treatment data – with Aquarius looking at the bigger picture, complex needs – including Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and mental health need, and their integrated pathways of support - with Aquarius being integral to these other support services, and additional added value – such as the transition hub, family group support, and youth participation, which provided pockets of support.

During the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members, the main points included:

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and young people in unsuitable Housing / Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

- Colette Lloyd commented that the additional funding from the OHID provided opportunities for Aquarius to go into the community and for the practitioners in their transition team, and their outreach workers, to work alongside the YMCA, Trident and Accord etc. This gets them better connected to neighbourhood community groups, and Aquarius can then identify the problematic behaviours and work alongside the housing providers. Since March and April, they have been targeting particular areas and requested that Members contact them if they were aware of any particular problem areas.

- Chris Baggot highlighted that there was another OHID support grant which was designed to support people with housing issues, and they were planning a lot of training with housing providers. However, they were mindful that this should be used to plug the gaps, rather than duplicate where the housing providers should already be providing the support.

Manchester Met University and the Mental Health Offer in Universities in Birmingham

- Aquarius were currently working in partnership with Manchester Met University on a research project looking at the prevalence of mental health and substance use, to assist in the ways they support young people with mental health. Timelines for this work will be shared with the Committee.
- In relation to what Aquarius were doing regarding problematic substance use in universities in Birmingham; they have joined a partnership with Living Well, who have a social enterprise café situated close to the University of Birmingham (UoB), which was a wellbeing café. It was hoped that they would be able to provide support on substance use alongside Living Well, who provide the mental health support. Also, they will attend freshers' weeks, and they have linked in with Newman University and Aston University via their student wellbeing officers and peer networks, so they will hopefully work with the students.

Unknown Groups

- Chris Baggot highlighted they have a lot of data for those not engaged with adult services and a key part of the delivery of the recent grants, and their drugs and alcohol strategy, was to increase the numbers of those that were engaged. He questioned whether there was enough data and knowledge regarding nitrous oxide use and they were working on this unknown.

Mental Health Provision and Funding

- Karl Beese commented that the enhancements of the OHID has allowed Aquarius to offer a service for people aged 18 – 25. Previously, there had been a drop out of people who should have transitioned from children to adult services, and it was recognised that not all 18 year olds were suitable for this transition. Also, the service model change has allowed them to link in with other key mental health providers.
- Emma Haley highlighted the Harm to Hope Plan and at the time of publication the transition age was of concern, as it made up 6% of the numbers in treatment. In terms of their response, they have a service structure in place to respond to these needs. However, they could also do more if more funding became available.
- Aquarius were always looking at what more they could do if they see an increase or prevalence in young people with mental health being affected by Adverse

Childhood Experiences (ACE), and trauma, and Aquarius provide a trauma informed response. More specialist and comorbid services would be welcomed.

Tracking People Referred to Another Service(s)

- Aquarius has a holistic approach and methodology and assess needs as early as possible. There can be a variety of issues, such as mental health and housing, and they look to support the service user in engaging with other services and continue to hand hold and track them, so they get the support they need.

The Chair thanked them for their attendance and contribution to the two inquiries.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The report was noted.
- The evidence provided was to be used to inform the CCE, and Children and Young People's Mental Health Inquiries.
- Members to contact Aquarius if they are aware of any problem areas in relation to Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) and young people in unsuitable housing/Homes in Multiple Occupation (HMOs).
- Aquarius to provide the timeline for the Manchester Met University project.

7. YOUTH SERVICE (10.45 – 11.25)

(See document No. 6)

Soulla Yiasouma, Head of Youth Service, Jadieal Millwood, Youth Officer with Strategic Lead for Youth Violence, Adill Hadi, Senior Youth Worker, and Razia Butt, Director of Children and Families, were in attendance to provide evidence to the CCE Inquiry.

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and Soulla Yiasouma presented the highlights from the report. This included the Youth Service being proactive with the young person, having a curriculum programme regarding CCE, and they have responded to the issue of violence against young women and exploitation.

The Youth Service was about building relationships and working with the young person, and they were in a good place to respond when the young person was exhibiting a change in behaviour. They recognise the Youth Service cannot work alone and they have developed partnerships with the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), and voluntary organisations etc. Therefore, they respond to exploitation in a joined up way, and will walk alongside the young person, and provide encouragement and advocate on their behalf.

The Youth Service offers an early intervention and prevention service, and they were the young person's trusted adult. They have a strength based approach and have meaningful conversations with the young person, and it is the young person who sets the agenda.

Jadieal Millwood highlighted that CCE in Birmingham was increasing, and as a result there were additional vulnerabilities to young people. They have explored additional training for youth workers, so they can be better equipped to help and support the young person. They have targeted interventions and know what other services can be accessed. Also, they use different ways to engage with young people, such as using Virtual Reality (VR).

Youth workers were the trusted adult for the young person, and it was students in year 6 that showed vulnerabilities. The youth workers were aware of what the young people were being exposed to, and they help them to dismantle the ideology, and realise what in reality it means to be part of a gang and exploited, and what the alternatives are.

They provide one to one support for the young person who has been referred into the Youth Service and all Youth Centres have additional staff which means more young people can be supported.

There were avenues of vulnerability for young people, such as social media, and the Youth Service operates a public health approach. Examples of the service were given, including a young lady who was a victim of CCE, whereby the youth worker engaged and built a relationship with her, so the youth worker then became part of the support package and hand-held them in accessing other services. This was about working with the young person to make a decision that they want to make a change.

Adill Hadi has worked in the Youth Service for 22 years and has worked with a number of cohorts of young people and they were well established with these. It was about building resilience, providing a safe space, and providing support without judgement. They have a level of intelligence about the young person that other support services do not have. An example was given where they were supporting the family as well as the young person, who they were better informed about than other services, as they have an established relationship. They provide upskilling and training to colleagues and partners and they were out in the communities.

The Chair commented that it was great to hear first-hand experience, the value of young people wanting to be engaged, and the time it takes to develop relationships, which was usually underestimated and thanked them for the work they were undertaking.

During the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members, the main points included:

- Paragraph 1.3 on page 77 stated 'the service worked with 7,010 individual young people and had 97,245 attendances in 2022/23'. The service was an open access service, and it was about giving skills for those going through childhood to adulthood. They were not a problem solving service, they work with young people.
- There has been an increase in the delivery of single sex provision and the 'Girls Groups' have increased from three groups to nine. They meet regularly once a month with the Police, so they can understand the issues.

- Adill Hadi was working with young men and misogyny, looking at challenging the narrative and negativity towards women.
- The exploitation of young people was on the rise and what more can be done, especially when “families feel at a loss at what to do” was questioned. It was acknowledged that it was difficult to engage with young people and this takes time. A major barrier was information sharing protocols, and the need for all agencies to work together and maximise the investment; the experience also needs to be seen through the young person’s eyes.
- There was a need to build resilience so young people were stronger and can say no to those that want to draw them into criminal exploitation. They need support from schools etc., and the young person being able to access services. Birmingham was in a better place than it was 3-4 years ago, as there were now a lot of support services, and an early help agenda for those at low level risk to prevent them from reaching high thresholds. Young people were victims and an example where a young person asked the Police to put a tag on them so they could not be exploited was given.
- The Cabinet Member highlighted the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) and that the young women’s IAG was also advising the Home Office. At the recent event she attended, Year 7 students and younger students explained difficult issues to the rest of the group they were working with. She will pick up with officers how this information can be joined up to support schools.
- How successful the Youth Service was with working with schools and colleges was queried. They had really good relationships with some schools, but not all schools were engaged. Jadieal Millwood was working with primary schools, as the school offer concentrated on primary schools because there was a task force for secondary schools. Adill Hadi sits on the school police panel meetings.
- Razia Butt highlighted the need to demonstrate the value of social return, and the universal offer, and she will assist with the information sharing issues raised.

The Chair thanked officers for their attendance and hoped to invite them to a future committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report was noted, and the information provided was to be used to inform the CCE Inquiry.

8. SEND ACCELERATED PROGRESS PLAN (11.25 – 12.05)

(See documents No. 7 and No. 8)

Sue Harrison, Strategic Director for Children and Families, and Helen Ellis, Director for SEND and Inclusion, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and Helen Ellis gave the presentation and highlighted the context, the four objectives, and what they were doing now - with the focus being on quality assurance.

Sue Harrison stated that it was an accurate reflection on where they were, so much work was going on, and she was pleased with progress, but there was a lot more to do, and they were not complacent. They had now appointed a Head of SENAR which will increase capacity, and further permanent recruitment in SENAR was ongoing.

During the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members, the main points included:

- Cllr. Debbie Clancy requested the spend information for staffing within the SEND and Inclusion Service, as the figures she has for interim staffing for 2021-22 were concerning.
- Cllr. Shehla Moledina questioned how well they knew the children and families they work with and if they collaborate with schools, and other services to address other issues, such as poor housing. Helen Ellis commented that this was about connectivity and having a multi-agency approach, for instance they work with the Children's Trust etc., and more work was being done on this. Sue Harrison reassured the Committee that the Birmingham Children's Partnership, which was a multi-agency partnership, were committing to everybody having a better knowledge of children, young people, and families with SEND. Everyone was asking for more training, but they have not got the capacity to deliver it at the moment, and this is a big aspiration for the partnership.
- Cllr. Des Hughes raised a number of queries and concerns:
 - What was in the DfE stocktakes was queried. It was confirmed that what was presented today was the evidence they had provided to the DfE.
 - Tribunals should be a last resort and were reducing. They were using mediation more and will continue to do this.
 - Whether the support service for families was reducing which impacted on the reducing number of tribunals was queried. The Cabinet Member assured the Committee that the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) was there for parents that needed support and they will continue to provide this.
 - The quality of the Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs), and naming schools within these: it was agreed that there were issues around the quality of some of the EHCPs. A multi-agency task group has been convened, which families will be part of, and they will review and

monitor on an on-going basis. This work will include the issues raised regarding the naming of schools in the EHCPs.

- The Accelerated Progress Plan on the Council's website mentions 'requires baseline' for some of the indicators (for instance page 26). Helen Ellis undertook to look into this and report back.
- Due to the agenda overrunning it was agreed that further questions would be submitted in writing to officers, and Sue Harrison highlighted that they were planning further briefings for all Members and dates will be coming out shortly, which will supplement the written response.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The report was noted.
- The following to be provided via e-mail:
 - The spend information for staffing within the SEND and Inclusion Service
 - Information on the indicators in the APP on the Council's website that state, 'requires baseline.'
- The Committee to provide further questions in writing for officers to provide a written response.

9. OFSTED INSPECTION OF BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ILACS)

(See document No. 9)

Andy Couldrick, Chief Executive, Children's Trust, was in attendance for this item and gave a summary of the inspection, which was published on 18 April 2023. He highlighted that the DfE would now reconsider its position on the intervention that was currently in place in light of this, and thanked officers within the Children's Trust.

Also, feedback on the statistics for short break provision, and an update on the recent press article, was provided.

Members recognised the huge achievement and congratulated the Children's Trust.

RESOLVED:

That the Ofsted findings and overall judgement of 'Good' was noted.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No. 10)

The Chair asked whether Members had any issues they wanted included in the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24. These issues would be added to those previously agreed to be scheduled (pages 152 and 153) and prioritised by Members sitting on the Committee in 2023/24.

The Chair commented that she would want the following added:

- Home to School Transport.
- SENDIASS.
- The review of short breaks (this had been agreed at the last committee meeting).

RESOLVED:

That the Committee reviewed the work programme completed during 2022/23 and recommended the following issues to be included in the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2023/24:

- Home to School Transport.
- SENDIASS.

11. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

12. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

13. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

In an urgent situation between meetings, the Chair jointly with the relevant Chief Officer has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.43 hours.