

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 20 July 2022

Present:

Councillor Reid – in the Chair
Councillors Cooley, Gartside, Lovecy and Sadler

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mr G Cleworth, Parent Governor Representative

Co-opted Non-Voting Members:

Miss S Iltaf, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People
Al Ford, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)
Michael Devine, Manchester Integrated Care Partnership
Vicky Smith, Manchester Integrated Care Partnership

Apologies:

Councillor Alijah, Amin, Bano, Hewitson, Johnson and Judge
Dr W Omara, Parent Governor Representative
Ms L Smith, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

CYP/22/33 Minutes

Decision

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 22 June 2022.

CYP/22/34 Re-establishment of the Ofsted Subgroup

The Committee received a report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit which provided Members with the terms of reference and current work programme for the Ofsted Subgroup. The Committee was asked to re-establish the Ofsted Subgroup for the municipal year 2022 - 2023 and agree the terms of reference, work programme and membership of the Subgroup.

Decisions

1. To re-establish the Ofsted Subgroup for the 2022 - 2023 municipal year and agree the terms of reference and work programme.
2. That Councillor Lovecy be appointed as Chair of the Ofsted Subgroup and that Councillors Gartside, Reid and Sadler and Miss Iltaf be appointed to the Subgroup.

CYP/22/35 Our Year

The Committee received a report and presentation of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which provided an overview of the activities and work against the six themes of Our Year and outlined the next steps.

The main points and themes within the presentation included:

- Highlights since the launch of Our Year, outlining activities in relation to the six main themes, which had been based on feedback from children and young people, specifically:
 - Equal and included
 - Play and activity
 - Climate
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Connected
 - Safe and secure
- Pledges from the Council, businesses and partner organisations;
- Activity planned for the rest of the year; and
- The journey towards becoming a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To welcome the work taking place, in particular that this was being done with young people, listening to their voices;
- What would be put in place to ensure that, once UNICEF UK Child Friendly City was achieved, the work would continue to progress and children and young people's voices would continue to be heard; and
- What was being done to reach the young people, and the areas of the city, that had not yet been reached by this work.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People advised that the programme of work to become a UNICEF UK Child Friendly City was likely to take three or four years and he agreed that this work needed to be embedded permanently and referenced the way that structures had been put in place to embed an Age Friendly approach. He suggested that more information on this be included next time the Committee received an update on Our Year. The Year of the Child Coordinator explained that part of the application process was consideration of the governance arrangements and how this work would be progressed.

In response to a Member's question, the Executive Member informed the Committee about the climate change summit which had taken place in June, recognised the importance that young people placed on tackling climate change and emphasised the Council's commitment to acting on this. He advised that more information on this would be included in the next report on Our Year. The Director of Education described some of the positive feedback from the summit and advised that there was a lot to build on and that this would be an ongoing piece of work beyond 2022.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Director of Education advised that the music activities provided by One Education which were included in the presentation were not funded by the Council. She reported that One Education had been running these activities for some time with a small charge to the children who attended but, as part of Our Year, had decided to remove the charge.

The Director of Education outlined the work to reach as many children and young people as possible, engaging with different groups and contacts, including those for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND), Young Carers, Looked After Children and Care Leavers. The Year of the Child Coordinator explained how more young people were being reached through commissioned youth and play providers. The Chair emphasised the importance of commissioning outreach work through the new area panels.

In response to a question from the Chair about Our Year funding, the Executive Member advised that there was a limited amount of funding available to help support events but that the Council could assist in other ways, for example, with venues. The Chair commented on the importance of utilising social value. She also welcomed the inclusion of Baby Week in the programme of events and suggested that this was something which could be continued.

Decision

That the Committee will monitor the progress and legacy of Our Year.

CYP/22/36 The impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health and well-being

The Committee received a report of Al Ford, the Director of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) which explored the impact of COVID-19 on children and young people's mental health and well-being.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- The impact of the pandemic and lockdown on children and young people's mental health;
- Manchester CAMHS waiting time and demand; and
- CAMHS response under the COVID-19 pandemic.

Some of the key points and themes that arose from the Committee's discussions were:

- To recognise the way that CAMHS had adapted and provided services differently during the pandemic and to thank them for their work;
- Concern about outcomes for young people who were referred to CAMHS but told that they did not meet the threshold;
- How the M-Thrive Hubs were developing;
- The roll-out of Manchester Thrive in Education (Mental Health Support Teams in schools); and
- Variations in referral levels across different parts of the city.

Al Ford reported that the clinical threshold for CAMHS was defined nationally and that the service responded based on clinical priority, with the most unwell children seen first. He advised Members that one of the reasons for mobilising the M-Thrive offer was for the children and young people who did not meet the clinical threshold, who could then be directed to the M-Thrive Hubs, which could identify the right service to meet the needs of the child or young person. He explained that the first Hub had been established in north Manchester, with two further Hubs opening this year. Therefore, he advised, the greatest impact so far had been in the north of the city, where the model had had time to mature. This, he reported, included fewer inappropriate referrals to CAMHS, which meant that children and young people were being referred to a service which was appropriate for their needs in a more timely fashion. He informed Members that this would be monitored and evaluated as the M-Thrive model embedded. He outlined the work taking place to roll out Manchester Thrive in Schools, advising that it was hoped that this would be expanded in the autumn term and reach more schools but that his service did not have control over the rate of coverage and which schools were involved. He advised that this was not intended to replace any existing provision individual schools might have, such as school counsellors.

In response to requests for data about the ethnicity and geographical spread of CAMHS referrals, Al Ford informed Members that he would provide this information at a later date. He outlined how the service was trying to move from a westernised clinical model to a needs-based model and how Equality Diversity and Inclusion were incorporated into the service, including making the workforce more diverse and providing opportunities for progression. He recognised comments from the Chair that there had been some benefits for autistic young people when lockdown was first introduced; however, he reported that the emotional health of this cohort had subsequently declined and outlined how the service had responded to this. In response to a Member's question, he advised that the service was aware of the impact of working during the pandemic on staff and outlined the programmes introduced to support staff welfare. In response to a question from the Chair, he reported that the service was seeing more asylum-seeking children and young people, including those who were fleeing wars across the world. In response to a question from the Chair, he outlined the funding arrangements for his service, advising that there was now increased investment in children and young people's mental health and the challenge was in putting in place a sustainable workforce.

Members discussed receiving a further report on CAMHS or children's mental health at a future meeting.

Decisions

1. To request data on the ethnicity and geographical spread of CAMHS referrals, in order to be able to identify any gaps.
2. That the Committee will continue to monitor children and young people's mental health services.

[Councillor Reid declared a personal interest as a Governor of Manchester Central Foundation NHS Trust.]

CYP/22/37 Review of Home to School Travel Support

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education and the Head of Access and Sufficiency which set out the proposal for two home to school travel support policies, one for children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) who were between the ages of 5 and 16 and one for young people with an EHCP who were between the ages of 16 and 25. The Committee was invited to comment on the report prior to its submission to the Executive on 22 July 2022.

The main points and themes within the report included:

- Background information;
- Main issues;
- Details of the proposed policies; and
- Wider service improvement.

The Chair highlighted the review of school buses which was currently taking place. She outlined how she had been made aware that there was not an equitable system in place for the provision of school buses across the Greater Manchester area and had raised this with relevant stakeholders. She reported that she was working with the Chair of the Environment and Climate Change Scrutiny Committee on how the two Committees could address this issue and that the Committee would receive a report on this at a future meeting. She informed Members that, although the report the Committee was considering at today's meeting related specifically to children with an EHCP, some children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) who were not able to use public transport might be able to travel to school using a school bus if that was available.

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Access and Sufficiency confirmed that if a Looked After Child was entitled to Home to School Transport this would automatically continue if they were moved to a new foster care placement. She confirmed that the policy applied to children in both mainstream and special schools who had an EHCP. In response to a question from the Chair, she confirmed that the transport provision would continue up to the age of 25, as long as the young person was still accessing education. The Chair highlighted the increasing focus on promoting independence for young people with SEND, including teaching them how to use public transport independently. The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People highlighted that funded driving lessons were included in the policy as another way to promote independence.

The Chair highlighted the issues facing homeless families who had been placed outside of the city, further away from their child's school. The Director of Education reported that Home to School Transport arrangements for a child with an EHCP would continue if they were placed in accommodation outside of the city. She advised that, if the child did not have an EHCP, they would be entitled to a free school travel pass but acknowledged that it could be difficult for families who were housed some distance from their child's school.

In response to a Member's question, the Head of Access and Sufficiency outlined how parents and young people were being consulted on the development of these policies.

Decision

To endorse the recommendations to the Executive that:

The Executive is recommended to: -

- (1) Consider the recommendations of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.
- (2) Agree in principle the following documents appended to this report, and to authorise the Director of Education to consult on the proposed implementation of them:
 - a) Home to School Travel support policy for 5–16-year-olds
 - b) Home to School Travel support policy for post 16
 - c) Home to School Travel support summary document
- (3) Authorise the Director of Education to consider any responses received to the consultation and to agree to the implementation of the proposed policies appended to this report if she considers it appropriate to do so.
- (4) Consider the work to date on the wider service improvement programme and agree to progress the identified areas of improvement.

CYP/22/38 Overview Report

A report of the Governance and Scrutiny Support Unit was submitted. The overview report contained key decisions within the Committee's remit, responses to previous recommendations and the Committee's work programme, which the Committee was asked to approve.

A Member proposed that the Committee receive a report on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome. The Chair suggested that this could form part of a wider report and that she would discuss outside of the meeting how this should be scrutinised.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme, subject to the above comments.