

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 19 June 2019

Present:

Councillor Stone – in the Chair

Councillors Hewitson, T Judge, Kilpatrick, Lovecy, McHale, Madeleine Monaghan, Reeves, Reid, Sadler and Wilson

Co-opted Voting Members:

Mrs J Miles, Representative of the Diocese of Salford

Dr W Omara, Parent Governor Representative

Co-opted Non Voting Members:

Mr L Duffy, Secondary Sector Teacher Representative

Also present:

Councillor Bridges, Executive Member for Children and Schools

Apologies:

Councillor Sameem Ali

Mr A Arogundade, Parent Governor Representative

Mr R Lammas, Primary Sector Teacher Representative

Ms Z Stepan, Parent Governor Representative

CYP/19/20 Minutes

Decisions

1. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 5 March 2019.
2. To receive the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 12 March 2019.

CYP/19/21 Update on the Young Carers Strategy 2017 - 2019

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which provided an overview of progress on work with Young Carers and proposed next steps in the refresh and implementation of the Young Carers Strategy.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- A summary of the key findings from the Young Carers Group research;
- Progress made so far, including the recruitment of a Young Carers Co-ordinator, who was present at the meeting;
- Next steps; and
- The Young Carers Strategic Action Plan.

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

- That Members welcomed the Young Carers Strategic Action Plan;
- The challenges relating to transition stages in education, particularly the transition to further and higher education;
- How young carers were being identified by schools; and
- Mental Health First Aiders in schools and sixth forms and how they could be used to support young carers.

The Head of School Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND acknowledged that the transition to sixth form was challenging for young carers. She reported that, following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), schools had received conflicting messages about what information they could share with colleges and other education providers when pupils transitioned to the next stage of their education. The Director of Education informed Members that her service was working with the Council's Legal and Audit Services regarding this and reported that this work could include the creation of a standardised form which schools could use to pass on information at the transition stage while remaining compliant with the GDPR. The Young Carers Co-ordinator reported that a key part of her role would be to support young carers through the transition stages, including planning for university from the age of 14 and making sure that young people didn't have to keep repeating their stories at every stage.

The Head of School Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND commented that, although the Young Carers Strategy had been launched in 2017, its implementation and the identification of young carers had not been consistent across the city. She informed Members that there was a need to improve knowledge and understanding about and advocacy for young carers in schools and, therefore, the strategy was being refreshed to address this. She outlined how, when dealing with issues such as absence and lateness, schools were now encouraged to explore the possibility that the pupil could be a young carer. She reported that part of the Young Carers Co-ordinator's role would be to ensure that schools were aware of and consistently responding to these identification triggers. She informed Members that she would look into the Mental Health First Aiders model and how this could support young carers and report back to the Committee on this via the Chair.

Decisions

1. To note that the Head of School Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND will look into the Mental Health First Aiders model and how this could support young carers and report back to the Committee on this via the Chair.
2. To request that an update on the work to promote consistent, legally-compliant information-sharing at transition stages be included in a future report on the Promoting Inclusion and Preventing Exclusion Strategy.

CYP/19/22 Manchester's Promoting Inclusion and Preventing Exclusion Strategy

The Committee received a report of the Director of Education which provided an overview of the progress with the development and planned implementation of a multi-agency Promoting Inclusion and Preventing Exclusion Strategy for Manchester.

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- The context of this work, including data on permanent and fixed-term exclusions at Manchester primary and secondary schools in comparison to national figures;
- An overview of the strategy; and
- Next steps.

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

- To welcome the strategy;
- To request a breakdown of the reasons for exclusions;
- What was being done to address off-rolling;
- The importance of ensuring that school governors were trained on school exclusions and off-rolling;
- To request further information on the independent review of the use of fixed-term exclusions in the specialist provisions across the city for young people who experienced Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH), including the Secondary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and to ask for the number of fixed-term exclusions from the Secondary PRU which had taken place this year; and
- To note the positive examples in the case studies and ask how widespread this good practice was.

The Director of Education reported that, once the latest data on school exclusions was available, the reasons for exclusion could be provided to the Committee. The Head of School Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND informed Members that, following their questioning at a previous meeting of the number of exclusions classified as being for 'other reasons', officers were now going back to any schools which gave 'other' as a reason for an exclusion to obtain more precise information.

The Head of the Virtual School reported that off-rolling had been covered in the national Timpson Review of School Exclusions and was also addressed in this Strategy and she outlined conversations which were taking place with schools on this issue. The Director of Education informed Members that the issue of off-rolling had been incorporated into the new Ofsted Framework and that schools were likely to be judged as inadequate in the leadership and management category if they were found to be off-rolling children. She advised Members that Ofsted had made it clear that it was only acceptable for an agreement to be made to remove a pupil from the school roll when this was in the child's best interests, otherwise it would be classed as off-rolling. She reported that officers were using Chair of Governor briefings and other

meetings to inform governors about the new Ofsted Framework and about the role of governors in identifying patterns and trends which suggested that off-rolling could be taking place in their school and challenging this.

The Head of School Quality Assurance and Strategic SEND reported that former Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) were supporting the review of fixed-term exclusions in specialist provisions, including the Secondary PRU, but that there had been a delay due to the health issues of one of the former HMIs. She advised Members that the report had been expected to be completed by the end of this half-term but that this might now be pushed back. She offered to circulate statistics on the number of fixed-term exclusions from the Secondary PRU this year to Members of the Committee. She also informed Members that the Council had been heavily engaged with the PRU over the last term in relation to the Promoting Inclusion and Preventing Exclusion Strategy and that the PRU had been fully engaged and supportive of the Strategy.

The Head of the Virtual School reported that there was a large amount of good practice taking place across the city and outlined some of the models including Rights Respecting Schools, the Adverse Childhood Experiences pilot and Mentally Healthy Schools. She reported that this work needed to be mapped and good practice shared across the city. The Executive Member for Children and Schools reported that it was planned to have a launch event for the Strategy in the Autumn term, including workshops where best practice could be shared. He offered to circulate the date of the launch event to Committee Members when it had been decided. He also informed Members that a national day of Rights Respecting Schools would be taking place on 4 July. The Chair requested that information on the Rights Respecting Schools national day be circulated to Members of the Committee.

Decisions

1. To note that the national Timpson Review of Exclusions Report has now been published and the recommendations contained therein are welcomed and are reflected in Manchester's Promoting Inclusion and Preventing Exclusion Strategy.
2. To note that the provisional school exclusions data for 2018-19 shows a reduction in the use of permanent exclusion compared to the 2017-18 data following the increased focus and challenge.
3. To request a further report on citywide school exclusion performance once the 2017-18 validated exclusions data is published, including information on the reasons for exclusions.
4. To request that this report include an update on the independent review of the use of fixed-term exclusions in the specialist provisions across the city for young people who experience Social, Emotional and Mental Health Needs (SEMH), including the Secondary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), and information on the destinations of pupils at the PRU.

5. To request that the figures on fixed-term exclusions from the Secondary PRU this year be circulated to Members of the Committee.
6. To note that the Executive Member for Children and Schools will circulate the date of the Strategy launch event and to request that Members also be provided with information on the national day of Rights Respecting Schools.

[Councillor Stone declared a personal interest as a member of the governing body of the Secondary Pupil Referral Unit.]

CYP/19/23 Complex Safeguarding Report

The Committee received a report of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which provided an update on the development of the Complex Safeguarding Hub and focused on the identification and response to vulnerable children and young people at risk of exploitation including the approach and impact from risk management. It also provided feedback on a recent Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Challenge in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

Officers referred to the main points and themes within the report which included:

- Governance and Accountability Arrangements;
- The Complex Safeguarding Hub;
- Missing from Home and Care; and
- The LGA Peer Challenge in relation to CSE.

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

- The importance of safeguarding young people visiting Manchester, not just Manchester residents, including young people attending events in the city and trying to travel home afterwards;
- What was being done to address the emerging use of Xanax by young people; and
- The workloads of staff within the Complex Safeguarding Hub.

The Strategic Head of Early Help acknowledged the issue of young people being reported missing from home due to difficulties and delays in travelling home after events. She reported that work was taking place at a Greater Manchester level on the role of transport providers in relation to safeguarding and she offered to raise Members' concerns regarding this with the Greater Manchester Partnership.

The Strategic Head of Early Help outlined the work taking place in relation to the use of Xanax among young people. She reported that the Population Health and Wellbeing Team was leading on communicating public health messages on Xanax and was monitoring trends in relation to Xanax use. She informed Members that the Complex Safeguarding Hub was being used to co-ordinate intelligence-gathering in relation to the contextual safeguarding issues, looking not just at what was happening within peer groups but also issues relating to the supply of Xanax and the risk of exploitation.

The Strategic Head of Early Help reported that, as part of the implementation of the Complex Safeguarding Hub, an assessment had taken place of the resources required. She advised Members that demand and capacity were reviewed on an ongoing basis and that currently the Hub was well-resourced. She also informed Members that, while the Hub provided a specialist resource, ownership of cases was shared, with staff in the Hub working alongside locality social workers and other partners.

The Executive Member for Children and Schools informed Members that, following the recent LGA peer review, the Council had received verbal feedback which had been largely positive, including in relation to Greater Manchester Police's role, while also highlighting a few areas for improvement. He offered to share the formal letter providing feedback, once this was available.

Decisions

1. To note that the letter from the LGA providing feedback on the review of the effectiveness of the Complex Safeguarding Hub and multi-agency arrangements in response to children at risk of sexual exploitation and those being exploited will be shared with Committee Members, when it is available.
2. To continue to monitor this area of work.

CYP/19/24 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 2019 - 2020 and agree the terms of reference, work programme and membership of the Subgroup.

The Chair recommended that consideration of inspection reports and performance information for services for children in need of help and protection, looked after children and care leavers be removed from the Subgroup's remit. He also recommended that consideration of inspection reports for childminders be added to the Subgroup's remit.

Decisions

1. To re-establish the Ofsted Subgroup for the 2019 - 2020 municipal year and agree the terms of reference and work programme, subject to the above amendments.
2. That Councillor Lovecy be appointed as Chair of the Ofsted Subgroup and that Councillors Hewitson, Kilpatrick, McHale, Madeline Monaghan, Reeves, Reid and Stone, Mrs Miles and Dr Omara be appointed to the Subgroup.

3. To note that it is proposed to hold four meetings of the Subgroup during the municipal year and that Members' preference is for these meetings to be held on Wednesday afternoons.

CYP/19/25 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.

Decision

To note the report and agree the work programme.