

# **Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee**

## **Minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2024**

### **Present:**

Councillor Gartside – in the Chair

Councillors N Ali, Amin, E Bell, Fletcher, Jafri, Lovecy, Mandongwe, McHale, Muse, Nunney and Sadler

### **Co-opted Voting Members:**

Mr G Cleworth, Parent Governor Representative

Mr Y Yonis, Parent Governor Representative

### **Also present:**

Councillor Reid, Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People

Councillor Cooley, Ward Councillor for Brooklands

Detective Inspector Chris Chadderton, Greater Manchester Police (GMP)

Detective Inspector Michelle Buchanan, GMP

### **Apologies:**

Ms S Davies, Parent Governor Representative

### **CYP/24/39 Appointment of Chair for the Meeting**

As the position of Chair was vacant, the Committee Support Officer asked for nominations for a Member to chair the meeting. A Member nominated Councillor Gartside, which was seconded by another Member and agreed by the Committee.

### **Decision**

To appoint Councillor Gartside as Chair for the meeting.

### **CYP/24/40 Minutes**

#### **Decisions**

1. That the minutes of the meetings held on 26 June 2024 and 17 July 2024 be approved as a correct record.
2. To receive the minutes of the Ofsted Subgroup meeting held on 24 July 2024.

### **CYP/24/41 Thriving Families Programme**

The Committee considered the report and presentation of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which provided an update on the work of the Thriving Families programme, which had been piloted in South Locality since January 2024.

Key points and themes in the presentation included:

- An overview of the model;
- Progress to date;
- Next steps; and
- A summary of the independent implementation review carried out by Performance, Research and Intelligence.

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

- That the referrals were disproportionately White British;
- Ensuring that cultural awareness was embedded in the work, particularly as the service was rolled out to more diverse parts of the city;
- How were schools being engaged in this work; and
- The impact of recruitment issues on service users.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People highlighted the important role of this new non-statutory service in early intervention and prevention.

The Practice Lead (Thriving Families) informed Members that the figures in the report related to South Locality, which did have a higher White British population than some other areas of the city. She reported that, as this programme was rolled out to other parts of the city, her service was working to ensure that the model was accessible for the diverse communities across the city. She reported that schools had been engaged in the Thriving Families programme from an early stage, before it went live, to ensure that they understood this work and that, when working with each individual family, consideration was given to how the service could work in partnership with the school, noting that school attendance levels were a particular area of concern in this part of the city.

The Performance and Insight Manager reported that there had been delays with the recruitment of Family Support Workers which had meant that other members of the team had had to cover until they were in place but this had not affected the number of families that they were able to work with. In response to a Member's question, she advised that 53% of the children across the city who were on child protection plans were White British and that in South Locality this rose to 68%. She recognised the Member's point about the importance of being culturally aware, particularly as the service was rolled out to other parts of the city, and reported that this had emerged as one of the recommendations from the focus groups.

The Acting Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) informed the Committee that a lot of work had taken place across his service in relation to identity and culture and he assured Members that officers would be very attuned to these issues as the programme was rolled out across the city. He advised that he would report back to the Committee at a future meeting on learning from the roll-out of Thriving Families to other areas of the city and that this would include how the service was responding to the different demographics.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Practice Lead (Thriving Families) clarified that the Domestic Abuse Worker role was split into two part-time posts so

that one postholder could work with the survivor and one with the perpetrator and that there were ongoing discussions about the best approach, within the funding available.

## **Decision**

To receive an update report at a future meeting, in order to scrutinise the impact of the service, and a further report once it has been rolled out across all Localities.

[Councillor Mandongwe declared a personal interest as a trustee of the Dimobi Children's Disability Trust and Dimobi Women's Trust.]

## **CYP/24/42 Manchester Complex Safeguarding Report**

The Committee considered the report and presentation of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which summarised the partnership arrangements in place in Manchester to respond to children at risk of exploitation, including practice model, governance and assurance activity.

Key points and themes in the presentation included:

- Overview and purpose of the Complex Safeguarding Hub;
- Complex Safeguarding Team offer;
- Need;
- Profile of children;
- Outcomes and impact; and
- Priorities for the future.

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

- Independent Return Interviews;
- Clarification on Missing from Home and Missing from Care and the difference between missing and absent;
- Whether information was fed back to schools regarding Operation Vulcan;
- Police operations involving more than one police force; and
- Gender differences in relation to young people referred in relation to Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), the under-identification of girls affected by CCE and the under-identification of CSE in general and specifically in relation to boys, and how this could be addressed.

The Assistant Director (North and Complex Safeguarding) reported that there was a statutory duty to offer an Independent Return Interview (IRI) on their return to children who had been reported missing and that they were encouraged to take up that offer but it was voluntary. She explained that the same offer was made to children Missing from Home and those Missing from Care but it was provided by two different, co-located teams. She commented on the additional challenges in getting families and their children who were Missing from Home to engage with the offer compared to those Missing from Care, while advising that every case was assessed by the service's Attendance and Guidance Service (AGS). The Strategic Lead

(Complex Safeguarding) clarified how GMP now only accepted reports of children who were missing, not those who were absent, to enable the correct, timely response to children who were genuinely missing.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People explained the challenges for Children's Home Managers in determining whether a child was absent or missing.

The Assistant Director (North and Complex Safeguarding) advised that her service had education links for all its operations to communicate with schools and that sessions were delivered to schools' Designated Safeguarding Leads every term and that, where an operation involved children from a particular school, the school was involved in the meetings throughout.

Detective Inspector Chris Chadderton, GMP, informed Members that notification was sent to the school when GMP had contact with one of their pupils, in a similar way to the Operation Encompass approach for children affected by Domestic Abuse, and that Operation Luca silver meetings involved an education link. In response to a Member's question, he reported that young people who were referred into the Hub were allocated a Social Worker and a Police Officer who would work together on the best way to engage with that young person, advising that some young people were not initially open to meeting with the police so might initially meet only with the Social Worker. He reported that evidence-led prosecutions were pursued where there was no disclosure from the young person or limited information provided by them, noting that some young people did not recognise that they were being exploited. In relation to police operations involving more than one force, he reported that strong relationships had been developed with other forces, providing examples of where GMP had worked effectively with other forces, while acknowledging that joint working could be improved further.

The Assistant Director (North and Complex Safeguarding) reported that her service was monitoring the referral data to recognise and address under-identification issues. She informed Members about work to raise awareness about CSE with schools and communities. She reported that her service had identified that few girls from black and minority ethnic groups were being referred to the Hub and that AFRUCA had been commissioned to undertake some work in relation to this, which it was hoped would identify ways that the service could improve, and that trusted relationships were being developed with relevant organisations in localities. In response to a Member's comments, she stated that the Hub would look at how the format of the Annual Report could be improved in future.

In response to a question from the Chair, the Strategic Lead (Complex Safeguarding) reported that the Hub was working closely with Localities to ensure that the Hub could fully input into plans for children and young people. The Assistant Director (North and Complex Safeguarding) outlined how the format of the plan had been redesigned, advising that the same format was used for Children In Need, Child Protection and Cared for Children.

## Decision

To endorse the proposed priorities for 2024/25 and note that the Committee will receive the next Annual Report in the following municipal year.

### **CYP/24/43 Manchester Youth Justice Plan 2024/25**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) which outlined in detail the vision, priorities, performance, and impact being achieved.

Key points and themes in the report included:

- Equality and inclusion;
- Early intervention, prevention and diversion services;
- Custody, remand and resettlement;
- Restorative Justice and Victim Services;
- Quality of practice; and
- Education, training and employment.

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

- How groups which the service worked with, such as AFRUCA and SHiFT, were recruited, noting that they were mainly London-based and that there were a lot of Manchester-based groups who knew the area and local communities well;
- Retaining young people who had been through the Youth Justice system and turned their lives around as positive role models;
- Work with GMP;
- The use of Joint Enterprise; and
- Work to address the radicalisation of children, in relation to racism and the violent disorder over the summer.

The Acting Strategic Director (Children and Education Services) reported that the service had a pre-existing contract with AFRUCA which had a degree of flexibility within it and that the work with SHiFT was due to a funding opportunity, evidence base and a bespoke need. He acknowledged the Member's point about utilising the knowledge and experience of local organisations and offered to meet with the Member outside the meeting to discuss her knowledge and insight into local organisations. He advised that, across Children's Services as a whole, local service providers did work as partners with the Council.

In response to a question about Joint Enterprise, the Head of Youth Justice reported that his service had been working with GMP in relation to children who were suspected of serious group offences, with increased use of bail rather than remanding into custody. He advised that his service worked closely with GMP on child-centred policing, including a focus on avoiding the criminalisation of children who had committed very low-level offences, providing interventions for them without criminalising them. He reported that young adults were now being invited back into

the service, highlighting young adults who had shared their experience of youth justice and rehabilitation and two young adults who were now working in the NHS and going into custodial establishments to ensure that children's health needs were met. He informed Members that, if a child came into the service in relation to an offence which was a hate crime, the reasons for the presenting behaviour would be fully assessed and analysed. He advised that he and other members of his service were on the Prevent Steering Group, which would be the means of delivering early intervention and prevention work in relation to radicalisation, including racism. In response to a Member's question, he agreed to provide the data on the breakdown of offences by ethnicity and offered to meet with the Member to discuss this further.

The Team Manager (Youth Justice) reported that there were three police officers integrated in the Youth Justice teams, in north, central and south, which aided communication between the Council and GMP. A Member asked for the contact details of these police officers to be shared.

The Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People expressed concern about a lack of consistent staffing in neighbourhood policing and the impact of this on child-friendly policing and the ability of police to know the neighbourhood and advised that she was raising this issue with the relevant people.

The Chair suggested that, when the Committee's new Chair was appointed, they should liaise with the Chair of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on the subject of Youth Justice to discuss any future actions, visits or follow-up reports.

### **Decision**

That, when the Committee's new Chair is appointed, they should liaise with the Chair of the Communities and Equalities Scrutiny Committee on the subject of Youth Justice to discuss any future actions, visits or follow-up reports.

### **CYP/24/44                      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.