
Chair	Councillor Sophie Conway
Councillors in Attendance	Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Soraya Adejare, Cllr Ajay Chauhan, Cllr Humaira Garasia, Cllr Clare Joseph, Cllr James Peters, Cllr Clare Potter and Cllr Caroline Woodley
Apologies:	Greg Condon, Mental Health Programme Manager, City & Hackney CCG Laura Smith, Clinical Lead, Children's Social Care, Hackney Learning Trust
Co-optees	Graham Hunter, Michael Lobenstein, Jane Heffernan, Jo Macleod, Ernell Watson, Shuja Shaikh, Jodine Clarke, Maariyah Patel and Aleigha Reeves
In Attendance	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People▪ Cllr Christopher Kennedy, Cabinet Member for Early Years and Play▪ Anne Canning, Group Director, Children Families and Community Health▪ Annie Gammon, Head of Hackney Learning Trust & Director of Education▪ Helena Burke, Leadership & Management Adviser, Hackney Learning Trust▪ Amy Wilkinson, Integrated Work stream Director, CYP & Maternity Services▪ David Wright, Health & Well Being Team Leader, Young Hackney▪ Richard Brown Executive Head Urswick and New Regents College▪ Sue Parillion, Head Teacher, New Regents College▪ Dr Elly Barnes, CEO, Educate & Celebrate▪ Daniel Walsh, Student, Hackney▪ Susy Langsdale/ Maya Walker, Project Indigo, Hackney▪ Sophie McElroy, CAMHS Alliance Project Manager▪ Waveney Patel, Consultant Clinical Psychologist, Homerton Hospital▪ Victoria Simmons, Deputy Head Teacher, Baden Powell School (Primary)▪ Peter McEvoy, Deputy Head, Cardinal Pole School (Secondary)

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- **Ruth Kossoff, Joint Head of Service, East London Foundation Trust**

Members of the Public There were 8 members of the public in attendance which included: Members of Hackney Independent Forum for Parents/Carers of Children with Disabilities (HIP) and a representative from Hackney Citizen.

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Councillor Sophie Conway in the Chair

1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from:

- Greg Condon, Mental Health Programme Manager, City & Hackney CCG
- Laura Smith, Clinical Lead, Children's Social Care, Hackney Learning Trust

1.2 Apologies for lateness were received from:

- Cllr Humaira Garasia

2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

2.1 There were no new or urgent items and the agenda was as published.

3 Declarations of Interest

- Cllr Chauhan was a teacher at secondary school in another London borough and a member of the NEU.
- Cllr Peters was a governor at the Garden School.
- Cllr Adejare was a governor at Tyssen School, a trainee teacher and a member of the NSWTF.
- Jo Macleod was a governor of a local primary school.

4 Support for LGBT students in schools

4.1 As part of its work programme for 2018/19, the Commission agreed to assess the support provided to LGBT+ students at schools in Hackney. Through a range of internal and external contributors, it was hoped that this item would:

- Outline any statutory duties and establish current service provision;
- Provide an overview of the needs of LGBT+ young people;
- Identify examples of good practice in schools;

- Contribute to the identification of strategic priorities and approach for this work.

Hackney Learning Trust (HLT)

4.2 The Chair introduced Helena Burke from HLT to present the attached report. The report described some of the local work undertaken by the HLT to ensure that local schools demonstrated an accepting and supportive approach to young LGBT+ students and how this work linked with other initiatives to curb bullying and harassment. It was noted that there was a significant amount of guidance and advice in this area, and that the HLT supported schools to help them meet these requirements.

4.3 The Equality Act 2010 required schools to pay attention to the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) to ensure that they did not unlawfully discriminate against pupils because of their age, sex, race, disability, religion, gender reassignment, pregnancy, maternity, marriage or civil partnership or sexual orientation. These were known collectively as the protected characteristics. It was noted that the Equality Act aims to prevent discrimination and not about providing positive support for these groups.

4.4 The Commission noted that the Ofsted inspection framework also expected schools to tackle inequalities and disadvantage in all aspects of school life, which would incorporate LGBT+ issues among other equality groups.

4.5 New guidance for compulsory relationship and health education in all schools by 2020 was published in July 2019. This guidance, which was still being consulted upon, would require all schools to teach health education and sex education in secondary school and provide the 'building blocks for positive and safe relationships of all kinds'. This was welcomed by the HLT and a Council wide response was provided to the consultation via Public Health. The Commission noted that the Government response to the consultation would be published imminently.

Action: That the Government response to the 'Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education' to be circulated to the Commission once published.

4.6 The HLT also helped develop good practice in the delivery of PSHE curriculum across schools by providing support to the PSHE school coordinators network across Hackney.

4.7 Nationally, the Equalities Office had published an LGBT Action Plan which set out a number of ambitions to improve support for LGBT children and young people at school, these included:

- To develop and deliver an anti-homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic bullying programme for 1,200 schools;
- For the Crown Prosecution Service to update of LGBT Hate crime guidance for schools;
- To update Sex and Relationship guidance for schools (as in 4.5);
- To update guidance of the application of the Equalities Act 2010 to support LGBT students in school;
- Provide support for LGBT teachers (outteacher.org).

4.8 Governing bodies had a legal responsibility to ensure that schools actively eliminated discrimination and advance equality of opportunity for all their students, therefore HLT would expect to see reference to support for LGBT+ students within school policies and other relevant documentation. It was also noted that Governors were expected to monitor bullying (including homophobic bullying) and ensure that there was an adequate response to eliminate this within the school.

4.9 It was suggested to the Commission that the most significant opportunity to support equality and tackle discrimination was to share good practice on how schools were demonstrating and 'accepting and supportive approach'. There were a range of forums supported by the HLT which helped to identify and extend good practice, these included: Head teacher briefings, Behaviour and Wellbeing Partnership, Governor Training and PSHCE Coordinators Network.

4.10 A number of case studies which provided good examples of schools providing a positive reflection of young LGBT+ people's lives within the curriculum were presented to the Commission (in attached report). This included the identification of positive LGBT+ role models in science, history, literature and across the curriculum, so that young LGBT+ people would get to see themselves in their everyday schooling experience.

4.11 The Commission understood that the HLT worked closely with Young Hackney to deliver emotional and well-being support to children and young people across Hackney, including the needs of LGBT+ young people. The WAMHS project (which was the next item of discussion) illustrated the cooperation and partnership across the sector to support young people's emotional and mental health needs.

4.12 Whilst it was noted that there was good practice to support LGBT+ students in schools, it was apparent from the voice of young people that the coverage of such provision could be improved. Indeed, it was noted that the voice of young LGBT+ people needed to be heard more to help schools to develop an appropriate system of support.

4.13 The Commission sought to assess how a cross-curriculum approach to support LGBT+ students could be embedded (e.g. opportunities to raise and discuss LGBT issues in literacy, science and humanities). If support for LGBT+ students was fully acknowledged within the school ethos and within its policies, this would provide teachers with the permission to approach this subject openly and confidently. It would also help teachers to identify opportunities where LGBT+ issues could be appropriately raised across the curriculum. This approach should focus on ensuring that a positive reinforcement of all young people's lives was reflected in syllabi and teaching methods.

4.14 The Commission sought to understand if there was a local network of LGBT+ teachers who could promote and develop schools approach to supporting LGBT+ young people? Whilst HLT was not aware of a local network, it was reported that there was an on-line community which discussed and shared good practice in supporting LGBT+ children and young people in school.

4.15 The Chair welcomed Amy Wilkinson to the meeting. The opportunity to discuss the integrated support for LGBT+ young people was welcomed. It was noted that the new 10 year NHS plan would provide a strong focus on the emotional health and wellbeing of children and young people which would include working in school settings and with young LGBT+ communities.

4.16 The Commission noted that Public Health commission Young Hackney to work with young people, in particular to deliver PHSCE within schools across Hackney. City & Hackney Clinical Commissioning Group commission Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to support the emotional wellbeing of young people, and in terms of spend, Hackney was among the largest providers across London. The Commission understood that were plans to focus a small proportion of this funding toward the LGBT+ community, but plans were at a very early stage at this time.

Young Hackney

4.17 The Chair welcomed David Wright to the meeting. A free of charge comprehensive programme of PHSCE was offered to schools to support relationship and sex education for young people aged 5-19 years (up to 25 years with additional needs) was offered by Young Hackney. The Commission noted that Young Hackney worked with all schools across the borough (both primary and secondary) as well as with colleges and alternative education providers to deliver a range of PSHCE modules. Young Hackney also worked with a wide range of community organisations and supported one-off events to reach a broad range of young people.

4.18 In terms of support for LGBT+ issues, Young Hackney offered a range of sessions which included;

- Sexuality and gender;
- Gender roles and Normativity;
- Homophobia and bullying;
- Positive sexuality.

4.17 The Commission noted that training and development sessions on sexual health, relationship, domestic violence and sexuality were made deliberately inclusive, and Young Hackney workers ensured that gender neutral terms were used and also provided positive examples of LGBT+ relationships. These sessions were delivered in schools (including faith schools), youth hubs, pupil referral units and other youth settings.

4.18 Young Hackney also undertaken work with specific schools and institutions to support LGBT+ projects including B6 (a local alternative education provider), Project Indigo, Hackney Museum and local other LGBT+ support groups.

New Regents College (NRC)

4.19 The Chair welcomed Richard Brown and Sue Parillion from New Regents College to the meeting. It was noted that leadership and governance were an integral to ensure that schools delivered on equalities duties. School leaders and governing bodies needed to ensure that teachers had sufficient training to be able to present and discuss LGBT+ issues with their students with confidence.

4.20 Children that attended NRC were not as effective in regulating their behaviour as others, which had allowed elements of homophobia to enter the

culture of the college. Through working with Educate and Celebrate however, the college had been able to develop an approach and the practical tools through which to address this. Moreover, as a result of this work, the college was better able to identify and support those children who were questioning their own sexuality.

4.21 The approach of the college was to instigate a programme of training and development to support a more inclusive school community which celebrated the diversity of its students. It was accepted that this would not be an overnight change, but would be adopted incrementally in which support would grow year on year. Whilst it was accepted that things still go wrong, there was now a more positive and inclusive community at the college. The Commission noted that the college had won a national equality award in recognition of this work.

4.22 The college outlined some of the work that it had undertaken to promote equality within the school:

- The development of a robust, transparent and explicit Equalities Policy and appointing an equalities representative on the college Management Board;
- The establishment of an Equalities Working Party to develop and monitor the Equalities Action Plan;
- Improved staff access to CPD on issues of equality e.g. LGBT+ Trans Awareness;
- The development of an inclusive and diverse curriculum which celebrated all equality groups, including LGBT+;
- Learners were empowered to protect themselves from unfair treatment, exploitation and extremism;
- A strong and nuanced PHSCE curriculum delivered by Young Hackney, which explored sexual wellbeing, consent, sexuality, gender, gender identity, gender roles and expectations.

4.23 The Commission noted that the college had undertaken some focused work to tackle homophobia which had included the establishment of a zero tolerance policy and accurate monitoring process of bi/trans/homophobic, race or disability related bullying. Staff had also been trained to effectively challenge homophobic bullying. The adoption of a gender neutral uniform also allowed gender non-conforming pupils to feel comfortable and which helped to reduce gender based slurs and bullying. Both staff and students were also supported if they choose to be openly out at school.

4.24 Given the revolving door nature of the college (as a pupil referral unit) it was imperative that its inclusive values were embedded within the culture and ethos as well as its approach to learning. Some positive outcomes had been recorded as a result:

- With the variety of equalities-centric CPD training, staff reported that they were more comfortable talking about equality issues;
- Leadership had observed staff using correct terminology and had embedded equalities issues into their teaching practices and mentoring sessions;
- Racist and homophobic slurs were used less often among students and were more willing to engage in discussions and workshops around matters of equality;
- Matters of equality were more embedded into every-day learning and displays around the school;

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- Students were more familiar with the nine protected characteristics and keen to engage in discussions about them;
- In the last 12 months the college had at least four students come out as gay or bisexual.

4.25 It was reiterated that if an organisation was committed to equalities, it must be committed to all equalities strands. This created a sense of fairness, purpose and holism to any equalities development programme and avoided any resentment on behalf of children or teachers who may feel excluded.

Educate Celebrate

4.26 The Chair welcomed Dr Elly Barnes from Educate and Celebrate. Although Educate and Celebrate started to work in schools in Hackney, its work had now expanded to other schools across the UK and Europe. Gender neutrality was fundamental to the approach of Educate and Celebrate and it supported gender neutral schools. It was suggested that many of the problems around gender identity and sexual orientation were as a result of hard-wired views as to what was male and what is female and the 'genderisation' of school environment.

4.27 The Commission noted that Educate and Celebrate offered gender neutrality training to education providers teaching children of reception age through to those at college. It was noted that Educate and Celebrate intended to hold a CPD day for all teachers across Hackney on March 15th for gender neutrality in schools.

4.28 Educate and Celebrate also supported schools through an awards programme which was based on 5 key principles:

- **Training** – teachers needed training to overcome their fears and to give them the confidence to be able to teach this issue effectively. Teachers were willing to do this, but they needed the skills and the language to be able to do this. Training also needed to emphasise that LGBT+ issues did not need to come through PSHCE as this could pathologise the issues raised. Instead LGBT+ issues need to be raised across the curriculum and within the range of subjects taught.
- **Centralised policies** – to begin it was important that schools reflect on their existing policies and develop new policies where needed. A centralised policy receptacle for tackling bullying, equal opportunities and gender neutral uniforms (for example) would help to share good practice across Hackney schools.
- **Curriculum** - it was important to 'usualise' LGBT and equality issues and language across the curriculum to ensure that these were not compartmentalised to certain areas of study (e.g. PSHCE). Educate and Celebrate believed that there were opportunities throughout the curriculum to enable young people to learn about LGBT+ issues and to give them appropriate language and understanding to be able to deal with LGBT+ scenarios when they arose. Educate and Celebrate also had a range of supporting books for students that celebrated different gender identities as well as guides for schools on how to make their school more LGBT+ friendly.

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- **Environment** – the Commission noted that what people saw when they first walk around a school was important in that this sets the tone and culture for that school, and an important opportunity to demonstrate and reinforce the schools approach to inclusion and acceptance of equality issues. The Commission understood that there was no hierarchy within the equality strands, but it is the responsibility of schools and other places of education to ensure that there is parity. Again, this is central to the ethos of Educate and Celebrate.
- **Community** – it was also important for schools to engage with different communities in the area to demonstrate a real live connectivity to equality issues raised in schools (e.g. local youth groups, older peoples homes, faith groups).

4.29 Finally, it was reiterated that that developments within schools were incredibly powerful where they originated from young people themselves and it was important to involve young people in all aspects of programmes to develop equalities issues.

4.30 The Commission noted that Educate and Celebrate worked closely with Goldsmiths University to conduct research, and routinely evaluated the work that it undertook in schools. It had recently concluded a piece of research into how equality issues could be presented and taught in faith schools which was available on its website. It was suggested that equalities work can and should be undertaken in all schools, irrespective of faith, as there were always innovative ways in which equalities issues can be presented.

4.31 To conclude, it was noted that many of the support services provided through Educate and Celebrate was free to schools in Hackney, particularly the Pride Group Networks.

Young LGBT Persons View (1)

4.32 The Chair welcomed Daniel Walsh to the meeting who was an LGBT+ young person and still received PSHCE lessons at school. In this context, he was able to offer a first-hand and current assessment of how a school supported LGBT+ young people.

4.33 A major criticism of PSHCE lessons in school was that teachers were often ill-equipped to deliver these sessions as they were not confident in the language they used to discuss matters relating to sex or relationships. The Commission noted that schools may not always tackle homophobia in a consistent manner, and that some instances may go unchallenged by teaching staff. When the presenter had reported an incident of homophobic bullying year 7, he was sent to the reflection room where other students who had been removed from lessons were placed and asked to write a report of the incident. Although he had not broken any rules, he was treated as though he had been an offender. Although the perpetrator was given a two day internal exclusion, the presenter was not given any support. Neither set of parents were contacted to inform them of the incident. It was suggested that there were clear lessons to be learnt from this incident.

4.34 Whilst the LGBT+ community was thriving, it was suggested that schools often struggled to recognise and validate the diversity of gender expression and

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sexual identities within this community. For example what is pansexual, bisexual and polysexual, or what does it mean to be asexual, demi-sexual or queer? As a result, many young people, including LGBT+ communities, had resorted to educating themselves on these issues.

4.35 It was acknowledged however that progress had been made at the school, as LGBTQ+ issues had become more integrated within the school curriculum. Whilst this was both positive and welcomed, it was suggested that equality issues should be incorporated across the curriculum at a much earlier age (at reception) to help normalise young people's experiences.

4.36 Being one of small number of out LGBT+ students in a school, it was also noted how important it was to have a friendly member of staff who was approachable and who students felt that they could talk to if they needed. Similarly, LGBT+ members of staff not only provided positive role models for young people, but could also be a confidant and a key ally to promote LGBT+ issues within the school.

4.37 As one of two out LGBT+ students at school, there was significant pressure on these students to lead and develop approaches to LGBT+ issues in that school (e.g. LGBT History Month, Rainbow Ribbon Campaign). Whilst accepting that there was a contributory role for these students, it was felt that this was not always appropriate and would be better if there had been greater leadership from teachers and school management in developing LGBT+ awareness and understanding in school.

4.38 To conclude, it was suggested that the aims of the LGBT+ Community in school were simple:

- More support for those young people who want it;
- An approach to LGBT+ education that was holistic and integrated throughout school careers, school communities and school curricula.

Young LGBT Persons View (2)

4.39 Prior to the meeting, the Chair and the Vice Chair met with a young Trans student (A) and his mother to hear about his experiences of coming out at school in Hackney. A summary of the main issues raised by A are given below:

4.40 In general, both A and his mother felt that the school had been very supportive of them throughout his coming out process. Whilst A had come out as trans earlier to his family, the school had initiated contact with the family as the gender dysphoria experienced by A at school had become too traumatic and distressing. The school initiated a meeting to discuss how A could come out at school and what support would be needed.

4.41 The initial meeting had been positive and A had the support of a mentor which was also very positive and helped to deal with issues in relation to other children in attendance at the school. The school had also made a referral for A to CAMHS to help him cope with the stress and anxiety which he was suffering with at that time.

4.42 A and his family however faced a number of issues whilst coming out at school:

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- **Uniform** – the school had a very traditional gendered uniform, and there was significant delay before it was cleared that N could wear a boys uniform;
- **Register** – as these were an official record of attendance, it was suggested that it was difficult to get these changed which meant that N was called by the wrong name which was very upsetting and undermined his gender identity;
- **Physical Education** – unnecessary barriers were put in place in respect of changing facilities and a prescriptive gendered sports offer was available to boys and girls;
- **Pronoun** – incorrect use of pro-nouns, whilst some were genuine mistakes others were not;
- **Toilet facilities** – initially there had not been any provision for gender neutral toilets.

4.43 In terms of the wider curriculum and teaching, whilst there was support among staff for A in coming out, this was not universal. It was suggested it would have been more helpful if the school leadership had taken a more active and positive role in developing awareness and understanding of A coming out among staff and other students and to ensure that there were appropriate policies in place to support him. As a result, it had fallen on A and the individual teachers that taught him to lead such initiatives instead there being a school wide approach.

4.43 The school disciplinary procedure was noted to be strict at the school. In this context, A was wary of reporting transphobic comments or behaviour of other pupils because of the potential repercussions that this could have for individual students. Thus it was left to A to personally resolve these conflicts and challenges.

Project Indigo

4.44 Project Indigo was a LGBTQi+ youth club which operated from within Off-Centre, a mental health service in Hackney. Most of the referrals to the service come through CAMHS or Social Services, therefore many of the young people that the project supported had some vulnerability and had more complex needs than other LGBT+ young people. A number of children were in care and may not be accessing school in a traditional sense. Many of the young people would struggle to access more mainstream settings for support.

4.45 At a recent meeting, the group discussed Section 28 (Local Government Act 1988) which was used to prevent the teaching of homosexuality in schools. This prompted a discussion of what schools were like now, from which young LGBT+ people noted the following challenges:

- **Coming out** – where there was a risk of violence and homelessness;
- **Social isolation** – not having access to a LGBT network for them to share experiences with people who look and feel like them;
- **Mental health** - as association with shame, stigma and hyper vigilance (constant awareness of the environment around them and when its ok or not express their gender or sexual identify);
- **Lack of support in schools** – afraid to raise these issues in school, or where support that was provided did not seem appropriate;
- **More community space** – more space to express their gender identify safely;

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- **Suicide** - there was a high incidence (once or twice a month) of young people expressing suicidal thoughts – with long waiting times for young people to access mental health services.

4.46 In relation to school specific issues that this cohort of young LGBT+ people face, the following was noted:

- **Bullying** - this could be problematic, and young people might be too afraid to snitch;
- **Lack of LGBT+ space in school** – not only physical space, but also the expectation that LGBT+ young people would lead in school initiatives which impinged on their study time;
- **Trust in teachers** – not knowing which teachers they could trust and confide in;
- **Lack of positive role models** – there were few examples of open LGBT staff who could provide positive role model or mentoring support for LGBT young people;
- **Fear of exclusion** –through expression of gender non-conformity.

4.46 Young LGBT+ people accessing Project Indigo also suggested that there were a number of protective behaviours which could provide additional support, these included:

- **More rainbow flags** - indications of safe spaces;
- **Sex education delivered (by drag queens)** – or people who are confident and positive in delivery sex education messages and who avoid of shame;
- **Gender neutral toilets;**
- **Gender neutral uniforms;**
- **Gender neutral Physical Education.**

4.47 It was noted that many young people were referred to Project Indigo via Improving Access to Psychological Therapies Team (IAPT). As a result, many young people accessed the service with mental health needs, many of which were complex and could be challenging for the service to deal with as it no longer offered a therapy service. It was suggested that there was a need for more robust mental health support for young people in Hackney.

General Questioning

4.48 The Commission noted that a central issue was the complexity of LGBT+ language but also of the need to normalise this within PSHCE and the classroom and beyond. Although HLT was not in a position to dictate to schools what they should do, it could be an agent of change by identifying and encouraging the spread of good LGBT+ practice in PHSCE lessons, in the curriculum and throughout the wider school.

4.49 The Commission sought to clarify if there was an emerging policy for schools on the provision of gender neutral toilets in schools and the potential conflict that this may present for those who would like to preserve women only spaces?

- Once contributor suggested that whilst there was no national or local policy or guidance and that it was left to local schools and developers to agree provision. It was also suggested that whilst it would be difficult to justify to parents to not provide single gender toilets facilities, additional facilities should be provided which in effect become a private

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space for non-gender conforming young people, or indeed, for those who have medical or other conditions which required more private toilet space.

- Another contributor suggested that it would be a helpful compromise to preserve male and female toilets but to provide an additional toilet facility for a 'third' gender;
- In terms of legal requirement, another contributor suggested that under the Equality Act, some third provision should be provided to reflect the needs of different equality strands. Individual gender neutral cubicles were however, a personally preferred model of provision which had worked well in school settings (with wash basins and mirrors on external corridors). Schools also need to consider changing room provision in this context.

4.50 The commission noted that there were approximately 10,00 children and young people were taught in dedicated Orthodox Jewish schools across Hackney, and sought to clarify how the provision of support to LGBT+ students would be compatible to their own teaching and religious principles?

- One contributor noted that some specific guidance had been prepared by a third party Jewish organisation which provided guidance on how LGBT+ young people can be supported in Orthodox Jewish Schools;
- Another contributor noted that as young LGBT+ people exist in all faiths, respective faith schools should make provision to support them at school.

4.51 The Commission sought to understand what spend there had been on LGBT+ issues and was this commensurate with the needs of young LGBT+ people as cited by some contributors at the meeting?

- Whilst the CAMHS transformation plan looked to improve the mental health outcomes for young people across City & Hackney, it was acknowledged that there was no dedicated or targeted spend on LGBT+ young people within that as yet. This work was ongoing however, and local commissioners would want to work with LGBT+ young people to begin to identify their needs which would inform commissioning.

Action: It was agreed that it would be useful if Commissioners were to return to the Commission at a later date to outline their future intentions to support the emotional and mental wellbeing of young LGBT+ people.

4.52 The Commission understood that there were wide variations among local schools in respect of their approach to inclusion and the support that they offered to LGBT+ young people. In this context, the Commission enquired how the HLT and the Council as a whole could help share good practice and help all schools to become more inclusive and better support young LGBT+ people?

- It was noted that good practice was shared through the PSHCE forum and through Deputy Head forum, both of which were supported by the HLT. It was agreed that there were model LGBT+ policies for schools which could be helpful to disseminate, and that there could be some value in developing some sample Hackney policies, (whilst acknowledging that some variation for faith schools might be necessary). The HLT had discussed developing a range of policies on various topic areas, though these needed to be coproduced and would require additional resource.

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Action: It was agreed the HLT would return at a future date (to be agreed) to report on progress to develop model Hackney policies to support LGBT+ young people in school.

4.53 The Commission sought to understand whether an audit had been undertaken of the policies and practices in place to support LGBT+ young people in schools across Hackney, as this would form the basis of any action plan and resultant priorities?

- Whilst an audit had not taken place it was clear that many schools had provided training for their staff to develop their skills and confidence in supporting LGBT+ young people. It was noted that widespread curriculum changes had placed schools under pressure in recent years and much resource had been dedicated to supporting that change. It was suggested that schools do care about the wellbeing of their children and tried hard to respond to these needs.

4.54 The Commission sought to ascertain what individual contributors would like to be developed in Hackney as a priority to better support LGBT+ young people:

- **Integrated Commissioning** – there was a need to consult, involve and listen to young people more and develop services in response to identified needs;
- **HLT** – to ensure that equalities issues were had a higher profile in the policies of local schools;
- **HLT** - that the voice of young people were very powerful and should inform priorities and local service development;
- **Educate & Celebrate** - ensure adults and teachers were communicating with young people to ensure that they were all on the same page and that staff had access to appropriate training to put these aspirations in to effect;
- **Project Indigo:** to help create accessible and meaningful relationships for young people which they can rely upon when they may need help;
- **New Regents College** – the provision of a gender neutral inform would make a huge difference;
- **New Regents College** – ensure that all schools, including primary schools, audit provision and that there is sufficient training for school leaders and governors to enable them to implement successful LGBT+ and equality strategies;
- **Young Hackney** – working with primary schools should be a priority as the earlier support is provided, the better young people are able to deal LGBT+ and equality issues; gender neutral schools were also seen to be an important priority;
- **Young Person** –integrated support for LGBT+ young people would help them deal with bullying coming out;
- **Young Person** - students need better advice, guidance and support to better enable them to support their peers.

4.55 The Chair thanked all those guests that attended and contributed to this item. It was agreed the Commission would review the evidence presented and feedback their conclusions and recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Young People. The Commission would also consider inviting lead services back in the new municipal year to report on progress in supporting the needs of young LGBT+ young people in school.

5 Wellbeing and Mental Health in Schools (WAMHS)

5.1 In February 2018, the Commission held round table discussion with a number of providers within the CAMHS alliance to discuss how the mental health needs of young people were being addressed in Hackney. Subsequent to that meeting, the Commission agreed to receive an update on the work of the WAMHS project which aimed to develop the wellbeing and mental health support to schoolchildren in Hackney.

5.2 The Chair welcomed to the meeting Sophie McElroy (CAMHS Alliance Project Manager), Helena Burke (Leadership & Management Adviser at HLT) and Waveney Patel (Consultant Clinical Psychologist from Specialist CAMHS, East London Foundation Trust) to present on the WAMHS item. The Chair also welcomed Victoria Simmons (Deputy Head Teacher from Baden Powell School) and Peter McEvoy (Assistant Head, Cardinal Pole School) who would present two case studies (primary and secondary) from the project. Ruth Kossoff (Joint Head of Service, First Steps and CAMHS Disability, Homerton Hospital) and Amy Wilkinson (Integrated Commissioning Workstream Director, Children, Young People and Maternity Services) were also in attendance for this item.

5.3 The Commission understood that schools (and teachers) play an important role in the early identification of mental health issues among young people and in referring them on for more specialist advice and support. The objective of the WAMHS project was to ensure that young people had access to high quality mental health and wellbeing support which was linked to their school and college. The project commenced in September 2018.

5.4 Initial work for the project had identified a number of issues that schools and teachers had faced in supporting the mental health needs of young people. The most important problem that school had encountered was that it had been difficult to navigate the complex CAMHS system given that there were 5 main providers in Hackney and there were multiple referral routes.

5.5 The commission understood that one of the primary aims of WAMHS was to develop access to mental health support services for children and young people; it was noted that at present only 25% of young people with a mental health disorder had contact with a mental health specialist. It was hoped that the operation of WAMHS would help to increase the proportion of young people that access specialist mental health support to 35%.

5.6 The Commission also understood that there were a number of intended primary outcomes for the WAMHS project, which were as set out below:

- To increase in the number and proportion of appropriate referrals to CAMHS services from WAMHS participating schools;
- To support improvement in the approach of schools to early identification and development of positive health and wellbeing policies and procedures (model policies to be developed);
- To improve the confidence of school staff to effectively identify and support students with mental health problems;
- To improve pupil and parent perceptions and satisfaction of schools approach to mental wellbeing and the support available in school.

5.7 In addition, there were a number of secondary outcomes for the WAMHS project, which were as set out below:

- A reduction in the number and rate of exclusions within participating schools;
- Improve equality of access to CAMHS services for all CYP;

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- Improve the number of appropriate and inappropriate referrals to CAMHS from all referral sources.

5.8 The WAHMS project commenced with the Anna Freud Mental Health and Schools link programme in February 2018. This constituted two days of training for participating schools and introduced schools to the broad family of CAMHS and social care services. This session also provided an opportunity to develop a more collaborative approach to support mental health of young people. 60 (75%) of schools attended this training (including primary, secondary and other education providers).

5.9 Schools that participated in the Anna Freud programme were then invited to join the Wellbeing Partner Framework which would provide additional support through the provision of a dedicated CAMHS worker for between 1 day a week and 1 day a month for a 1 year period (from May 2018). CAMHS workers were not deployed to provide therapeutic support to children, but to help schools develop local policies and procedures which would support the emotional and mental health needs of children and staff at the school.

5.10 The evaluation of the project was being led by Public Health in Hackney and would run from February 2019 through to the autumn of 2019. An initial audit was undertaken to assess how various aspects of the school could contribute to the mental health and wellbeing of young people, these included:

- Curriculum;
- Behaviour policies;
- School ethos and environment;
- How needs were identified and reported;
- Support to parents and staff;
- Enabling voice of young people.

5.11 From this audit, each participating school was required to identify two priorities to support emotional wellbeing and mental health improvement and to develop a school action plan. A snapshot of one of the action plans was included within the submitted report for this item.

5.12 Each school was also required to develop a very specific plan for how they intended to use the allotted CAMHS worker. In total, approximately 25 CAMHS workers from 4 teams were involved. The involvement of CAMHS workers was intended to have reciprocal benefits in which the understanding and awareness of the school environment and associated mental health issues by CAMHS workers would be developed alongside any benefits accrued by the school.

5.13 As part of the evaluation, schools were asked to reflect on the benefits of WAMHS project to date. It was recorded that the most important benefit so far had been the opportunity for the school to reflect on their approach to wellbeing and assess what systems were in place to identify and support young people, together with the added insight and expertise of CAMHS workers. Other cited benefits included improved staff confidence derived from training, improved working relationships with parents and an improved approach to mental health across the school.

5.14 If the evaluation demonstrated that it was effective, the project would be rolled out to all schools from 2020. Although the evaluation would not be complete until the summer of 2019, a number of learning points were highlighted to the Commission:

- Different work cultures between schools and CAMHS required excellent communication and collaboration;
- Improved specificity of CAMHS workers role and contractual delivery of that support was needed;
- Schools needed CAMHS workers more than one day a month as this helped to develop relationships and continuity of service provision.

5.15 In respect of future plans for the project, it was noted that Phase 1 had been extended to April 2020 and a that number of refresh events were planned to support this. From April 2020, the project would be rolled out to all schools in Hackney and dedicated support would be provided to schools within the Orthodox Jewish Community. It was noted that City and Hackney were keen to participate in the National Trailblazer projects for the Mental Health Support Team in schools which would deliver direct work to pupils. Although an initial bid was not successful a further bid would be made when the pilots opens up for the second phase.

Case Studies

5.16 The Commission heard evidence from two schools, Baden Powell Primary and Cardinal Pole Secondary, on how the WAMHS project had supported their approach to mental health and wellbeing in their school.

Baden Powell Primary School

5.17 The Support of the CAMHS worker had helped to formalise local policy and practice to support wellbeing (monthly meeting with staff) which was felt to be very beneficial. In addition, the participation of the school in the project helped to develop local audit systems to help the school recognise what was working and what needed to be improved.

5.18 From the above the school developed a local action plan which included:

- Parent workshops with CAMHS worker to help identify needs and to better enable them to support children with specific issues (e.g. anxiety, separation and divorce, difficult issues);
- Monthly staff meetings between CAMHS worker and staff to identify training needs which was also offered to TA's;
- Introduction of a structured PSHCE lessons which was taught weekly with homework – and where PSHCE issues were taught across the curriculum;
- Individual 1-1 consultations with staff to identify personal and professional needs and improve ways of working with individual children.

5.19 The school offered a number of conclusions about its involvement with WAMHS:

- Although time heavy, involvement had produced significant benefits;
- Leadership must buy into the project and support its development;
- CAMHS worker had been pivotal to local changes and improvement;
- Consultation and training with staff had improved staff confidence;
- The school would like to extend individual consultation sessions to parents.

Cardinal Pole

5.20 The Commission noted that there was an important contextual difference from primary to secondary, in that the complexity and volume of mental health needs were much greater. The CAMHS worker attended one day a week which helped to develop continuity of support to the school to enable it to change.

5.21 A wellbeing support group was established through the project which included the Deputy Head and the CAMHS worker, safeguarding lead, inclusion manager, student counsellor and parent liaison officer. This group established a system of wellbeing triage which had helped to develop a formalised system to receive and assess wellbeing referrals. The CAMHS worker had been instrumental in guiding the development of this new system, which has resulted in an increase in the number and appropriateness of referrals being made to specialist services.

5.22 The school had identified 3 priority areas within its local action plan: more targeted support and improved referrals, better engagement and involvement with parents and carers and improved staff development. A number of outcomes and outputs had been recorded thus far for these priorities:

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- Since the start of the project, there had been 57 referrals into the triage system of which 12 resulted in a referral to CAMHS;
- An engaging and informative programme of events had also been developed to support work with parents and these had been well attended;
- Information was routinely sent out to parents on a range of wellbeing and safeguarding issues;
- The school website has also been revamped in which a dedicated wellbeing and safeguarding page had been developed;
- Workshops to help staff manage stress have been developed as well as weekly mindfulness drop-in sessions;
- A weekly bulletin to improve support for staff had been set up;
- Training to help staff identify and support needs sensitively had been provided.

Questions from the Commission

5.23 The Commission sought to understand if parents were always receptive to mental health interventions through the project?

- It was noted that there was still a lot of stigma about referral to use of mental health services. Although WAMHS may result in more young people being referred to appropriate specialist mental health support that they need, the project would also help to build the resilience of teachers, parents and young people to better identify and support wellbeing within the school environment, which may be less stigmatising.
- A participating school also noted that CAMHS interventions were generally light touch and offered a supportive and nurturing solution for parents. Whilst parents were initially fearful, these fears were allayed once the nature of the intervention became known.

5.24 The Cabinet member noted that the deployment of CAMHS worker had been very beneficial in other authorities and had helped to improve engagement and involvement with parents. This deployment should of course be driven by need, as all schools are different, and alternative hub-spoke models might also be considered.

5.25 The Commission sought to clarify how the WAMHS offer had been extended to schools from the Orthodox Jewish Community?

- Two Orthodox Jewish Schools (both primary and secondary) were part of the WAMHS project, and the project template was adapted to be sensitive to the needs of the community to ensure that appropriate language and interventions were used. This work had been positive and well received.

5.26 The Commission noted how important the voice of the child had been in developing such services, and sought to clarify how these would be included within the evaluation?

- As the aim of WAMHS was to improve the systems and processes within the school itself rather than the direct delivery of clinical or therapeutic services to children, these have not been the focus of the evaluation. This being said, a pre-pilot questionnaire was developed and distributed among young people and there have been a number of focus groups in a number of school.
- It was also noted that children who were seen through CAMHS as a result of a referral through WAMHS were also systematically asked for feedback.

5.27 The Commission noted that the WAMHS project worked with the Garden School, a local special educational needs school. It was noted that this intervention had been very positive and had helped to deliver improvement in a number of areas including helping staff to identify and support mental health and wellbeing, supporting staff wellbeing and improved links between CAMHS and the school. It was noted that the CAMHS worker would support the school for one year, but what would happen after?

- The local CAMHS offer and resource, was significantly above other areas, but the priority would be to assess how this project would develop lasting improvements in the school which would continue to deliver support after the

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project finally ceased. The result of the evaluation would be assessed and would inform any future funding commitments;

- It was noted that increased referrals to CAMHS had also been recorded through the project, but local access rates remained among the best in London;
- There had been a 10-25% increase in CAMHS referrals in Q1 and Q2 of this year, though it was not clear if these were the result of national trends or more localised issues.

5.28 The Commission sought to clarify if resources had been identified to support the roll out of WAMHS to all schools in May 2020?

- It was noted there was money ring-fenced for the roll-out post May 2020 dependent on a successful evaluation. It was noted that whilst it looked like funding had been secured 2021 and beyond, this had yet to be fully agreed.

5.29 The Commission also enquired whether WAMHS was supporting alternative education providers?

- It was confirmed that WAMHA was working with New Regents College to support 3 alternative providers in Hackney.

5.30 Given the limits on time, the Commission were asked to write to the Commission with any further questions which would be presented to the WAMHS project for a response and circulated to the Commission.

5.31 The Chair thanked everyone for attending for this item and to update the commission on the work of WAMHS. It was hoped that a further update could be provided in the next municipal year when the project had completed Phase 1 and would rolled out to all schools.

6 Outcomes from School Exclusions - site visits

6.1 The Commission has undertaken a range of site visits and focus groups to support its review of the outcomes of children excluded from school. A number of site visits to alternative providers have been undertaken which have included:

- New Regents College
- The Garden School
- Hackney City Farm
- The Boxing Academy
- Inspire

6.2 Members of the Commission reported back on some key observations or conclusions which has been reached thus far through this visits. These are summarised below

- There will always be a need to commission alternative education provision given the breadth of the needs of children who cannot be taught in a mainstream setting or at a singular alternative provider;
- All alternative providers visited noted how it was important it was to work with parents in supporting excluded children, though it was not always clear how much support was available for parents locally, especially independent advice and advocacy;
- When a child is excluded from school, it is often difficult for the next education provider (AP or NRC) to obtain import information about the needs of that child from the excluding school which makes it difficult to provide appropriate support;

- A number of providers suggested that a significant number of children entering alternative provision had an undiagnosed educational or healthcare need, and often had not had been assessed for and EHC Plan, which again made it difficult to support that child;
- Whilst a high proportion of children were noted to go in to further education or training after they leave AP, it was suggested that the drop-out rate for those children entering college was high. This has lead the Commission to question what transitional support is provided from AP to college settings?
- Whilst there is clearly lots of good practice that is happening locally, for example, the development of the Positive Behaviour System at The Garden School, it is not clear what processes there are to support replication across schools and the AP sector;
- The issue of staff qualifications was also raised, particularly where it was noted that in those AP settings where children needs were greatest there were fewer qualified teachers.

6.3 The Commission have also undertaken a number of focus groups with young people to assess the impact of school exclusion and what support they have received to help them reintegrate back to mainstream education or with an AP. A summary of the key emerging issues to emerge from data collection thus far is provided below:

- In AP, children work in smaller groups which was found to be more supportive and better enabled them to focus on their studies;
- Where this was provided, mentoring was noted to have a very positive effect on young people, as this provided space to reflect on their behaviour and to make positive changes;
- Whilst some children liked the discipline and order of local behaviour policies, others found these challenging to operate within;
- Some young people found it difficult to transition from a school to alternative education provision, as in some cases, the culture was too informal and did not set enough boundaries for them to operate within;
- There was a desire to go back to mainstream education to enable them to access wider range of GCSE studies, and of course to re-engage with their peer networks;
- A strong theme in both focus groups was that young people felt that their voice was had not been heard in the exclusion process, with many indicating that they had not been given sufficient opportunity to present their side of the story or for them to explain why things had gone wrong;
- There was a also strong sense that local behaviour policies were not enforced fairly, where children with strong academic potential being treated more leniently;
- There were occasions when children who had received a fixed term exclusion, were simply readmitted to school after the exclusion period,

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without any meeting with the school and no process to check if their behaviour or outlook had changed;

- There was also an important relationship between space and local behaviour policies and the ability of settings to provide students the opportunity to reflect on their behaviour.

6.4 A focus group was also held with a Turkish speaking parents group, whose children may have SEND. A broad ranging discussion was held from which the following issues emerged:

- In many cases children had undiagnosed education or health needs which can lead to inappropriate care and support being provided at school;
- Similarly, some parents of those children who were on an EHC plan indicated that the plans were not updated regularly as required, and that children were not receiving adequate support;
- Parents wanted more support at critical times in their child education (e.g. transition) particularly independent advice and advocacy;
- Parents were not always aware of the scope and range of a schools behaviour policy and how this may impact on their child. In some cases, it may lead to parents choosing a school which may be inappropriate to their child's needs.
- Parents felt that choosing an appropriate school for their child was difficult, with local resources feeling like 'a directory' rather than advice or guidance. The expectation that parents would need to 'research and investigate options' was felt to disadvantage non-English speaking parents / communities.

6.5 It was noted that evidence gathering was ongoing, and that a number site visits were planned for other alternative providers in March 2019.

7 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

7.1 The Commission noted and agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 2019.

8 Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission - 2018/19 Work Programme

8.1 The Commission noted and agreed the work programme for the Commission for the remainder of the 2018/19.

9 Any Other Business

9.1 There was no other business.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm.

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Duration of the meeting: 7.00 - 9.55 pm