



London Borough of Hackney  
Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission  
Municipal Year 2018/19  
Date of Meeting Wednesday 30 November 2022

Minutes of the proceedings of the  
Children and Young People  
Scrutiny Commission held at  
Hackney Town Hall, Mare Street,  
London E8 1EA

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<b>Chair</b>	<b>Councillor Sophie Conway</b>
<b>Councillors in Attendance</b>	<b>Cllr Margaret Gordon (Vice-Chair), Cllr Midnight Ross, Cllr Caroline Selman, Cllr Sheila Suso-Runge and Cllr Lynne Troughton</b>
<b>Apologies:</b>	<b>Cllr Alastair Binnie-Lubbock, Cllr Anya Sizer and Richard Brown.</b>
<b>Co-optees:</b>	<b>Salmah Kansara</b>
<b>In Attendance:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <b>Cllr Caroline Woodley, Cabinet Member for Families, Early Years, Parks &amp; Play</b></li><li>- <b>Jacque Burke, Group Director, Children and Education</b></li><li>- <b>Paul Senior, Interim Director of Education</b></li><li>- <b>Diane Benjamin, Director of Children's Social Care</b></li><li>- <b>Naeem Ahmed, Director of Finance Children, Adults &amp; Community Health</b></li><li>- <b>Sajeed Patni, Head of Finance, Children's and Education</b></li><li>- <b>Joe Wilson, Head of SEND</b></li></ul>
<b>Meet recording:</b>	<a href="https://youtu.be/igay_KdHtq0">https://youtu.be/igay_KdHtq0</a>
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## Councillor Sophie Conway in the Chair

### 1 Apologies for Absence

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the following members of the Commission:

- Cllr Alastair Binne Lubbock
- Cllr Anya Sizer
- Richard Brown (Co-opted member)

1.2 The following members connected virtually:

- Jo Macleod (Co-opted member) .

## 2 Urgent Items / Order of Business

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

## 3 Declarations of Interest

3.1 The following declarations were received by members of the Commission:  
- Jo McLeod was a Governor at a primary school in Hackney and a parent of a child with SEND.

## 4 Children's Social Care Data Briefing (19.05)

4.1 The Children and Families Service (CFS) Annual Report is presented annually to the Commission. However, this report was not available to be included within this agenda, therefore a brief summary of children's social care activity for the period 2021/22 was presented.

4.2 A budget monitoring report for Children and Families Service accompanies this report (agenda item 5) to enable members to scrutinise policy and budgets in alignment.

### Children and Families Service

4.3 The Director of Children's Social Care brought to the attention of the Commission the following:

- CFS noted that although referrals had increased, the number of assessments had decreased, which suggested that the early help offer was proving to be effective;
- The number of looked after children (LAC) in the care of the authority had declined from 431 to 405, a significant drop which was attributed to improvement in local assessment processes and appropriate application of care thresholds;
- It was acknowledged that there were staffing challenges within the service with particular pressure on the recruitment and retention of social workers. Hackney was signed up to the London Pledge to prevent competition for social workers and the service had recently developed a staffing strategy to support recruitment;
- Similarly, it was noted that there was an equally competitive market for children's social care placements which was driving up costs for children and families services.

### Questions from the Commission

**4.4 Given the confirmed trend in adolescents entering care, how has staffing and service organisation within CFS adapted to meet the needs of this cohort? What datasets are the service using to help identify and support this cohort, for example SEND services?**

- Officers reported that there was a good youth based offer via Young Hackney. There was also the Edge of Care Service, which offers dedicated support to adolescents helping them to step-down or step-up into care as needed. CFS was also looking at how to provide further early help to prevent more adolescents coming into care.
- The LGA were invited to review CFS work with adolescents earlier this year who were complimentary about the local offer to young people, which was also supported by assessments made by Ofsted. Young Hackney worked closely with a number of organisations (statutory services, in schools, and in youth centres) as part of this early help offer to adolescents. The service was very aware of disproportionalities in this data, particularly among young black boys and men, and services were working to ensure that this cohort was supported to help them remain connected to education and other family and welfare networks.
- In terms of children's social care data, the service regularly undertakes thematic reviews into various cohorts of children which are interrogated for patterns and

trends. The service also reviews complaints data to identify areas for service development and improvement. Data on socioeconomic status is not collated, but data is analysed alongside census data to further inform how resources should be prioritised. In relation to SEND, this is kept on a separate MOSAIC system within Education, but a new system is being developed across both education and children's social care which will allow services to have a singular view of a child. It was also noted that colleagues from Hackney Education and CFS were now co-located which will facilitate communication and information sharing across these directorates. A new Outcomes, Business Intelligence and Strategy directorate has also been formed to help develop synergies across both education and children's social care.

**4.5 Despite a 27% increase in the number of referrals to Children's Social Care in 2021/22, the number of related metrics all recorded strong declines (assessments down 15%, Child Protection Plans down 11%, Looked after Children down 6%). Officers suggest that this was the result of the early help offer, what evidence or analysis has the service undertaken to support this? What does CFS know about the demographics of those children who may not be assessed to need such care and support?**

- The service has streamlined referrals into the early help service and set up a consultation line via the Multi-Agency-Safeguarding Hub (MASH). When referrals come into the MASH, they are screened and referred through to the early help hub if needed and signpost families to other services for support. The service was changing terminology from referral to request for support, to ensure that supporting agencies remained in contact with families in need and to ensure that that support continued to be provided from the partnership of local services. The service was assured that thresholds were applied appropriately as there are robust systems in place to assess and quality assure this (e.g. dip sampling). Twice a week colleagues in MASH and the Early Help hub meet with CAMHS to discuss specific cases and agree a shared pathway forward for children and their families. CFS believe their thresholds to be robust, which was in part validated by the recent Ofsted inspection. There was however always a need for ongoing dialogue for partners across the sector.
- Although there was no increase in referrals during the pandemic, since the pandemic (2021/22) there has been an increase, which was probably due to increased oversight of schools. It was noted that the rate of referrals coming into the service was now on a par with neighbouring boroughs, having been higher for a number of years.
- In terms of the Supporting Families Programme, because this is a payment by results service, there was a very clear audit trail which demonstrated how families were identified, what support they were provided with and whether this was effective. This is central to an early help offer, which can be escalated to statutory support if needed.

**4.6 The Commission is aware of the ongoing concerns around the recruitment and retention of children's social care staff not only in Hackney, but also across London and nationwide. How is Hackney's offer to social work staff unique or different to other authorities which might make the service comparatively more attractive to possible new recruits? How is the wider support offer to social workers different in Hackney compared to other boroughs (e.g. caseloads, training, mentoring, personal development)?**

- It was noted that workforce challenges were being experienced across London and many LA's were in the same position as Hackney. CFS was developing its own 'unique selling point' (USP) to staff and was consulting with staff on what was important to them and what they valued.
- From December, a market supplement was being offered to attract experienced social workers into Hackney CFS. In response to exit interviews conducted with social workers, a new Senior Social Worker role was being developed to allow

social workers to progress without moving on to managerial roles. This will be introduced in January 2023 and will hopefully assist in the retention of social workers.

**4.7 The Commission has undertaken a number of site visits to local schools in recent weeks (in relation to connected work) where teachers noted that it had become much harder for them to obtain social care support for their children in need. Given the centrality of local schools to the identification and referral of children in need, how does CFS work proactively with schools to develop awareness, improve referrals and ensure more effective support to local children and families? How will closer working of Children and Families Service and Hackney Education assist closer working partnerships on the ground for children and families?**

- Officers reported that there would be synergies from the colocation of education and social care teams. A consultation-line had been established in which local practitioners can talk to social care professionals about children they may be concerned about and to check if a referral is necessary. The consultation line has been extensively used by education, where 68% of all contacts to this service derived from local educational settings. There was also a healthy dialogue between schools and social care about whether subsequent referrals should be made for additional support. It was acknowledged however that this was an ongoing challenge.
- Whilst officers noted that that schools were under pressure, it was suggested that the strength of the early help offer was important to resolving this issue, by making sure children and families got help and support before this needed to be escalated to children's social care. From an education perspective, schools had the benefit of additional help and support through the Reintegration Unit and other services available locally.

**4.8 Nationally, there are widespread concerns around the availability of residential and secure placements for children. Can officers describe how placement shortages are impacting on children's social care provision in Hackney? Also, the placement of children far away from family networks is a concern - are there any parameters which the service applied to this? Understanding most of our neighbouring boroughs are experiencing the same issue around access to social care placements, how is Hackney working strategically with other boroughs to develop social care placement options?**

- The CFS ambition is always a foster-first approach. There is a challenge in securing quality residential placements which are close to children's networks here in Hackney. CFS had a goal of placing children within a 20 mile radius of the borough, but this was not always possible given the specific needs of individual young children. Whilst vigorous quality assurance processes are in place for commissioning residential placements, the quality of provision was still of concern and it was often necessary to commission additional support for children. In this context, CFS is often required to plug the gap in case for residential placements. It should be recognised that for some children with specific needs, the choice of placement might be very limited.
- Whilst it was clear that most children in residential placements were black and global majority boys, no data was available on location residential placements (distance from Hackney) at the meeting, but this would be provided to members.

**Agreed: That further data on the location of residential placements would be provided to the Commission.**

**4.9 How will the upcoming children's social care sufficiency strategy address capacity issues and help improve placement options for children's social care? What are the key elements of this strategy and when will this be published and ready to be tested?**

- It was noted that the children's social care strategy had been drafted and would be considered by the Corporate Parenting Board in December 2022.

4.10 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions from the Commission. Given the lack of capacity to look at this item again within planned meetings, the Chair suggested that when the full CFS Annual Report is published at Cabinet, this is then placed on the following CYP Commission agenda for noting. Members can then develop key lines of questioning off-line which will then be published with the responses of officers at the next meeting.

**Agreed: The CFS Annual Report will be presented to note and that any subsequent members' questions will be published alongside officers' responses.**

## **5 Children and Families Service - Budget Monitoring (19.55)**

5.1 Budget monitoring is a key function of overview and scrutiny and each year the Commission reviews the in-year budgets of the Children and Families Service. The aim of this item is to:

- Review in-year spending and cost pressures;
- Management actions to reduce any projected overspends;
- Progress in achieving identified cost savings for 2022/23.

5.2 This item is taken alongside the Children and Families Annual Report so that members can review budgets alongside policy priorities for the service. Additional data has been requested on the Corporate Parenting Budget given the ongoing cost pressures in this area of service.

### Corporate Finance Overview

5.3 After the application of reserves, CFS was projecting an overspend of £1.7m for the year end 2021/22 at September 2022. The most significant area of overspend was corporate parenting which was predicting an overspend of £1.3m after reserves. Overspends of £0.3m and £0.2m were also projected for Commissioning and the Disabled Children's Service.

### Questions from the Commission

**5.4 Given that the increased use of in-house foster carers is a key priority (in that they provide better quality of care and are more cost effective than Independent Foster Agencies), the Commission notes that the budget for in-house foster carer team has not changed from 2021/22 to the current year - it has remained static at £2.4m. In this context, does the current budget for the in-house foster carer team fully reflect the priority for this service given that the team now supports more placements (possible service dilution) and ambitions to extend support (i.e. Mockingbird)?**

- It was noted that there had not been a significant tail-off of in-house foster carers in Hackney as had been experienced in other boroughs during the pandemic, and numbers have been increasing since this time. These foster carers needed the support of social workers and other staff to help them take on maintain placements of looked after children. The service was looking at how the local offer could be further improved with additional support and staffing to ensure house foster carers got the help that they needed.

**5.5 Given that there is an interrelation between in-house and IFA foster carer use, is this reflected in the way that these respective budgets are viewed (i.e. not siloes). To what degree can projected budget underspend for IFA (of £760k) be used specifically off-set in-house foster carers budget?**

- Potentially, given how these budgets interrelate this is what will happen. When budgets are set for 2023/24 finance and service officers will liaise and they will take this into account and will be reflected in budget allocations. The service will

set a budget which reflects the need to encourage more children to be supported via in-house foster carers team, and create budget pressures for IFA foster carer usage.

**5.6 At page 25, the management action is to increase the number of young people claiming housing benefit? Can you explain further what this means? Does this refer to care leavers who are in receipt of supported housing, but encouraged to switch to independent housing?**

- This refers to children who are in supported accommodation but who are able to maintain an independent tenancy in their own right, and therefore qualify for housing benefit. The cost to the council of providing supported accommodation is therefore reduced. A dedicated worker supports young care leavers to apply through this transitional period.
- There are a number of issues why not all care leavers might be claiming housing benefit as young people may have their claims stopped or have lapsed, not applying for the correct benefits in time, having issues with bank accounts, or refusing to claim.

**5.7 The paper detailed a management action to reduce the number of high cost residential placements by 5 this year to reduce the projected overspend in this part of the corporate parenting budget. How does the service intend to do this so that it will not generate equal cost pressures in other aspects of the corporate parenting budget? Is there sufficient capacity to step children down? What safeguards are in place to ensure that these decisions are genuinely taken in the best interests of the child?**

- The Head of Service regularly assesses all high cost placements as part of a weekly meeting. This is not always about stepping children down from these residential placements, but also about challenging the costs of these provisions in relation to services provided and the needs of the children concerned. That is, is a 3 to 1 ratio of support still required or can 2 to 1 ratio of support be provided? Costs might be appropriate at the time, but children's needs vary and the service needs to reflect this in appropriate and cost effective commissioning.
- In terms of forensic analysis, there is always a lessons learnt process about the commissioning of individual placements which may inform future commissioning arrangements. The service was trying to bring together finance, performance and service information for more effective and cost efficient placement of children.
- The Director had oversight of all such moves and whilst finance is a consideration it was not the only consideration as children's needs were paramount. The Director had confidence that such moves were taken in the best interests of the child. Oversight was also provided by an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to provide representation for children in care.

**5.8 A significant underspend of £225k is projected for Clinical Services - which is equivalent to almost 1/6 of the entire budget. Given that there was also a significant underspend in this service of £246k at the end of the last financial year 2021/22 - can officers explain the reasons why this budget has been consistently underspent - is this due to staff vacancies or additional unplanned income? If this is due to staff vacancies, what impact is this consistent underspend having on clinical service provision for local children and families? What counter measures have been taken?**

- The main reason for the underspend was because of additional funding from health partners NLCGG to offset health costs within the service. As in effect the whole of children's services budgets are ring fenced, any underspends in one area of the service can be used to offset overspends in other areas of the service (and bottom line for CFS). In the budget setting process for 2023/24, finance officers will sit down with services to understand demand and whether underspends are likely to occur in the forthcoming year.

**5.9 At page 24, it is noted that the Early Help review was designed to reduce costs by £350k, but the report notes that these savings have not been fully achieved. Can officers set out how much savings have been achieved by the Early Help Review and what will need to be mitigated?**

- It was acknowledged that there had been a delay in delivering the early help savings for this year as this was still being worked through as to how these savings were going to be achieved on a recurrent basis. The under delivery of this budget saving is factored into the forecast for the year end March 2023.
- It was acknowledged that this was at present contributing to the overall overspend for the service, but finance officers were confident that this could be worked through.

**5.10 In relation to semi-independent care, the Commission noted that there was a significant cost pressure of £1.5m for accommodating under 18's and over 18's. Given that members noted that the quality of housing support and accommodation was variable from site visits this year, what was CFS doing to improve quality as well as reduce costs?**

- In relation to the quality of semi-independent housing, officers noted that Ofsted were bringing more settings into regulation to ensure that these complied with established standards. The service was preparing for this regulation which comes into effect in April 2023, and to understand what impact that this would have on commissioning of housing support. The CFS welcomes this regulation and is working with providers to support them through this process. Every child that CFS places in semi-independent care is provided with appropriate care and support for that placement.
- Officers acknowledged that other solutions may be possible in the longer term, though these would involve significant commitments from the Council's capital programme which would be challenging in the current financial context. The council was having conversations with other boroughs about such possible joint ventures to help share investments and risks, but it was acknowledged more could be done.

**5.11 From table 1 of the report, the Commission noted that there was no budget or spend allocation for Teaching Partnership and Contextual Safeguarding services. Can officers explain this?**

- The Teaching Partnership is funded by the Department of Education (DfE). The Contextual Safeguarding Service was initially funded by DfE but this is now funded by the CFS.

**5.12 Vacancy Rate Savings have been introduced across council departments to assist in stemming overall budget shortfalls in the General Fund. At page 24, the report notes that there is a target of £900k saving for Children and Families - how much of this is forecast to be achieved and how much will need to be mitigated? The Vacancy Rate savings represents a significant sum, has there been any assessment as to what impact that this has had on service provision, particularly as this includes a number of key posts (e.g. Leaving Care Welfare Benefits officer as spec on p25)?**

- Across the council a vacancy rate saving of 3.5% was set for each directorate to achieve in relation to staff turnover and recruitment. The rationale for this was that as staff leave non-front line aspects of the service, there is a lag in between staff leaving and replacement staff being appointed which generates a 'saving' in the budget. This exercise has not been completed without challenge, but officers were confident that this target would be achieved. There is no suggestion that this approach would cause delay to a post that was needed to be recruited to, and that this has been identified through natural churn within the recruitment system. This would be continually monitored with service heads.

- It was not unusual for LA's to have a vacancy rate saving, with many adopting a higher percentage than 3.5%. Officers did note however, that this vacancy rate saving applied to all staff groups, including frontline staff. The priority for CFS is to run a safe service and the need to find savings in this manner would not jeopardise that objective. The service would not leave a statutory post open, therefore if a social work post fell vacant then the service would recruit immediately as these posts need to be filled all the time. For CFS the vacancy rate saving is mainly achieved through non-statutory posts.

5.14 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to members' questions. The Chair reiterated the importance of budget monitoring as this helped to contextualise some of the decisions that officers are required to take about related policy issues. This item would continue to be taken in future years. The Chair further noted that the Commission would hope that proposals for investment to save in respect of children's social care placements for residential settings and semi-independent accommodation would be forthcoming in the future.

## **6 SEND Strategy 2022-2025 (20.30)**

6.1 Hackney Education has developed a new SEND Strategy for the period 2022-25 which was approved by Cabinet on November 21st 2022. The objectives for the Commission for this item is to note the contents and underpinning principles of the SEND Strategy, and to question officers on their plans to deliver key objectives detailed within it.

6.2 The Commission understands that an Action Plan is being developed with partners to support the delivery of the key aims of the SEND strategy, and which itself is being presented to this Commission in February 2023. It is envisaged that through the ongoing scrutiny of the SEND Action Plan, the Commission will retain oversight of the delivery of key service developments and improvements for SEND services.

### Questions from the Commission

**6.3 In relation to Priority 4 - Joined Up Services - The strategy indicates that there are currently no jointly commissioned services in Hackney. What are the barriers to jointly commissioned services and how will the SEND Strategy help overcome these? How will the Joint Agency Plan be progressed in 2023?**

- Much of the resources of local services are tied up in delivery through schools, specialist provision and commissioned services. The barriers to working together were financial in that there was a limited pot of money available. Investment in special schools and mainstream schools was important to ensure that they can provide the SEND services needed for local children. Rising demand and the pressures these places on local services also stifles the ability of services to work together effectively; in Hackney the number of children with an EHCP has increased by 65%. Finding specialist placements for children with SEND is difficult, which in turn has an impact on schools and other educational settings. 5.3% of all local children now have an EHCP. This demand has an impact on education, social care and health services. The SEND strategy is a partnership strategy which agrees priorities across the EHCP system and aligns funding to support those priorities.
- The JAP is a multi-agency panel which meets to discuss and plan for children with multiple and complex SEND needs. This group assesses what the best placement would be for the child and agrees funding splits between agencies. This was a relatively new process and would be evaluating this in the coming months.

**6.4 Developing accompanied lines of finance to support the ambitions of the SEND Strategy will be challenging, especially in relation to capital requirements needed for estate redevelopment which underpins a major part of this strategy.**



**Can officers provide some reassurance around capital funding secured thus far? In addition, there are other financial uncertainties (whether the government will cover the accumulated £18.5m SEND deficit) and ongoing financial pressures (overspend forecast to be £4.6m) for SEND provision in Hackney. Can officers set out the funding to support the implementation of the SEND strategy thus far and additional funding needed to support the SEND Strategy but yet to be identified?**

- The SEND Green paper was currently working its way through the political system which would hopefully address some of the underlying issues for SEND funding. Schools were at the front end of this issue, and the Green Paper would help to direct more resources to support them. It was also clear that the borough needed to reduce the number of children who were supported by non-maintained provision out of the borough as this was a significant financial pressure. Nationally, the budget pressure was estimated to be £1.5 billion, so it was clear that Hackney was not alone in facing these pressures.

**6.5 How will the new SEND Strategy ensure that the voice of parents is heard and that they are meaningfully engaged and involved in key decisions about their child? Will there be any future provision for parent advocacy given the complexity of SEND landscape?**

- Parental engagement was critical and there were a number of local parental engagement groups that the service worked with to support service delivery. The Parent Carer Forum plays an important role in this and has a dedicated work programme to connect parents to local services, and it is hoped that a new PCF will be in place in the New Year in Hackney. This would ensure that the voice of local parents is heard locally and that there is a mechanism to provide challenge to local SEND services. The SEND team believes in the principle of co-production and will seek to engage and involve parents as well as young people themselves in developing SEND services.

**6.6 Will the SEND strategy address the issue of parental support and engagement in relation to children on SEND support?**

- This local authority is very generous when it comes to the issuing of EHCPs which is illustrated by the proportion of children and young people who have an EHCP in Hackney (5.3%) compared to London (4.4%) and national (4.2%) averages. Based on the needs and evidence they provide, local children are reaching these thresholds for EHCP provision and the LA does issue plans in response to these needs. Parents are engaged as part of this statutory assessment process to develop and review all EHCPs and other SEND plans.
- Priority 2 focused on the earlier response to special needs. The graduated response is important to this approach so that schools can identify and support more children with SEND earlier. Alongside this is that the SEND team also recognised the need to work around schools more to ensure that there is a multidisciplinary team offer to support them (e.g. SLT, Ed Psych, and School Nurses). These professionals are working around clusters of schools and there is a multi-agency planning meeting every term to discuss, agree and plan for the needs for children with SEND support. This enables the group to review and monitor the progress of children on SEND support. There is also an expectation that there will be discussion as to which SEND pathways children might be best to be supported through (e.g. SEND support, EHCP or some further additional support to the school). This system was in early development as it was only established in September 2022, and it was hoped by the summer term of 2023 more robust data would be available to review oversight of children on SEND support.

**6.7 The Commission was aware that Barnet Parent Carer Forum was very active as too was the Camden Parents Advisory Board, which was not only a consultative body but also offered advocacy and support to parents not only with children with SEND, but also to parents whose children were looked after by the**

authority or similarly supported by children's social care. The Commission noted that this was a broader parent and family support offer across education, social care and health which should be considered locally.

- The local authority constantly sought to engage with other authorities to compare and contrast service provision, to help identify and support the extension of good practice.

**6.8** The Commission also noted the role of the community and voluntary sector in supporting children with SEND and their families, particularly where there may be language or culture differences which may present barriers to service accessibility. It was noted that advocates from such community groups (such as YouTube workers) sometimes found it difficult to access SEND meetings with parents (and young people).

- Officers reassured the Commission that local Community Centres and community groups should be an integral part of the local SEND response and help to shape and deliver local provision.

**6.9** In relation to Priority 3, the Commission completed a review of Post 16 SEND back in 2020 and made a number of recommendations which have helped to inform this strategy. Critically, the Commission's work highlighted the paucity of Post 16 options currently available for young people with SEND, so how will the SEND strategy improve the volume and range of Post 16 options available to young people with SEND?

- It is the responsibility of the local authority to assess needs and ensure that there are appropriate services available to meet the needs of children with SEND, including post 16 provision. The SEND Strategy is an ambition setting out the high level objectives for services, and the SEND Action Plan will provide further detail on how these priorities will be delivered.
- Supported Internships had some real success where 90% of young people had been successful in gaining employment afterward. Further support would be needed to scale existing provision up and extend support to young people with SEND post 16. Success is important in encouraging more investment and expansion of provision for young people in Hackney.

**6.10** The Commission was of the view that the SEND Strategy should contain a stronger commitment to anti-racism and to ensure that services were inclusive. There was however a commitment to working closely with the Orthodox Jewish community to develop services, and the Commission would welcome further information on what was planned.

- The strategy was needs based including assessments of the needs of different ethnic groups in the borough, and it was hoped that the key principles and objectives set out within it would help to address all the SEND needs of children and young people across Hackney. The borough has recently gone through a self-assessment to help identify areas of strength and areas where improvement is necessary.
- Hackney Education was also developing an Inclusion Charter which would also include children with SEND as well race and ethnicity. This will link to work in the SEND Action Plan.

**6.11** In relation to data and analytics, what do we know about local children who are on SEND Support and children with an EHCP; what demographic data is captured and what is driving demand for services which can assist in future service planning and delivery?

- Data was a critical part of the local approach to ensure that local services were evidence based and delivered real tangible results for children with SEND. An outcomes based approach was likely to be increasingly important in the context of declining resources, as it might be the case in the future that there may not be sufficient resources to continue to support less effective services or non-statutory

services. The service was pulling together a data scorecard to help assess performance and progress across SEND provision which can be brought to the Commission at a future meeting. This data will inform Commissioning.

**6.12 The Cabinet member responsible for SEND emphasised the following points in relation to supporting the Orthodox Jewish community and the overriding issue of the SEND budget deficit.**

- There is an explicit goal to have more SEND provision within the borough. The SEND team were working with Side by Side, a special educational provision for the Orthodox Jewish community, to further extend provision.
- From the early years perspective there were already very good working relationships with the Orthodox Jewish community with good links to children's centres and other early years provision.
- Whilst there still is a deficit, this was projected to be £18m by the end of 2022/23, the service had been successful in securing additional capital funding to expand school place provision. In excess of £12m had been committed to develop new provision. It was positive that new ARP's had been agreed for local schools which could now be established and begin to support more young people with SEND in local schools.
- It was also noted that additional resources were being committed to extending pupil forums to support the voice of young people in service design and delivery.

**6.13 How will the SEND partnership measure the success of this SEND Strategy? Whilst the SEND Strategy sets out some of the outcomes and measures, it does not provide for any targets which might provide a measure of success (e.g. decreased exclusions for children with SEND, more young people transferring to adult social care). Are any targets envisioned to support the development of this strategy? Will associated targets be included within the Action Plan (e.g. the proportion of children with SEND receiving their education as settings within the borough)?**

- There were a number of ways in which the strategy would be monitored and reviewed. As well as statutory requirements (e.g. exclusion data, timeframe for completion of assessments) there will be greater emphasis on obtaining feedback from parents and children within the EHCP review process (e.g. are children happy and making good progress). This data will be regularly reviewed by the SEND Partnership Board. Acknowledging that development was an organic process, service was also keen to set up family groups which can be consulted at certain points to help with delivery on certain aspects of the strategy.
- The Cabinet member noted that a new independent chair of the Hackney Schools Group Board had been appointed, but that the focus on race and SEND and would retain an intersectional approach.

**6.14 Priority 2 - Earlier Response - If New Regents College (NRC) and the Re-engagement Unit are to work preventatively and support children in need earlier - how will the SEND Strategy ensure that all local schools (maintained and academies) are equally engaged and committed to this agenda?**

- For the first time in 2022, the Re-engagement Unit (REU) is a universal offer available to all settings which will extend the reach to all schools. It was acknowledged that there was a difference in engagement and take up of the REU, which was also the case for the Councils SEND offer. Some schools do not accept the free offer and want to do something different for their pupils which was fine to a degree as schools were autonomous. The SEND team was however focusing on developing its training offer for local schools with a broad universal free training offer to ensure widest possible reach into local schools. If schools do not take on board the Universal offer, then there will need to be a rethink as to how SEND services work with them.

- Proposals for NRC were still in development, but the plan is for alternative provision to become more inward reaching to support local schools to support children to maintain places in mainstream education.

6.15 The Chair thanked officers for attending and responding to questions raised from members of the Commission. The Commission was looking forward to the publication of the SEND Action Plan ahead of the meeting in February 2023. Noting that this was a partnership plan, the Commission would welcome the lead officers from partner agencies so that they could be invited to co-present this item.

## **7 Child Q Safeguarding Practice Review (21.20)**

7.1 Members of both Living in Hackney and Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission met to scrutinise the response to the Child Q Safeguarding Practice Review in June 2023. A letter setting out the key findings of this joint Commission setting out initial findings and recommendations has been sent to lead officers at key partners for a response including:

- London Borough of Hackney;
- Metropolitan Police Service;
- MOPAC;
- City & Hackney Safeguarding Partnership.

7.2 A further follow-up meeting with both Commissions is expected in 2023, once the City & Hackney Safeguarding Partnership have concluded their follow up of the Safeguarding Practice Review and IOPC report has been completed.

7.3 Members noted and agreed the letter.

## **8 Housing Support for Care Leavers (21.25)**

8.1 Members of both Living in Hackney and Children and Young People Scrutiny Commission reviewed housing support for care leavers during the spring and summer of 2022 and have made a number of recommendations to the Cabinet appropriate member which were detailed in an attached letter.

8.2 The recommendations of the Commissions are timely given that the Care Leaver Offer and Housing Strategy are both currently being updated. It is also noted that the experiences of care leavers will now also form a specific assessment by Ofsted as part of the inspection framework for children's social care.

8.3 The Cabinet response to the recommendations is expected in January 2023 and this will be published in both Children and Young People and Living in Hackney scrutiny commission agendas. Follow up arrangements for the recommendations will be agreed across the Commissions.

8.4 The Commission noted and agreed to the recommendations.

## **9 Work Programme 2022/23 (21.20)**

9.1 Members reviewed the updated work programme for the remainder of 2022/23. The main changes to note were:

- Item on Race, Racism and Social Care has been subsumed into an item on support for young parents;
- Accessibility of CAMHS services is confirmed for April 2023;
- Cabinet Q & A for the Cabinet member for families, parks and leisure (Cllr Woodley) is scheduled for February 2023 and the Commission will agree which topics it would like to focus on before the end of the year.

9.2 Members noted and agreed the work programme.

## **10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

10.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 29th September 2022 and October 31st 2022 were noted and agreed.

## **11 Any Other Business**

11.1 There was no further business. The meeting closed at 9.15pm and the date of the next meeting was noted to be 16th January 2023.

Duration of the meeting: Times Not Specified