

Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Wednesday 21 October 2015 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02B - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Lisa Rajan
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor James Okosun
Councillor Sandra Rhule
Councillor Charlie Smith
Councillor Kath Whittam
Martin Brecknell
Lynette Murphy-O'Dwyer
George Ogbonna

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adult Services,
Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care
Glen Garcia, Head of Pupil Access
Cara Jones, SIAS Manager
Julie Timbrell, scrutiny project manager

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Kay Beckwith sent a message that she is no longer on the Headteachers Executive so a new representative will be found for the committee.

2. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

- 2.1 There were no urgent items of business.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 Cllr Kath Whittam declared that her daughter makes use of the 'Local Offer'.

4. MINUTES

RESOLVED

George Ogbonna was accidentally left off the attendance list of the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September. This will be corrected, other than this the minutes were agreed as a correct record.

5. KIDS COMPANY

The chair announced that the committee will be looking at the demise of Kids Company, with a focus on the impact on local children. The select committee is currently also looking at the demise of Kids Company, but with more of a focus on the financial matters, and there is no intention to replicate that work. She proposed a focus group with randomly selected clients of Kids Company to get feedback on the support given by the council, as although there has been significant coverage of Kid Company the voice of young people has been seldom heard.

The Strategic Director of Children's and Adult Services, David Quirke-Thornton, presented the enclosed report.

The chair opened the question and answer session by remarking that the numbers of children, young people and families received by Southwark do not bear any relationship to the numbers publicised by Kids Company. She also remarked that whilst the Kids Company chair's comments about Southwark 'descending into savagery' clearly appear alarmist, there was a stabbing down her road and so the possible impact on young people is a paramount concern.

The following questions and comments were raised by the chair and committee members to the Strategic Director:

- Did he think that young people and families, whose details were not passed to Southwark, may have been driven underground? The Strategic Director responded that this was a possibility. He said when officers spoke to Kids Company they did identify 3000 people that they were working with who were "without status". Kids Company refused to give officers those details because of the perceived obligation the council would have to report their clients to Border Control. He added the council did press them for these details as they may well be people who are vulnerable and in need, and who the council would have a primary duty towards. He said the council are very concerned about these people.
- What kind of need did the clients have that Kids Company identified ?

There was quite a low level of need.

- Why did people attend? The open door policy of Kids Company offering food, emotional support, and money is attractive. I do not recognise the high level of need Kids Company identified and spoke of, however Kids Company said as they dealt with a London wide cohort, so it is possible that clients from other boroughs are not benefiting from the high quality universal services Southwark offers such as Free School meals and our welfare services.
- What extra support did you offer? One was benefits advice as some people were receiving on going financial support. We have also given extra support to prevent people turning to gangs for support. Also some clients have said that they were using funds for drugs, though we have no evidence Kids Company knew this. We have also up-scaled our Early Help universal offer so people can more easily self refer as we think this is one of the messages of Kids Company , as the open door policy was attractive.
- You mentioned people who may be off the radar. Have you seen a rise in Food Bank use, petty crime etc? Perhaps an amnesty on people 'without status' would be worth considering? We have not seen an escalation of food bank usage or crime. If people come to this county with 'no recourse to public funds' there is assistance - it is modest; shelter and subsistence. This is available for children and adults with disability. There is a danger by setting up a parallel system then people do not regularise there lives. However people did make themselves known to us we would have to report to Border Control.
- These people (without status) are surely very at risk for exploitation? Yes, for prostitution and other forms of exploitation.
- This must stress our policies on child sexual exploitation.
- I am immensely impressed that Southwark took the decision some time ago only to use services that are Ofsted registered. Yes, Southwark took a decision some time ago to only use Ofsted regulated premises so we did not use Kids Company.
- What about the support offered to unaccompanied minors - what do the council offer? The local authority where the unaccompanied minors arrive, which is often a county lying on the coast like Kent, undertake an assessment and are then young people are typically offered accommodation , and this may be by other boroughs. The care system is not necessarily geared to their needs as the service young people often want and need is accommodation and food, as frequently the young people are very resilient. They often go absent as do not to need the care support. The granting of 'leave to remain' is a very long process even though 80 per cent successful. As cases take so long to process the 'no recourse to public

funds' is often a long term situation for applicants.

- What lessons can be learnt? What monitoring took place? We didn't monitor as we had didn't fund or commission. The first line of responsibility is trustees. Other organisations invite challenge on safeguarding .There is important lesson on monitoring. Kids Company was acting in a blind spot as not subject to CQC or Ofsted.
- Was it possible there was double counting of the people they worked with? Yes I think there was, and we did see some of this, but it was most likely human error as people were using different services in different locations. There was however no evidence of the scale Kids Company referred to of 36,000 people worked with.
- Our School did use them for some years although we were uneasy so we stopped. In future would you advise about council concerns with providers to schools? Yes I can give you that assurance. We stopped using Kids Company not because of concerns but because of a policy decision not to use Ofsted registered providers.
- I commend Southwark Council on not using a regulated service. What lessons have we learnt about service provision? We are working on developing clear simple information to assist in offering help. If people come forward then we are under obligation to report to border control. If we have a shadow system it does not support them - rather people need clear information on how to regularise their position.
- I recall when the council ceased to fund Kids Company and it was difficult time. In future I think it's important that this is communicated more widely. Yes, I can take this on board.

The chair summarised by saying that it is important that the committee talk to young people and as part of this we may get an idea of the young people flying under the radar and the issues around this, given this will be a particularly vulnerable cohort of young people .

RESOLVED

The scrutiny committee will talk to young people to get their views. A meeting will be scheduled with officers to assist this.

VIDEO - KIDS COMPANY

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=65vaSJ2WUyQ&list=PL_maFEOk7e9iZdL8xafmFgg92uNR1h9u6

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ydb0h91R8dU&index=2&list=PL_maFEOk7e9iZdL8xafmFgg92uNR1h9u6

6. LOCAL OFFER

The chair invited officers Cara Jones, SIAS Manager, and Glen Garcia, Head of Pupil Access, Children's and Adults' Services to present .

The chair thanked the officers and commended the work in getting feedback and then invited the committee to ask questions and make comment:

- What kind of choice is available for people and what is the take up of personal budgets? We are working to simplify the process for personal budgets and we do encourage people to attend the drop in advice sessions to help craft the letter for this. The Local Offer web site is very much a location that pulls together all the available services. Frequently people approach in a time of crisis and our Local Offer and team work to support and empower families and enable people to know about and access services - it is a one stop service.
- How do you work with SENCO ? We go to various school events and conferences and do outreach. We also have an over 16 provider event
- Do you have anything for Governors? We did provide an update in the governor's bulletin and have provided training sessions - this is a good point and we need to keep repeating information.
- How are you dealing with an environment where services are diminishing? We do bring together a variety of services that continue so that people are aware of what is on offer.
- Much of this work is online, what about people who are not IT literate? We have drop in sessions where there are a variety of feedback methods. We also have open sessions with opportunities to feedback and we encourage professional enter in feedback on iPads.
- What have you doing to encourage take up? We have sessions at schools that pick up new arrivals. We encourage young people to ask other peers for feedback.
- Do you have links with social care services? Yes we link up to a variety of teams.
- My experience of helping my daughter transition to an EHS plans was not good, initially. I was given a leaflet to SIAS, but it was not immediately apparent how important this service was. Once I did access SIAS it was a much better service and I had a good experience. The Local Offer website

often leads to dead ends - for example traineeships. There is also extraneous information from places such as Birmingham; although it is appreciated this website is a work in progress. I recommend outreach starts from year 9, rather than 11. Officers welcomed the feedback and said that outreach does now start at year 9.

VIDEO - LOCAL OFFER

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=264r8u2CikI&index=3&list=PL_maFEOk7e9iZdL8xafmFgg92uNR1h9u6

7. FGM REVIEW

Committee members fed back that the FGM Scrutiny in a Day went well, with a member saying how moving it had been. There was a discussion about involving education and health in the Action Research.

RESOLVED

A session will be held with Coventry University on action research on the afternoon of 11 November, with member, officers and FGM community leaders.

An interim summary report on work to date will be produced in January.

VIDEO - FGM REVIEW

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLQG5AgBgoI&list=PL_maFEOk7e9iZdL8xafmFgg92uNR1h9u6&index=4

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X-aF8hBMLhc&list=PL_maFEOk7e9iZdL8xafmFgg92uNR1h9u6&index=5

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Hqgh8E8Mk0&list=PL_maFEOk7e9iZdL8xafmFgg92uNR1h9u6&index=6

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m6x6mCnp8Ro&index=7&list=PL_maFEOk7e9iZdL8xafmFgg92uNR1h9u6

8. WORK-PLAN

RESOLVED

The cabinet responses to the Adoption Review and Narrowing the Achievement Gap were tabled and will be circulated at the next meeting.

VIDEO - WORPLAN

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PTMX5R_HQu8&list=PL_maFEOk7e9iZdL8xafmFgg92uNR1h9u6&index=8

CHAIR:

DATED: