

## HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMISSION

MINUTES of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Commission held on Monday 8 February 2021 at 7.00 pm at

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Victoria Olisa (Chair)  
Councillor David Noakes (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Sunny Lambe  
Councillor Maria Linforth-Hall  
Councillor Charlie Smith  
Councillor Bill Williams

**OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools

**OFFICER SUPPORT:** David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director, Children's & Adults Services  
  
Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning , Southwark Council  
  
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Project Manager

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were given for Cllr Sandra Rhule.

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

### 3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

Cllr Sunny Lambe declared that a family works for London Ambulance Service.

#### **4. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting on 21 January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

#### **5. INTERVIEW WITH CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & SCHOOLS**

The commission interviewed Cllr Jasmine Ali, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Schools on the social care, children's services and health parts of her portfolio.

The following themes were covered:

- Children's services and youth offending
- Children in care
- Roll out of laptop and broadband to school children
- School meals and enabling access
- Impact of Covid on children mental health
- Domestic violence and impact on children
- Accessing the NEST and targeting of provision
- £2 million Investment in school's for mental health - progress, continuity and legacy.
- Prevention of mental ill health

#### **RESOLVED**

Follow up information will be provided on:

- NEST – and how information is provided on support for bullying, LGBT+, and body image.
- Enabling access to free school meals with particular reference to Academies.

#### **6. MENTAL HEATH PROVISION FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Genette Laws, Director of Commissioning presented the report and the chair invited questions. The following points were made:

- Many schools are already investing in mental health
- Young carers are in particular need of support during the pandemic

## **RESOLVED**

The number of Mental Health First Aiders in schools will be provided.

### **7. REVIEW: HEALTH INEQUALITIES BAME YOUNG PEOPLE**

The chair invited Nicholas Okwulu from PEM People - People Empowering People – to present with help from colleagues John Salmon and Cedric Whitby.

Nicholas Okwulu emphasised the importance of a safe space, and that young people raise the need for this continuously, for example an adventure playground. He said that this is not something that is easy to deliver. Young people are saying they are being taken to places they do not want to go, or are more vulnerable to street violence or stop and search, when they do not have access to a safe space.

Skunk cannabis is a big problem and risky, particularly for those with mental health problems.

Young people are lacking hope and feeling displaced by regeneration.

John Salmon introduced himself by explaining he had been working in schools and nurseries. He said Mental Health first aiders ought to be a default provision in schools.

The stop start for Covid is worrying. New Zealand is having a recovery programme for lockdown and he said this ought to be replicated locally.

He voiced concerns that parents with special needs children are left at home with little support - maybe a Teaching Assistance in Teams - and the lack support generally for special needs children and families. He asked if all schools and authorities have a SENCO.

He said he was concerned with a lack of presence online during the pandemic. A virtual service with a network of young people delivering peer support was proposed.

Cedric Whitby introduced himself as the co-founder of Sunbeam Forum – supporting independent and small black business with a focus on education, advocacy, and creatives. He explained his background is a former deputy head in a PRU.

Southwark has a richness of services, however he said there is a need to move away from a medical model to a social care model with relationships at the core. Young black men are more likely to encounter mental health difficulties as they face greater challenges but there is reluctance to access services, because of stigma and cultural barriers. CAMHS is a quite scarce resource that has failed to register with those groups. Young black people more likely to go to community groups with people who look like them. There is good practice in the mental health field but a lack of integration and collaboration and evidence of what is working or not working. An example of this is CAMHS – which Southwark spend a lot on commissioning. He questioned who was part of the Health and Wellbeing boards and if they are diverse enough.

The chair then invited questions and there was a discussion with commission members, Pem People and participation from Cllr Jasmine Ali and David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director, Children's & Adults Services.

The following points were made:

- A commission member said that children from the Latin America community are struggling to get enough time as parents are often overworked and unavailable, which leaves children lacking attention and with vulnerabilities to gangs.
- Southwark has the NEST which is this reaching out widely and working virtually, however concerns were raised by Pem People that for every 50 young people, 1 or 2 may know about this service. Pem People suggested that messaging is developed with the community so there is a meeting of minds with an ongoing conversation and collaboration in order to promote this service effectively.
- Pem People said that BMX and garages are where many young people are now. They suggested that there is a need for practitioners and commissioners to come and visit outside of the 9-5 pm. Young people are not hard to reach, but rather hard to hear.
- Cllr Jasmine Ali said the youth mental health strategy won an award for ethnography, and took the revolutionary step of offering access to 100 % of young people. The NEST was

opened during the pandemic; however Covid was a disjuncture in terms of community presence on the ground. The staff team is mostly Black and Asian team. She invited people to visit NEST, once restrictions are lifted.

- David Quirk Thornton said the pathway to support for white people is often CAMHS, whereas for black young people it is often youth offending. This is racism rather than health inequalities.
- There was a discussion about if there is a need to decommission services and make them more people centred, or if it would be better to review services, such as CAMHS, to address systemic issues, rather than either adding more money or doing away with a particular service.
- It was noted there is a need to broaden Southwark's coalition and a specific proposal to make a network of BAME young people to be on boards and involved in Southwark's commissioning process.
- School exclusions were discussed and the downward trend acknowledged following a big focus on working towards Zero Exclusions. Pem People raised concerns that Managed Moves may be increasing at year eleven, resulting in young people ending up in a PRU or criminal justice system, and advocated for more work addressing the reasons for children not engaging – for example depression and disengagement arising from bereavement, poverty, poor housing etc.

The chair thanked Pem People and invited them to participate in the process of developing a report and send in recommendations.

## **RESOLVED**

A draft headline report will be produced and shared with Pem People and colleagues.

## **8. WORK PROGRAMME**

This was not covered .

Meeting ended at 9:30pm