



Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Monday 25 February 2013 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor David Hubber (Chair)
Councillor The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole
Councillor Sunil Chopra
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Cleo Soanes
Councillor Poddy Clark
Councillor Althea Smith
Colin Elliott
Leticia Ojeda
Lynn Charlton

**OTHER MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Merril Haeusler, Deputy Director of Children's Services –
Education.
Kerry Crichlow, Deputy Director Strategy and Commissioning –
Education.
Julie Timbrell, Project manager –Scrutiny.

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Rowenna Davis and Paul Kyriacou .

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

2.1 There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

4.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2013 were agreed as an accurate record.

5. REVIEW: BULLYING - SCHOOL AND COUNCIL POLICY IN SUPPORTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND REDUCING ABUSIVE AND POOR PEER RELATIONS.

5.1 Peter Bradley from Kidscape gave a presentation, attached to the minutes. He explained that Kidscape was the first anti bullying charity, and they are now in their 28th year.

5.2 Mr Bradley was asked about cyber-bullying and he said that children often start on safe places like Club Penguin from the age of 6, however from the age of 8 children often want join sites like Facebook, even though young people can only officially join at 13 years old. He said there are about 1 million primary school age children on internet sites.

5.3 He went on to explain that one of the chief concerns they have is the rise of porn searches , which is increasing. Young people appear to be getting desensitised to images, many of which are very concerning.

5.4 He ended his presentation by explaining that Kidscape has just received funding from the Department of Education to work with 9 local authorities, including Southwark. This will focus on bullying intervention in primary school, and they intend to train teachers. He said he hoped that Southwark would be interested. The head-teacher representative said she thought schools would, and offered to cascade the information through her role on the head-teachers executive.

5.5 The chair invited questions and a member asked if Kidscape worked with elite adults that bully and he responded that their remit is for under 18 years olds. He was then asked about role models and he agreed that some schools run peer mentoring programmes; for example an 11 year old mentoring a 7 year old. He explained that this can be very effective.

5.6 A member raised the issue of child protection, and asked if Kidscape do you work to ensure children that don't get material that might harm their innocence. Mr Bradley said that Kidscape have a child protection programme. The member went on to ask about the risk that adults might

give information to children that was emotionally harming and Mr Bradley said that they have police officers from the Sapphire programme involved in there child protection work, who are very experienced.

- 5.7 Mr Bradley was asked if Kidscape charged for its services and he explained that they did not, and went on to explain that they work with both targets and bullies, free of charge.
- 5.8 A member asked if children tend to change or carry on bullying. He responded that sometimes there are changes, a bullied child can also become a bully .He said that certainly Kidscape find that targets can do behavioural work to become more assertive and less passive with Kidscape, which is very effective.
- 5.9 A member asked if he was satisfied with the safeguards on the internet. Mr Bradley explained that they had recently advocated for stronger controls; and Kidscape had wanted an 'opt in' rather than an 'opt out'. He explained that a lot of parents are giving hardware platforms to teenagers to set controls. He emphasised the importance of parents and adults talking with children about issues and concerns.
- 5.10 Mr Bradley was asked about children who might be perceived as different, and suggested that children who are 'looked after', might be more at risk and he agreed that Kidscape do find this. He commented that he read the scrutiny minutes of the last meeting and saw that the issue of sexual identity was discussed. He noted that 'gay' is often used pejoratively by children, but not challenged sufficiently. The chair thanked Mr Bradley for his presentation.
- 5.11 The scrutiny project manager, Julie Timbrell, reported that Cybersmile had been due to attend tonight's meeting, but had to cancel at the last minute because of professional reasons and had sent their apologies.
- 5.12 The chair noted the commentary circulated by Colin Elliott on the film - Danny's Parade, which was one of the videos contained in the DVD that School OUT's distributed at the last meeting. The chair said he had contacted Sue Sanders from Schools OUT and asked if she wished to comment. Colin Elliott said he had looked at the other videos, that he also had concerns about these too. He explained that his worries centred on the potential for the DVDs to undermine the message of previous the reviews on the importance of parental responsibility. A member commented that he was also uncomfortable with the content; from a faith perspective. The head-teacher representative observed that any resource like this would be carefully considered by a school prior to use, and that in a primary school teachers would be contacting parents prior to using the material. She noted that the DVD's raised equalities viewpoints that schools need to think about, however she considered, from an educators viewpoint, that the videos were

not that balanced. The chair indicated that he would circulate any comment from Sue Sanders of Schools OUT in response. A couple of members indicated that they would like a copy of the video to view.

RESOLVED

The committee welcomed the opportunity for Southwark schools to receive support from Kidscape to tackle bullying.

Cybersmile will be invited to attend a future meeting.

6. REVIEW: UNIVERSAL FREE HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS

- 6.1 The chair welcomed Laurence Guinness, Head of Campaigns and Research, at Kids Company to present on their campaign: 'Plate Pledge - tackling childhood hunger, malnutrition and food insecurity'. He gave a presentation, attached to the minutes.
- 6.2 Mr Guinness reported that Kids Company is feeding about 2000 children a week. He said that there has been an increasing number of children self referring; from around 30 new children a week in 2011, to 70 a week now.
- 6.3 He said explained that Kids Company have provided a meal for some time, largely as a means of engaging children by creating a family type atmosphere, encouraging relationships, and the development of social skills, however a survey of children revealed that around 85% of children actually relied on the meal to eat adequately. He said this had been a shock. Other research revealed that 1/3 do not have a bed and 18% do not have any underpants.
- 6.4 Mr Guinness reported that Olivier De Schutter, UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, visited London last week. He would like to do a special report on UK, but is otherwise engaged at the moment. Olivier De Schutter made this comment:

"62% of children in poverty living in families where at least one of the parents has a job is very worrying. It is really unacceptable. We are on our way to a having a permanent underclass, people living in poor neighbourhoods that have no opportunities to choose different ways to feed themselves, fewer role models to follow and poverty transferred through generations."

- 6.5 Mr Guinness went through data from surveys on hungry children .The Princess Trust/ Times Educational Supplement/ You Gov survey (600 teachers UK April 2012) found that almost half (48 per cent) regularly witness pupils coming into school suffering from malnutrition or showing signs that they haven't eaten enough; the Guardian UK Teachers Survey (600 Teachers, June 2012) said that 83% of teachers saw evidence of pupil hunger and the Opinion Matters survey for Kellogg's (500 UK teachers, August 2012) reported that four in five teachers (79%) report pupils are turning up for lessons hungry, with more than half (55%) saying the numbers have increased in the past year.
- 6.6 Lawrence said that he applauded the council for the introduction of free school meals. He explained that Kids Company have lots of voluntary and corporate partners. The care that they provide for children helps them care for themselves. He reported that many children dread the school holidays, and commented that we need to address this. He reported that Kids Company provide food vouchers. He noted that children going hungry is happening in the 6th richest country in world.
- 6.7 Lawrence ended his presentation by making these recommendations:
- Commission urgently needed research to accurately measure the prevalence of food poverty amongst school-aged children and their parents/guardians.
 - Create official channels in deprived schools where hungry children can report to designated staff members who can distribute basic food packs on an as-needed basis.
 - Commission an economic cost/benefit analysis to better understand the social impact of food recycling and reducing food waste by re-distributing to the poorest members in society.
 - Explore ways of utilising the dormant and latent resources presented in under-used school kitchens to create supper clubs in the most deprived areas. These could be sponsored by business and empower community members to collectively help themselves.
 - Provide immediate emergency nutritional measures for schools facing the toughest challenges in educating disadvantaged pupils.
 - Provide "Holiday Kitchens" where hungry children can get a free lunch or dinner during the school holidays.
- 6.8 The chair thanked Mr Guinness for his presentation and invited members to ask questions. Members asked if he thought that responsibilities for feeding children lies with parents and if some were being negligent? Lawrence

acknowledged that there are a significant number of parents who make the wrong choices, however some parents do all the right things but still are unable to feed their children. He noted that while there is negligence, this is a pejorative term; sometimes parents are overwhelmed.

- 6.9 A member commented that the provision of free meals costs a lot of money. Mr Guinness responded that Kids Company provide a meal for £1 per day. He added that even if there is a cost we don't say we can't do anything because of this. He said the first step is to get the data. He said that the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Grove, has not developed sufficient processes to measure food intake, and while the government is pouring money into curriculum and resources these will not work for the children who are hungry.
- 6.10 Kid's Company were asked if they are promoting growing your own, and he responded that they are , but added that this was not going to alleviate the core problem.
- 6.11 A member reported that she volunteers at Kids Company and commented that the report does not mention that lots of children have no recourse to public funds. She added that many of the children have social problems, for example some of their fathers are in prison. She added that many are going there for nurturing as much as food.
- 6.12 Kids Company was thanked for the recognition they had given to the value of Southwark's free school meals. The member ask about the provision of supper in the evening . Mr Guinness mentioned a scheme in a school where this is linked to doing homework, and a promised to provide more details.
- 6.13 Mr Guinness was asked if he was lobbying government and working with social services. He explained that Kids Company's resources were limited; and he is the main person working on this , however he is head of research and has other responsibilities including neuroscience research. He explained that Kidscape have been talking to Ian Duncan Smith, however the political lobbying is done in private as Kidscape as are taking the diplomatic route.
- 6.14 A member said he would like to see Kid Company working with sister organisations to tackle poverty. Mr Guinness said that Kidscape have also contacted other charities and the media about this issue. He said it was not just about public money and that there are solutions involving private business. A member commented that Southwark Council budgets are facing massive cuts and suggested focusing on the Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg. Members also reported that they did feedback concerns to the cabinet lead for children and suggested that Kid Company did this too.
- 6.15 A member asked if they encouraged parents to do more in your programme and Mr Guinness responded that they are working with families who wanted

to develop skills and are going into households and teaching parents how to cook. A member commented that we are often told that food poverty is about skills rather than income. A member asked if there is a risk that some parent will not bother and Mr Guinness said there is, and many children are desperate. He explained that Kids Company focus is on the needs of children. He was then asked if there could be a cycle of deprivation and Mr Guinness explained that Kids Company have a programme that teaches children, teenagers and young people to gain cooking skills so they are prepared as adults. He added that children often have very limited food experiences so Kids Company encourage children to experiment and try different food.

- 6.16 A member thanked Kids Company for their presentation and requested more information on the national statistic which was dropped. Members also commented that they would be interested in hearing more about the conversations that Kids Company are having with other stakeholders, and noted that there are lots the council can do in partnership. The chair thanked Mr Guinness for his presentation.

RESOLVED

The committee requested more information from Kids Company on:

- The Lancashire initiative that provides a supper and homework club.
- A national statistic that was dropped, which used to provide a nutritional measure.
- Details of any partnerships that Kids Company is developing in Southwark as part of their Plate Pledge programme.

7. ROTHERHITHE SCHOOL AND SOUTHWARK FREE SCHOOLS - REGULAR REPORT.

- 7.1 The chair commented that there has been some movement on Free Schools. He added that the City of London Academy is expanding its provision and officers said that this would contribute to provision in the north of the borough.
- 7.2 A member commented that the need for primary places could translate to an added need for secondary places; the officer agreed that this will eventually be the situation, however he stated at the moment the more pressing need is for primary places.

8. COUNCIL COMMISSIONING OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR ORGANISATIONS THAT SUPPORT PARENTS

8.1 Kerry Crichlow, Director of Strategy & Commissioning, commented that the arrangement with CVS had ended by mutual agreement because the scheme had recruited fewer volunteers than had been hoped for, and the needs of families had been higher than anticipated. A member asked if work with families is more difficult in Southwark. The Director responded that Southwark does experience high levels of deprivation and the challenges that children and families face are often interconnected and frequently severe. She went on to state that, however, Southwark do have fantastic schools. She ended by recommending the committee hear from Homestart, as they are an experienced provider and used to a step down model.

RESOLVED

The committee will take evidence from Family Action and Homestart on their work supporting parents in Southwark.

9. REVIEW: LOCAL AUTHORITY ROLE IN EDUCATION

RESOLVED

The committee will seek the views of governors and the head-teachers executive on the review.

10. WORK PROGRAMME

10.1 The draft was agreed.