



City of Westminster

Committee Agenda

Title: **Children & Adults, Public Health & Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee**

Meeting Date: **Thursday 27th July, 2023**

Time: **6.30 pm**

Venue: **Rooms 18.01 & 18.03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP**

Members: **Councillors:**

Angela Piddock (Chair)	Max Sullivan
Iman Less	Lorraine Dean
Ellie Ormsby	Ralu Oteh-Osoka
Selina Short	Caroline Sargent

Co-opted Members:

Alix Ascough - Head Teacher, All Souls Church of England School
Marina Coleman - Headteacher, St Vincent's School
Professor Ryan Nichols - Parent Governor Representative

Members of the public are welcome to attend the meeting and listen to the discussion Part 1 of the Agenda.

Admission to the public gallery is by ticket, issued from the ground floor reception. If you have a disability and require any special assistance please contact the Committee Officer (details listed below) in advance of the meeting.



If you require any further information, please contact the Committee Officer, Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor.

Email: lhunting@westminster.gov.uk
Corporate Website: www.westminster.gov.uk

Note for Members: Members are reminded that Officer contacts are shown at the end of each report and Members are welcome to raise questions in advance of the meeting. With regard to item 2, guidance on declarations of interests is included in the Code of Governance; if Members and Officers have any particular questions, they should contact the Head of Committee and Governance Services in advance of the meeting please.

AGENDA

PART 1 (IN PUBLIC)

1. MEMBERSHIP

To note any changes to the membership.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive declarations by members and officers of the existence and nature of any pecuniary interests or any other significant interest in matters on this agenda.

(Pages 5 - 6)

3. MINUTES

To approve the minutes of the Committee's previous meeting held on the 12 June 2023.

(Pages 7 - 18)

4. PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

To receive an update from the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health, and the Voluntary Sector, Councillor Nafiska Butler-Thalassis.

(Pages 19 - 24)

5. PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, LEARNING, AND LEISURE

To receive an update from the Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure, Councillor Tim Roca.

(Pages 25 - 32)

6. ADULT SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT 2022-2023

To review the Adults Social Care Annual Complaints Report 2022-2023 and note performance and outcomes.

(Pages 33 - 46)

7. THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT AND THE CHILDREN'S PARTICIPATION ANNUAL REPORT

(Pages 47 - 86)

To review the activities and impact of the Independent Reviewing Service 2022-2023 and the priorities for working with children and young people in the Childrens Participation Annual Report.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages 87 - 102)

To discuss and shape the Committee's work programme for the municipal year 2023/24.

**Stuart Love
Chief Executive
19 July 2023**

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Agenda Item 2

Children, Adult Public Health, and Voluntary Sector Policy & Scrutiny Committee 28 February 2023 - Declarations of Interest

Known interests of Members of the Children, Adult Public Health and Voluntary Sector Policy & Scrutiny Committee which may be relevant to the business of the Committee are listed below. Please note that if there are any corrections or additions to this list, these must be made by the Member concerned under agenda item 2 – Declarations of Interest.

Councillor/Member of the Children, Adult Public Health and Voluntary Sector P&S Committee	Organisation	Nature of Interest
Councillor Angela Piddock (Chair)	Westminster Academy	Governor
	Queen's Park Federation	Governor
	Paddington Arts	Trustee
	The Floating Classroom	Trustee
	National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT)	Member
Councillor Lorraine Dean	The City of Westminster College	Employment as a Learning Support Assistant

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CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Children & Adults, Public Health & Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children & Adults, Public Health & Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 12th June, 2023**, Rooms 18.01-03, 18th Floor, 64 Victoria Street, London, SW1E 6QP.

Members Present: Councillors Lorraine Dean, Iman Less, Ellie Ormsby, Ralu Oteh-Osoka, Angela Piddock (Chair), Selina Short and Max Sullivan.

Co-opted Members: Alix Ascough, Marina Coleman (virtual), Mark Hewitt (virtual), and Professor Ryan Nichol.

Also Present: Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector), Councillor Tim Roca (Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure), David Bello (Acting Bi-Borough Director of Adult Social Care), Maria Burton (Portfolio Advisor for Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis), Nicki Costain (virtual) (Portfolio Advisor for Councillor Tim Roca), Bernie Flaherty (Bi-Borough Executive Director of Adults), Ian Heggs (Bi-Borough Director of Education), Linda Hunting (Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Professor Jill Manthorpe CBE (King's College London), Christine Mead (Head of Community Partnerships), Seth Mills (Bi-Borough Director of Social Care), Clare O'Keefe (Lead Policy and Scrutiny Advisor), Anna Raleigh (Bi-Borough Director of Public Health), Penny Roberts (virtual) (Director of Education at St. Stephen's Diocese), Rachel Soni (Director of Health Partnerships) and Gareth Wall (Bi-Borough Director of Integrated Commissioning).

1 MEMBERSHIP

1.1 The Committee noted that there were no changes to Membership.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 The Chair referred Members to the standing document of known interests of Members and noted there were no changes.

2.2 The Committee noted Councillor Dean declared that in respect of items to be discussed, Councillor Dean is a Learning Support Assistant at City of Westminster College.

- 2.3 The Committee noted Councillor Oteh-Osoka declared that in respect of items to be discussed, Councillor Oteh-Osoka is one of the Governors of WAES (Westminster Adult Education Service).

3 MINUTES

- 3.1 The Committee approved the minutes of its meeting held on 18 April 2023.

RESOLVED:

- 3.2 That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 April be signed by the Chair as a correct record of proceedings.

4 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE, PUBLIC HEALTH AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR (CLLR NAFSIKA BUTLER-THALASSIS)

- 4.1 The Committee received an update from Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, on priorities and any updates that have arisen. The Cabinet Member responded to questions on the following topics:

- The future plans for the Ethical Care Charter and the costs related to plans within the Charter.
- The transfer of mental health patients from the Butterworth Centre.
- Community Grants funding, availability and the compliance checks in place for funding grants that are provided by the Council.
- The social care digital platform that is currently under development by the Council, the intended audience, and how the programme will be rolled out.
- Next steps in the Gordon Hospital pre-consultation and public consultation and the Council's involvement.

4.2 ACTIONS

1. That information of the total cost of one year for Stage 3 of the Ethical Care Charter which provides for conditions of employment to be provided to the Committee, when available.
2. That the response from CNWL NHS (Central North West London NHS) / Gordon Hospital to the letter sent by the Chair following the last meeting will be circulated to Members.

5 PORTFOLIO UPDATE - CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LEARNING AND LEISURE (CLLR TIM ROCA)

5.1 The Committee received an update from Councillor Tim Roca, on priorities for the portfolio and any updates that have arisen. The Cabinet Member responded to questions on the following topics:

- The reopening of the Bayswater Children's Centre.
- Missing children across Westminster, the increase in these figures, what is being done to partner with schools, how children are being actively tracked, especially if they do not own technology, and what interventions are in place to train and support staff to be aware of the early risks to stop children missing from education.
- How the Covid-19 pandemic and lock-down have affected issues such as missing children and youth substance misuse, and what is being done to address these problems.
- The *We Got U, You Got This* mental health campaign and engagement with young people, including the plans of support for young people that don't have access to technology.
- The plans to amalgamate St. Stephen's and St. Mary Magdalene primary schools and the information provided to parents regarding places at the schools for the next academic year.
- The consultation and restructure of libraries and library staff, collaboration across the borough with partners, cost savings, maintaining an effective service for residents, efficiencies within the library teams, staff training at all levels within libraries, and the importance of maintaining excellent library services across the borough.
- Ofsted inspections and the health and wellbeing of teachers and head teachers.
- SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) funding and the effects on primary schools and the children, due to the reduced levels of this funding.
- Keeping secondary school places as a priority for Westminster residents.
- The plans for the Queen's Park Family Hub site and the work that is being done to consider options for services provided.
- The new Church Street Community Centre and the Little Venice Community Centre.
- The availability of drugs to young people and issues that are present in some wards, including, when these issues are present near schools, and the correlation between these problems and mental health issues that are occurring in young people.
- The digital platform to support young people with areas that have been highlighted by services, and the engagement with the community in developing the platform.
- The disproportionate figures of stop and search being carried out with Afro-Caribbean young people and the training and awareness of MET (Metropolitan Police) officers and Youth Offending Teams about this.
- Absentee fathers in black, Afro-Caribbean families and the factors because of this that may impact on young people being stopped and searched.
- The partnership and funding between The Grosvenor and Westminster Foundation, the longevity of that support, HAF (Holiday Activity Programmes) and extended activities for children that have been included in the Council's budget planning.

5.2 ACTIONS

1. That information and examples of the training offered of MET officers to increase awareness in relation to the stop and search of young Afro-Caribbean people and for examples of the style of training that is being carried out.
2. That information regarding absent black Afro-Caribbean fathers in relation to the effect that may have on disproportionate stop and search incidents and links to serious youth violence of the young people of this group.
3. That information about HAF program including who the Council are reaching to participate to be provided to the Committee after the summer holiday period.
4. That information on the Children and Young People Substance Misuse Strategy be provided to the Committee.
5. That the results of the *We Got U, U Got This* campaign, when appropriate.
6. That information on the different levels and type of training that is provided for library staff be provided to the Committee.
7. That information about how the *We Got U, U Got This* campaign is being made accessible for young people who don't have devices or access to private technology be provided to the Committee.
8. That information on the plans for the Queen's Park Family Hub site and the suggestions for options for the site be provided to the Committee.

6 VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2023-2028

- 6.1 The Chair welcomed Christine Mead (Head of Community Partnerships) to introduce the report on the voluntary and community sector investment strategy. The Head of Community Partnerships responded to questions on the following topics:
 - The capability for longer term funding, beyond 12 months, from the Council and others such as foundations and organisations.
 - The social value of the voluntary sector.
 - The Council's investment in a core grants programme to increase longevity of voluntary sector initiatives and the importance of this.
 - Quality control of voluntary sector organisations, close partnership working including with smaller organisations with a turnover of less than £400,000 per year, to ensure they deliver a good level of service.
 - How priorities and capacity building are determined, including a matrix being developed to help the Council determine where they can have the largest impact.

- Targeting certain areas in the City with support.
- Collective resource capacity with the private sector and putting plans in place to inform organisations about where funding is needed and how to exercise their social value commitments.
- Partners taking on responsibility for funding to increase longer term capacity and commitments and how this is both promoted and encouraged by the Council.

7 INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

7.1 The Chair welcomed Professor Jill Manthorpe, King's College London, to introduce the independent review of the Council's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Professor Manthorpe responded to questions on the following topics:

- How the review of the Council's work during the pandemic was evidenced.
- The vaccination processes across the Council and the uptake of residents.
- The importance of immunisations and what has been learnt from the pandemic.
- The role of local authorities and how that has changed since the pandemic.
- The lessons learned from the strategies implemented around data management, the changes to how data is captured, the challenges this presents in terms of privacy protection, and best practice.
- What can be done in occupational health settings to support the workforce who suffered personally as a direct effect of Covid.
- Staff wellbeing and the effects of long Covid, and what the Council can do for support.
- Relationships with the NHS and partners.
- How Westminster Council performed during the pandemic.
- Homelessness services and the unique challenges in Westminster.
- How the Council can reward and acknowledge the work carried out by the workforce during the pandemic, including erecting a memorial to acknowledge this and the effect of the pandemic on Westminster residents and the mortalities.
- How recommendations made in the report will be best taken forward by the Council, how the Council will engage with partners, the building of relationships, and the Council's priority of preparedness for another future pandemic.
- Cross-working with the voluntary sector and other agencies, including local and internal boundaries and relationship building.
- Addressing inequalities in public health and the life expectancy gaps that exist.
- Public perceptions of adult social care and the improvements that should be addressed going forward.
- The high percentage of Covid-related deaths within the Learning-Disabled community of Westminster and how this group was not highlighted in the report.
- Where the report highlighted that certain health agencies had under-performed during the pandemic and how that is being managed going forward.
- Preparedness for any future pandemics and lessons learned from the management of services in the Council during the Covid-19 pandemic.

- How Westminster performed and supported its communities well during the pandemic, including, taking a lead in supporting people that were not Westminster residents and an active role in leading interventions in London.
- The work of the Council with voluntary sector organisations prior to the pandemic that played a significant role in how the Council responded to the pandemic.
- Communication with residents during the pandemic and what can be done outside of digital communication.
- How the recommendations in the report will be prioritised and taken forward by the Council.

7.2 ACTIONS:

1. Professor Jill Manthorpe offered to consider the MENCAP (The Mentally Handicapped Society) report on mental health in relation to mortalities during the Covid-19 pandemic and provide a breakdown of relevant data of Learning-Disabled residents to the Committee.

8 HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2023-2033

- 8.1 The Chair welcomed Rachel Soni (Director of Health Partnerships) to introduce the report outlining the draft Bi-Borough 10-year health and wellbeing strategy. The Director of Health Partnerships responded to questions on the following topics:

- How the consultation has performed since it opened on 2 May 2023, including the online survey, and how the Council and RBKC (The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea) are engaging with communities to reach the views of the people that are most affected by health and wellbeing inequalities across both boroughs and how these will be reflected in the final strategy.
- The implementation of the 10-year strategy, that will be revisited every two years and plans to deliver the strategy will be set between the local authorities, NHS, and voluntary sector.
- What other stakeholders have responsibility and the accountability of the Health and Wellbeing Board for delivering and taking forward the strategy.
- Additional activities that should be added to the strategy such as walking and spending time in healthy, outdoor environments, increasing the promotion and education of cycling for children, and including the term 'sport' in the strategy to encourage children towards exercise.
- Hoarding and untidiness in homes and how this can affect people's mental health.
- Events being run to promote the strategy with residents, including events that are promoted by the voluntary sector.
- How the Council are actively seeking to reduce the life expectancy gaps that exist between wards in Westminster.
- The end date of the consultation, 9 July, and when a summary of the results and final draft will be available, including the approval process at the Health and Wellbeing Board.

- How the strategy will be embedded across other departments of the Council such as employment and education as part of an overarching health and wellbeing focus.
- The importance of mental health and wellbeing in the strategy, including the 18–25-year-old category that bridges support between children and adults, as well as support for these people with employment.
- The need for autism and dementia strategies to be included in the Health and Wellbeing strategy.

9 THE PROPOSED AMALGAMATION OF ST. STEPHEN’S AND ST. MARY MAGDALENE PRIMARY SCHOOLS

9.1 The Committee convened to review a call-in brought by three of the Committee’s Members – Councillors Dean, Oteh-Osoka, and Short. The Members stated their reasons for the call-in, identifying two key areas:

1. Further examination of the costs to the local resident taxpayers.
2. The lack of future plans for educational use of the St. Stephen’s school site.

9.2 A report responding to the reasons for the decision was presented by the Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure, Councillor Tim Roca, and Ian Heggs, Bi-borough Director of Education. Both addressed Members’ questions arising from the report.

9.3 Following the reasons for the call-in by Members, officers, and the Cabinet decision-makers responded and explained the reasons for the proposed amalgamation of the two schools.

9.4 Officers advised the decision made for the amalgamation of the schools was about safeguarding public money and to avoid St. Stephen’s incurring large deficits, and that this was the most appropriate decision taken. Officers explained that significant discussion had taken place with the governing bodies and head teachers in reaching the decision, as well as full transparency with ward Councillors.

9.5 Call-in Members raised questions about the deficit that had occurred with St. Stephen’s primary school in 2021, how other schools in Westminster have also incurred large deficits and are still open, and whether the Council should have put deficit plans in place earlier to avoid the possible amalgamation.

9.6 A question arose about the risk of closure of schools in Westminster and plans for other amalgamations, including the detrimental effects on residents and their children.

9.7 The Cabinet Member responded to call-in queries and stated that pupil numbers had declined at St. Stephen’s dramatically, affecting their budget and in light of Council Tax payments for residents, and following consultation a prompt decision to close the school to avoid the deficit for the next academic year increasing that further. It was explained that as St. Stephen’s

is a church school, the decisions about what the site would be used for in the future was to be decided by the diocese.

- 9.8 Discussion arose by call-in Members about falling rolls in schools and the stress and concern of children and families, including the concerns of the Committee that further investigation is required on this topic.
- 9.9 The Cabinet Member responded with an explanation concerning funding of smaller schools and that further investigation and support is required of the DfE (Department for Education) on this matter.
- 9.10 Officers explained that governing bodies have a range of responsibilities and that setting suitable budgets and considering deficits over a three-year period was a significant part of their responsibilities. Therefore, on considering the amalgamation, the two governing bodies had considered both the deficit figure that would occur at the end of three years and other possible options forward before the closure of St. Stephen's was taken.
- 9.11 Officers explained that as the two schools had put plans in place early, it was possible for every child attending St. Stephen's to be offered a place at St. Mary Magdalene school, the school is a 10-minute walk from St. Stephen's, and governors had also been able to consider how to retain the ethos and educational model of St. Stephen's at St. Mary Magdalene.
- 9.12 The Cabinet Member responded that the consultation for the schools had been developed from earlier amalgamation consultations and that significant changes had been made to the process from lessons learned and to ensure a very thorough and rigorous review.
- 9.13 Officers advised that the Council is held accountable by the DfE for schools within the borough that are in deficit and the steps that are being taken to correct this.
- 9.14 The Cabinet Member stated that since the beginning of the year, the concern regarding a possible amalgamation of the two schools and what was being done in the consultation process with parents and headteachers, and how rigorous that process has been has been brought to Committee meetings to ensure that Members were kept fully briefed and able to comment.
- 9.15 A question arose from call-in Members about where the funds were coming from in order to deal with the deficit at St. Stephen's and how that would affect Council Services.
- 9.16 The Cabinet Member responded that funds would be used from the General Fund of the Council and to meet the deficit amount of £400,000.
- 9.17 A question arose from call-in Members about the number and length of outstanding contracts at the school and how that was being managed in line with contractor expectations.

- 9.18 The Cabinet Member responded that there was only responsibility for teaching staff and that on completion of the current process the statutory requirements would commence and that the Headteacher and Chair of Governors had raised concerns about how the call-in was increasing the delay, incurring more cost implications.
- 9.19 Discussion arose about the decision being timely and necessary in order to reduce the continuing cost to the Council and that the information provided had made a very clear case that it was the right decision to therefore intervene and proceed with the amalgamation, before the issue becomes far larger. It was noted that the school is not viable to continue in its present manner.
- 9.20 A question arose from call-in Members about the usage of the St. Stephen's site and Members provided examples of possible options such as a special school provision for children, disability, or WAES (Westminster Adult Education Service).
- 9.21 The Cabinet Member responded that the Council does not have direct responsibility for the St. Stephen's building, though was working with the diocese on future plans of usage for the premises that would still be intended for ongoing educational purposes, such as Westminster Cathedral School. The Cabinet Member and officers explained that various informal options were being considered with suitable providers, currently three, though there were suitability concerns for use of the site given the nature of the buildings and the adaptations that may be required for its use. It was noted the site cannot be publicly marketed for reuse, under The Charities Act 2022 due to its ownership, until a closure notice has been announced by the Council, and the planning restriction on the site is for educational purposes, therefore the responsible local authority will be taking plans for the site forward. The Director of Education at St. Stephen's Diocese explained that should a difficulty arise in securing another educational provider for the site, there would be a discussion with the church and the need for complex planning applications that would be required before permission may be granted. It was also noted that non formal consultation process for the transfer of teaching staff could take place until the formal closure notice had been affected and it was crucial for the process to be timely so that teaching staff were informed as soon as possible.
- 9.22 A point was raised by a call-in Member about the St. Stephen's site being taken over by developers and raised a concern about the importance of the buildings being retained for public use.
- 9.23 The Chair requested officers and the Cabinet Member that as further discussions occur and plans develop for the site, that these are brought back to inform the Committee, when appropriate.
- 9.24 It was requested by officers that the efforts of the headteacher and the governors of St Stephen's school to manage the consultation process and retain confidence with the families, students, and the community, for the outcomes for the children for next academic year should be noted.

9.25 A question arose from call-in Members about how official notice was being given about the amalgamation of the school, such as on the diocese website. The Director of Education at St. Stephen's Diocese explained that the primary concern throughout the consultation process had been for the children and retaining confidence at a local level and this and the discussions about the buildings had been approached separately, due to the nature of ownership by the church. It was confirmed that announcements for amalgamations would be posted in the diocese newsletter and the responsible local authority that maintains the school would make an announcement, as part of the statutory process, that also allows for a possible appeal of the decision by the church.

9.26 Discussion arose about how well the consultation process had been carried out with local families, as there had been no causes for concern raised from residents and no case work related issues raised at the Council. It was noted this was due to the excellent work that had been carried out by the schools and officers.

9.15 **VOTING**

6 (including co-opted Members) – For: to note the report and take no further action. Co-opted Members: Alix Ascough and Professor Ryan Nichol

3 – Against: to proceed with referral back to the decision-maker.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the report and no further action to be taken.

10 **WORK PROGRAMME**

10.1 The Chair invited the Policy and Scrutiny Advisor to introduce the Committee to the Work Programme and provide an overview.

10.4 The following points regarding the Work Programme were noted by the Committee.

- The work programme would be reviewed in more detail at the July meeting.
- Members would provide any suggestions to the Policy and Scrutiny Advisor ahead of the July meeting.

11 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

11.1 The Committee agreed there were no other business items to be discussed.

The Meeting ended at 9.25 pm.

CHAIR: _____

DATE _____

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City of Westminster

Children & Adults, Public Health & Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 27 July 2023

Portfolio: Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector

The Report of: Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis

Report Author and Contact Details: Maria Burton, Portfolio Advisor
mburton@westminster.gov.uk

1. **No key decisions have been made in the period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated 12 June 2023.**

2. **The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date:**

Adult Social Care and Public Health

2.1 **Learning Disability accommodation services and day services**

2.1.1 The Council is in the process of preparing its Housing, Care and Support Framework. Officers have worked with service users to shape the specification for this contract, which is being tendered in September 2023 and will go live in April 2024.

2.1.2 The contract will unify a group of currently disparate contracts for supported living, floating support, and short breaks. This approach will allow the Council to manage services within a standard rate for the provision of specialist care. It will also feature geographical clusters, helping to manage the market more effectively and allowing staff from one organisation to work across sites easily, as needed.

2.1.3 The Lisson Grove Hub programme is also continuing to move ahead and includes within its scope the reprovision of Community Access Westminster services. Officers are continuing to explore the best future options for the location of those services, with a clear proviso that whatever the next step, it must bring them together and be an improvement on the existing settings.

2.1.4 We have also secured some additional investment for our learning disability services so that an offer can be created for those residents who are not eligible for council funded support, but for whom education, training and employment – and community networking opportunities are very beneficial. This is in addition to excellent existing offers for these residents, such as the hub provided by LDN London on Harrow Road.

2.2 Mental Health digital platform

- 2.2.1 A user-friendly platform for all residents' health and wellbeing needs will be developed to sign post them to local provision and support. It will advocate people to make better choices to promote mental wellbeing through the five ways to wellbeing. The platform will be geared towards preventative interventions, encouraging people to seek support before reaching a crisis point.
- 2.2.2 The platform will be launch by the end of March 2024. Current work is centred on engaging with communities to ensure the resource is accessible, informative, and interactive. The platform will be co-produce with residents and communities.

2.3 Gordon Hospital

- 2.3.1 In March 2020, Central and North West London NHS Trust (CNWL) temporarily closed the Gordon Hospital, which was the only in-patient psychiatric care service for Westminster residents in need of specialist mental health provision. The reason given for the temporary closure was COVID-19 related concern. Patients were moved to other out-of-borough hospitals, and some were discharged back into the community.
- 2.3.2 CNWL has still not held a consultation on the Gordon Hospital's closure. It is likely that the formal consultation will start in September or October 2023. It has been made clear to CNWL's senior leaders that keeping the Gordon Hospital open or replacing acute inpatient beds in Westminster must be included in the consultation options.
- 2.3.3 The Gordon Hospital's closure has left Westminster with zero beds available in the borough for residents who require in-patient care, adding further pressure across the wider health and care system. Care in the community is not the only solution for people who need for specialist care, and there will always be a need for in-patient beds.
- 2.3.4 Earlier in July I issued a joint statement with the Leader of the Council calling on the NHS to reopen the acute mental health beds at the Gordon while maintaining the community mental health care offer. We also raised the issue of long waits for care, and patients being placed outside Westminster, with additional pressure therefore being placed on patients and their families.

2.4 Better Care Fund

- 2.4.1 The Bi-borough Better Care Fund (BCF) Plan has not yet been submitted because three days before the 28 June 2023 submission deadline, the North West London (NWL) Integrated Care Board commenced a review of BCF schemes for all eight NWL boroughs. This is expected to be completed by 31 July 2023. A significant proportion of

the Plan had been developed and was agreed at the 8 June meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board. I have written, with the Lead Member for Adult Social Care and Public Health at the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, to the National BCF Team and NHS NW London on this and the disruption that this has caused, with a view to resolving this by 31 July 2023.

2.5 Global Majority Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

- 2.5.1 Health data for Westminster shows that the more deprived an area is, the less healthy its residents are likely to be. Residents from ethnically diverse and global majority groups, and particularly residents from a Black ethnic background, are most likely to have poorer health outcome. To inform action that tackles inequalities, officers are finalising a needs assessment on the health inequalities that Westminster's Global Majority communities experience.
- 2.5.2 Between March-April 2023, the Public Health and Communities teams contacted specific voluntary and community sector groups in Westminster, such as the BME Health Forum and the Maida Vale Caribbean Men's dominoes club. Officers sought to understand the link between culture, health and people's experiences of systemic racism or discrimination.
- 2.5.3 Early results have confirmed that people might face specific barriers to accessing the health services they need, such as discrimination, challenges navigating the health system, poor service user experiences and outcomes, and accessible discussions about health conditions.
- 2.5.4 Learning will be shared internally to help influence council-wide programmes, before the JSNA's autumn. The insights are also helping to refine services due to be imminently commissioned, such as the Integrated Healthy Lifestyle service. Work is also underway to understand the collective impact of the initiatives on addressing health inequalities.

2.6 Community Health and Wellbeing Workers pilot

- 2.6.1 The pilot is a joint scheme between the Council, The Marven GP Practice and Milbank Medical Centre. It is being evaluated by Imperial College London. The programme aims to provide regular, proactive outreach to households in the area, building relationships and identifying and responding to needs in a way that works for residents.
- 2.6.2 Central London Healthcare GP Federation is looking to fund the programme beyond the pilot stage and is currently exploring its expansion in the south of the borough with the Abbey Centre and Paddington Development Trust in the north of the borough. The Public Health team will look to support this transition and the programme's growth, development and business as usual activities.

2.6.3 The pilot was shortlisted for the MJ achievement awards 2023 for tackling health inequalities and was cited as a best practice case study in the Fuller Stocktake Report.

2.7 Launch of new Community Champions apprenticeship scheme

2.7.1 The new Community Champions apprenticeship scheme will complement the five existing Community Champions schemes that support a network of 100 volunteers. The new apprenticeship scheme will offer new pathways into employment for and upskill champions, and it will increase capacity within the existing champions projects. All the champions are local residents.

2.7.2 The scheme launched in May 2023 with residents, directly employed by Champions project suppliers, commencing their 15-month apprenticeship placements. It has been a promising start, with positive feedback received from learners. The lessons learned from this cohort will support future intakes on to the scheme.

2.8 Supporting Healthy Weight

2.8.1 The Council was successful in its School Superzone bid for £30,000 from the Greater London Authority to support a partnership centred around Edward Wilson School in Westbourne to improve health and wellbeing. The Superzone will focus on increasing active travel, improving road safety around the school and improving personal safety and increasing access to and use of local green spaces. The next step is to work with the partnership group to agree an action plan. The group includes the school and the Council's parks, leisure and community safety teams. The Superzone partnership group will also link with the North Paddington Programme to ensure work is joined up for maximum impact.

2.8.2 In South Pimlico, the Public Health and Housing teams' collaboration (including Public Health investment) has resulted in an urban greening project. The project has installed 11 raised beds on the Churchill Gardens estate. Residents, youth centre facilitators and schools have access to the site. In addition, food growing workshops have been held with St Gabriel's School, Millbank Academy and Churchill Gardens, reaching more than 200 young people.

2.9 Childrens and Young People's Drug Strategy

2.9.1 The Council has published the CYP Drugs Strategy outlining recommendations and actions. The strategy can be found here: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/your-health/childhood-health#alcohol-and-substance-misuse>.

2.9.2 The Strategy focusses on CYP who are using illegal drugs, parental substance misuse and "hidden harm", and CYP who are involved (and/ or to be exploited) with the supply and dealings of drugs.

2.9.3 Some key recommendations officers have been working on are:

1. Recruiting “hidden harm” and family/friend workers in our Public Health- commissioned young people wellbeing drugs service, which specialises in substance misuse and supports CYP impacted by familial/parental substance misuse);
2. Launching the Black and Blue project in schools, a role model substance misuse/mental health project working with the Archives team and the Paul Canoville foundation;
3. Establishing a Combating Drugs Partnership to drive the wider agenda forward including adult drug users and the rough sleeping population; and
4. Developing a nitrous oxide campaign over the summer with insight around education and minimising risk.

2.10 Visit to Beechcroft

2.10.1 On 20 June I visited the Dementia Project, operated by AgeUK Westminster, at Beechcroft House. This visit enabled me to witness the work and outreach done by the Dementia Project, and the relationships they have built with service users.

Voluntary Sector

2.11 Community Investment Strategy

2.11.1 The first stage of implementation has started with the development of Core Grants. Discussion sessions have been held with Westminster Community Network and the BME Health Forum, with positive suggestions about how to shape the application process. The next stage is to develop the guidelines and prepare support sessions to be able to open the Fund in September.

2.12 Community Grants Funding

2.12.1 £600,000 has been awarded through the Community Priorities Programme to 43 organisations (and 8 individuals) in 12 wards. Bids were reviewed by panels formed of residents and community organisations. The funded projects include activities such as boxing, steelpan workshops, community planting, Zumba, children’s pottery, among others. Of the awarded funding, 84% went to organisations, and 16% to individuals developing new projects.

2.12.2 Once the issuing of contracts to the successful projects has been completed, the team will then start to gather feedback from providers and residents who took part in the scoring to evaluate the process.

2.12.3 The timeline for the next round of the Communities Priorities Programme is to complete the community participation this financial year, with the awarding of grants April 2024.

2.13 Westminster Connects

2.13.1 We celebrated National Volunteers week with a picnic for our most active volunteers. Volunteers supported the Trooping the Colour preparations, West End Live, WCC Blue Cross Dog Show and South West Fest and the Community Coronation event. We supported the One Westminster Volunteer Fair with over 200 residents attending and 30 organisations represented. We are having early conversations with Childrens' Services about developing a volunteer handyperson service.

2.13.2 Give 16 staff volunteers recruited for the Street count for the Rough Sleeping team. Language Cafes in City Hall and Lisson Grove continued on a weekly basis with staff support.

2.14 #2035

2.14.1 To support the organisation with how we will work differently to support the #2035 vision to reduce health inequalities, we are developing a communication video and plan, the 'Change Makers' programme to support the Council and partners to build relationships with communities and develop co-production skills.

2.15 Visit to Advance

2.15.1 On 10 July I visited Advance, a charity that supports women and girls who have experienced domestic abuse or the criminal justice system. They provide a range of support, from advocacy to practical advice. Advance is part of the Angelou Partnership, which is supported by Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham.



City of Westminster

Children and Adults, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date: July 2023

Portfolio: Young People, Culture and Learning

The Report of: Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning

Report Author and Contact Details: Nikki Costain
ncostain@westminster.gov.uk

1. Key decisions made in the preceding period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated June 2023

- To publish a statutory notice proposing to amalgamate St Stephen's and St Mary Magdalene's Church of England (CE) Primary Schools.

2. The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date of the administration

3. Children's Services

3.1 Update on Pressure on Children Social Care Services

As a result of increased complexity and need within our communities, there is heightened pressure on our frontline Children's services. This sustained pressure is an enduring challenge that we continue to monitor closely. The numbers of children who are on Child Protection plans continues to be higher than it was pre-pandemic (56 Child Protection plans in March 2020 compared to 70 at the end of May 2023).

Frontline practitioners are reporting that the children and families they are working with are struggling because of increased emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis and this is impacting upon family functioning and stress levels.

Whilst historically we have been effective in recruiting, retaining and upskilling our workforce, the sector is experiencing a national shortage of social workers. This can be largely attributed to social workers leaving the profession due to the stress of the job and post-covid lifestyle changes, such as leaving the capital. Locally we are competing with other inner London authorities as well as outer London boroughs. Team managers are now reporting recruitment challenges, in particular the recruitment of experienced social workers. This means we are taking on more newly qualified practitioners, who are unable to hold complex caseloads and this places further pressure on the service as a whole. Social work teams are managing higher levels of risk, with more management oversight required to ensure appropriate safeguarding.

Our strong systemic training and leadership offer continues to make us an attractive employer and we are fortunate to have a low reliance on temporary agency staff in comparison to other organisations. We continue to prioritise the development of our workforce and invest in their emotional well-being to ensure we can provide the best of services.

3.2 Attendance and Behavioural Issues in School

There has been a drop in school attendance from pre-covid levels in Westminster Primary and Secondary schools. There has been a fall in attendance for all Westminster primary schools; which is a position mirrored across inner London, which has seen a drop by approximately 2%, and the national figure has fallen by almost 3% compared to the previous year. The latest published data shows Westminster secondary schools' attendance (for Autumn and Spring terms combined) in 2021/22 was 92.8%, which was above National (91.4%) but below Inner London (93.2%).

Primary schools, are also reporting increasingly challenging behaviours post-pandemic. This is supported by the latest published suspensions data, which shows that Westminster primary schools had 78 suspensions in the academic year 2021/22 (autumn and spring terms only); this is a significant increase on the previous year (23 in 2020/21) although this was during Covid. The 2021/22 figure is above inner London but just below national averages.

We work closely with schools to reduce exclusions and suspensions and have a robust trauma-informed offer to improve behaviour in schools. Our Early Help's School Inclusion programme works intensively with pupils at risk of exclusion in primary and secondary schools and works to address the underlying reasons for challenging behaviours. The aim of the interventions is to bring about positive, sustainable, systemic change- both at home and in school to support inclusion and engagement in learning. The team also train staff in whole-school trauma- informed approaches to addressing challenging behaviours. So far, several schools have undertaken this whole school training and have embedded a systemic, trauma informed approach to behaviour management.

3.3 Serious Youth Violence and Knife Crime

Knife crime has not returned to pre-Covid levels but continues to be a real concern. Gang tensions continue, particularly in the north of the borough. Tragically, on 19th June, a 17-year-old boy was fatally stabbed in St Mary's Churchyard, churchyard walk – close to Westminster College. This came just days after a 16-year-old boy was stabbed in Queens Park.

The recent stabbing has created significant distress with local families, across schools and the community and with our staff. The IGXU continues to provide support and use specialist knowledge and experience to break down the influence of the gangs and to divert children away from this activity. A range of interventions across the VCS, police and the LA continue to be expanded and strengthened.

The new substance misuse strategy was launched at Chelsea Football Club (Stamford Bridge) on 29th June, where Paul Canoville shared his experiences of racism, substance misuse and his path to recovery – through a creative black and blue program developed for primary school children. Four primary schools across the Bi-borough took part in the shaping of this program and joined Paul for the launch. It is anticipated that this program will now be rolled out to all primary schools and part of the prevention program addressing substance misuse and its links to serious youth violence.

3.4 Anticipation of OFSTED Inspections

An inspection of our Youth Offending Service is overdue, and we continue to expect notification from HMIP every Friday. Children's Services is also on alert to anticipate a full Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services ('ILACS') within the next 12 months. We are continually auditing the quality of services, including getting feedback from those using them to ensure there is continual improvement across all areas for judgement; children in need, child protection, looked after children and care leavers.

3.5 Half Term Holiday Activity and Food Programme Update

This May half term, 1250 children benefitted from Westminster's additional Holiday Activity and Food offer, enjoying over 4,100 meals. A diverse array of activities was on offer, ranging from sports (Football, Basketball, Table Tennis etc) and multi-sports camps, to music, arts and crafts, cooking, adventure play and gardening. A survey was carried out, with 114 responses from Parents/Carers and their children. The survey results were very positive, with 100% of respondents saying that they would return to the provision, and 95% of the children and young people who responded said that they learnt something new and made new friends.

The May Half Term Holiday provision offer was generously joint-funded by Grosvenor Estates. The Council is continuing to work in partnership with The Grosvenor to explore future support on joint priorities.

Preparation is currently underway for the summer HAF programme, with providers mobilising to offer places to children who are eligible for the Department for Education's funded offer (reception age through to age 16 and eligible for Free School Meals), as well as to offer places to children and young people from low-income families. It is set to be an exciting summer for children and young people in Westminster, with a huge range of different activities on offer for all ages.

3.6 Update on the Amalgamation of St Stephen's and St Mary Magdalene's Church of England (CoE) Primary Schools

The proposed amalgamation of St Stephen's and St Mary Magdalene's CoE Primary Schools has been formally approved and is now at the implementation stage. This follows a four-week consultation led by both governing bodies, and then a six-week representation period led by the Council following the publication of a Statutory Notice to amalgamate the schools on the St Mary Magdalene's school site.

The amalgamation of the two schools will see the discontinuation of St Stephen's Primary School with effect from 31st August 2023. Pupils at both schools have a guaranteed place at the new amalgamated school, to be named St Mary Magdalene and St Stephen's CoE Primary School. The trustees of St Stephen's Church are the landlords of the St Stephen's school site and will look at educational use options in the longer term. In the short-term the amalgamated school will continue to use the building for some educational activities, including after-school provision.

The decision to amalgamate the two schools is in response to falling rolls and will help reduce the increasing surplus capacity in Westminster primary schools and associated budget challenges and maintain high standards of education for our children.

3.7 Update on the 'We Got U, U Got This' Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Campaign (as requested by the Committee)

'We Got U, U got This' is an emotional wellbeing and mental health promotional campaign created by and for local young residents in Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea. The campaign went live in May, and aims to promote local services, particularly our early intervention offers and to empower our young residents to access support as appropriate.

This campaign aims to increase young people's (aged 14-24) awareness of the mental health services available to them via the Council's Family Information Service (FIS) or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) by 5% - roughly 1,000 young people in each borough. We have already reached 2,000 visitors to the website (our target for the entire campaign), and visitors to the page

on average have spent around three times the average time spent on a web page, and six times the average time spend on our council's web pages. This indicates higher engagement with the information about our mental health services and that the campaign has succeeded in reaching more people.

The We Got U Campaign was designed as both an online and offline campaign, featuring in-person engagement sessions with local mental health providers such as MIND and Kooth. This aims to ensure that we are reaching young people in person, as well as via social media channels and through the signposting videos produced by our local film student, Tabby. We have also aimed to ensure all young people are included, despite not having a personal device, by using the messaging that young people can search 'Wegotu.info'. This domain is easy to remember and is a simple call to action, to encourage young people to remember the address and to search on a shared device when possible. This messaging was also particularly important for our schools' posters, which do not include any QR codes given that students are not meant to have digital devices in schools. The inclusion of all young people was considered throughout this campaign, however the focus on digital promotion was following feedback during our consultations with young people and in response to studies that social media is the most efficient way of reaching young people e.g. A 2023 survey ([Social media triggers children to dislike their own bodies, says study | Children | The Guardian](#)) found that 97% of children as young as 12 are now on social media.

4. Learning

4.1 WAES

4.11 End-of-Year Celebrations

Our end-of-year events have been taking place over the last few weeks. The Graduation Ceremony for our Diversity and Inclusion learners took place on 22 June, with the Lord Mayor honouring us with her presence. Our Creative Showcase was held on 28 June; it was a great evening with high attendance at our Lisson Grove Centre, opening our doors to showcase our learners' work in Art, Ceramics, Floristry, Fashion, and Hair & Makeup. A great evening was had by all with a full room for the fashion catwalk inspired by the diverse learner lived experience. This culminated in our Learner Awards, held on 5 July in the Lord Mayor's Parlour at City Hall, with over 120 learners nominated for awards. We welcomed many award winners and their families across the three ceremonies to celebrate well-deserved learner success. The citation of learner achievements highlighted the challenges, commitment and resilience of adult learners, juggling a range of complex issues, whilst studying to support their progression to work or further learning.

4.12 Award Winners

We are delighted that two of our learners won 1st and 2nd place at the Institute of Accounting and Bookkeeping National Awards in the Student of the Year category. This award goes to learners who have a high achievement in their qualification, have made an excellent degree of progress from the time of starting the course and have overcome adverse challenges overcome along the way. Additionally, the learner needs to have had a positive impact on their employing organisation and the student group. Both of our winning learners achieved a high score, juggling family and caring responsibilities, whilst working and studying. They have both been a great support to their peers, and one of them is now looking to undertake a teaching qualification, so that she can teach accounts. Given the shortage of accounting teachers, we are pleased to be supporting her to take this next step.

4.13 WAES Digital Academy

The WAES Digital Academy, which is part of the Mayor's Academies Programme, is growing from strength to strength, and the course offer has been expanded to include Web Application Development, Full Stack Digital, Software and Cybersecurity Programmes. Attached to the hub is a Digital Careers Coach who has been supporting learners to complete their programmes into work. To date, over 45 learners have progressed into good work in the Digital and Tech industries.

5. Leisure

Cabinet responsibilities for Leisure were reassigned on 29 June when Cllr Sanquest was appointed Cabinet Member for Resident Participation, Consultation Reform and Leisure. She has taken over responsibility for:

- Sports and leisure services including leisure centres, active communities' communities initiatives and Sayers Croft Field Centre

5.1 Leisure Centre pre-paid membership numbers

April 2023 reported the highest number of pre-paid members across the contract at 20,800. This is the highest recorded since March 2020.

Six centres reported increased membership between March and April 23. Following a decrease in March 23, Porchester reported consistent number of pre-paid members.

Little Venice pre-paid members continues to decrease with April reporting just 922 pre-paid members. This is the lowest number of pre-paid members recorded. However, it is unclear at this stage why this is as there have been no major changes to the service. The site team are increasing marketing efforts to support the growth.

A positive overall % change for pre-paid memberships was reported in April 23 at 101%/+1% membership compared to the same period in 2019/20.

Four centres averaged positive percentage change in pre-paid members for April 23: Paddington Recreation Ground (+42%), Porchester (+11%), Queen Mother (+4%) and Moberly (+9%) compared to 2019/20.

Whilst Little Venice reported the lowest number of pre-paid members for April 23 (922), % change margins are smaller due to low numbers of pre-paid members pre-pandemic averaging (1,285 through the 2019/20 financial year)

Marshall Street remains the centre with the lowest recovery across the financial year in pre-paid members compared to 2019/20 at an average of -51%. Marshall street pre-paid members are over 1,000 lower for April 23 (2,029) compared to April 19 (3,273)

Total Usage

- There is a 22% decrease in total usage % change for April 2023 compared April 2019.
- When comparing April % change for 2022 and 2023 against pre-covid levels (April 2023), April 2023 averages a 27% decrease whilst April 2022 reported further decrease at 33%. This shows continued recovery improving from a 29% decrease for April 2023 and 2019.

Centre breakdown

- Paddington Recreation Ground reported an increase of 42% total usage for April compared to the same period in 2019.
- Little Venice reported a slightly increased total usage at 24% when compared to the average 22% recovery through the last financial year (22/23) compared to 2019/20.

ActiveWestminster Card

- Both the number of live ActiveWestminster cards (12,249) and card usage through April 23 (980) has continued decreasing since January 23

5.2 Seymour Leisure Centre

Seymour Leisure Centre development is currently in for planning permission with a decision expected in Summer 2023. Recommendations from the planning board will be considered on receipt. The centre is planned for closure in the first quarter of 2024 and planning has begun to demobilise the centre and relocate sessions and providers to other sites, with minimal disruption.

5.3 Jubilee Leisure Centre

Jubilee Community Leisure Centre has completed practical completion and is planned for opening in August 2023. Local people and community organisations will get priority access including 14 hours of free bookings provided to the community which Queens Park Community Council will manage.

5.4 Tresham Centre

T&B Contractors Ltd were recently appointed and the decision to appoint T&B has been submitted to CGRB today. The decision has already been approved by CRG and the contractors should start on site next month.

5.5 Queen Mother Sport's Centre

On 30 May the council opened a new accessible changing place, known as a Changing Place Toilet (CPT), at Queen Mothers Sports Centre in Pimlico. This follows the availability of these facilities at Paddington Recreation Ground and Church Street Community Leisure Centre as the Council strives to make buildings across Westminster more accessible to residents as part of its Fairer Westminster strategy. The council's property team successfully bid for government funding for more CPT provisions across the City and then worked with Muscular Dystrophy UK, identifying Westminster leisure centres as ideal for CPTs as well utilised by communities, key to physical health, open for long hours and staff fully aware and understanding of accessibility needs.

6. Culture

6.1 West End LIVE

It was one of the most popular West End LIVE events ever, with an estimated 65,000-70,000 people attending over the course of the weekend. The weekend was packed with 11 hours of performances from 48 top London shows, featuring over 500 performers. Across the weekend, videos of the performances posted to the Official London Theatre YouTube channel accumulated 657,000 views, with a viewing time of 30,000 minutes. Overall, the West End LIVE and Official London Theatre social channels had a reach of over 7.8 million.

- In the week following West End Live, attendances and revenue were up from the same point in 2022 – attendances increasing by 19% while revenue grew by 22%.
- This growth was driven by musicals, adding 20k attendees and £1 million in revenue on previous week.
- Total advances increased by £10 million from previous week and are now £35 million ahead of week 25 2022.

Also, TKTS saw an increase of 36% on tickets sold over the WEL weekend in comparison with the average over the 3 previous weekends.

This year's event coincided with Trooping the Colour which resulted in the 6-minute fly-past being seamlessly integrated into the schedule and appropriately introduced by King George from Hamilton.

6.2 Inside Out Festival

The comms campaign for Inside Out, the council's free and inclusive annual summer festival, is launching w/c 3 July to press with a new webpage of the full programme to be promoted widely via the marketing departments of our cultural and community partners. A rich variety of open-air arts activities will take place throughout the entire month of August to engage both residents and visitors. To encourage participation the council have supported projects by running a dedicated grants programme to ensure fairer and wider access.

The programme showcases live performances, cultural walking tours, outdoor exhibitions, family workshops, sculpture trails, installations and pop-up activities. In 2021, Inside Out brought the vibrant local cultural offer to accessible outdoor places across Westminster and won a national '[Hearts for the Arts](#)' Best Arts Project Award (National Campaign for the Arts/Local Government Association). While there is a spotlight again on the West End, this year we have also extended the festival further across the borough to reach more communities.

£128k of Culture Grants (Inside Out) funding has supported the following:

- National Gallery exhibition and activities in Trafalgar Square
- Latin and Afro-Cuban music performances and food stalls in Mayfair
- Gilbert and Sullivan costumed singing walking tours by English National Opera
- Outdoor cinema and community events in Queen's Park Gardens
- Dance workshops and performances in Somerset House courtyard
- Youth Dance and Carnival Community Festival in Maida Hill and Paddington
- Intergenerational mask making and acting by Dende Collective in Church Street
- Wallace and Gromit outdoor animation family workshops by the Cartoon Museum
- Climate Change talks and events in the Soho Photography Quarter
- Global Majority music and dance performances in St Martin's in the Field courtyard
- Artist-led storytelling events at Westminster Abbey
- John Nash character-led tours exploring Marble Arch
- Culture and history tours by Westminster Guide Lecturers
- Jermyn Street Theatre storytelling installation in St James's Church Piccadilly Gardens
- Women and Power walking tours of Parliament Square and Whitehall
- Art, poetry and photography street festival in Fitzrovia

A new web page for the festival has also been launched: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/insideout>.

6.3 Arts and Social Prescribing events

Westminster Culture Network are running arts and social prescribing events in Westminster libraries to create new connections between the local cultural offer and social prescribing with the aim of improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Westminster's most vulnerable residents. Facilitated by arts and social prescribing renowned expert, Dan Hopewell, Director of Knowledge & Innovation at Bromley by Bow Centre, the events will also feature talks from One Westminster and Westminster Public Health

Each event will explore the ways cultural organisations can collaborate with both primary care providers and NHS link workers to ensure more people can improve their wellbeing through cultural engagement. They will take place on 11 July at Charing Cross Library and 13 July at Pimlico Library. These discussions will kickstart new hyper-local arts and health networks across our borough, supported by the role of libraries as community hubs that can play an important role in signposting to a range of cultural wellbeing activities.

6.4 Community Gallery Exhibition Programme

Following the current Windrush related sculpture and carnival exhibitions produced with Unison and the carnival arts organisation, Yaa Centre, City Lions are due to install an exhibition in August. This will include work by local schoolchildren on themes chosen by them as part of the Creative Collective project. The exhibitions are touring to four Westminster libraries and a final selection will be shown in the WCH mezzanine before moving on to the Saatchi Gallery later this year.

The Archives Centre are planning an exhibition on gardens and parks in Westminster from late August until mid- November that will weave in discussions on community gardening, biodiversity and sustainability. The subjects explored will be Monks, Monarchs, Nobles, Gardens for the Market, Botanists and Gardens for all. This will be followed by an Islamophobia exhibition in collaboration with the Faith Staff Network from November until January.

6.5 Donmar Warehouse theatre tour to schools

Donmar Warehouse Shakespeare's Henry V tour to secondary schools across Westminster has been successfully underway this July, following preparatory packs issued to teachers. The productions are taking place in school halls this July and will exceed targets (1,500) due to enthusiastic take up of the offer by schools so will engage over 2,100 key stage 3 students. Feedback has been very positive e.g. *"It was magical because it was like we were there"* (student); *"It was life changing for some of our students"* (teacher).

The Lord Mayor is attending a performance at St Marylebone on 10 July. The 8 schools involved include Westminster City, St Marylebone, Pimlico Academy, Greycoat Hospital, St George's, Paddington Academy, Marylebone Boy's School and St Augustine's CE High School. King Solomon Academy had to withdraw due to a teachers strike.

6.6 Artist's Garden

The latest art installation at the Artist's Garden on Temple Roof Terrace – Holly Hendry's Slackwater - is launching on the 6 July.

Cllr Toale has joined the Advisory Board for the space to discuss artist proposals, programme direction, community/stakeholder engagement and exchange ideas about how to improve.



Children and Adults, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	27 July 2023
Classification:	General Release
Title:	Adult Social Care Annual Complaints Report 2022-2023
Report of:	Director of Adult Social Care
Cabinet Member Portfolio	Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	Fairer Westminster
Report Author and Contact Details:	Malcolm Rose Head of Care and Assessment mrose@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1. Adult Social Care and Health (ASCH) has a dedicated Customer Engagement (CE) Team that receives and manages service complaints, Freedom of Information requests and member enquiries. This Annual Report provides a summary of complaints activity for the year, and how complaints are managed and reviewed.
- 1.2. Adult Social Care (ASC) conducts a one-stage process for statutory complaints that is in line with the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) legislation and guidance. It offers service users, carers, their families, and friends a process for resolving issues that relate to ASC service delivery. It allows for escalation to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) where necessary. For cases escalated to the LGSCO, evidence is shared to demonstrate that its recommendations have been completed. The process also provides the opportunity to make positive suggestions, comments, or compliments about service delivery.
- 1.3. At the heart of the Council's ASC practice is the emphasis on listening to service users' and ensuring their experiences are used to adapt service delivery. As part of the Council's ASC practice, officers regularly review and

discuss complaints management and lessons learned as part of supervision, team meetings and wider discussions.

2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1. The committee are asked to review the Adult Social Care Annual Complaints Report 2022-2023 and note performance and outcomes.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the
Background Papers, please contact Malcolm Rose,
Head of Care and Assessment
mrose@westminster.gov.uk**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Adult Social Care Annual Complaints Report 2022-2023

ADULT SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL COMPLAINTS REPORT

2022-2023



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Volume
110 Statutory Complaints received



Complaints by nature of issue
41% of total complaints were about service quality
21% of total complaints were about communication



Complaints by Service Area
30% of total complaints relate to Care & Assessment Teams
26% of total complaints relate to Home Care Provision



Outcomes
26% Upheld
44% Not Upheld
28% Partially Upheld



Member Enquiries
148 enquiries received this year

Compliments
16 received this year



Escalations
1 Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Investigation completed

About this report

This report provides an overview of complaints, compliments and investigations between April 2022 and March 2023. The report highlights how various services within Adult Social Care (ASC) have performed in line with key principles outlined in the Local Authority Social Services and National Health Complaints (England) Regulations 2009 and the complaints process.

About the complaints process

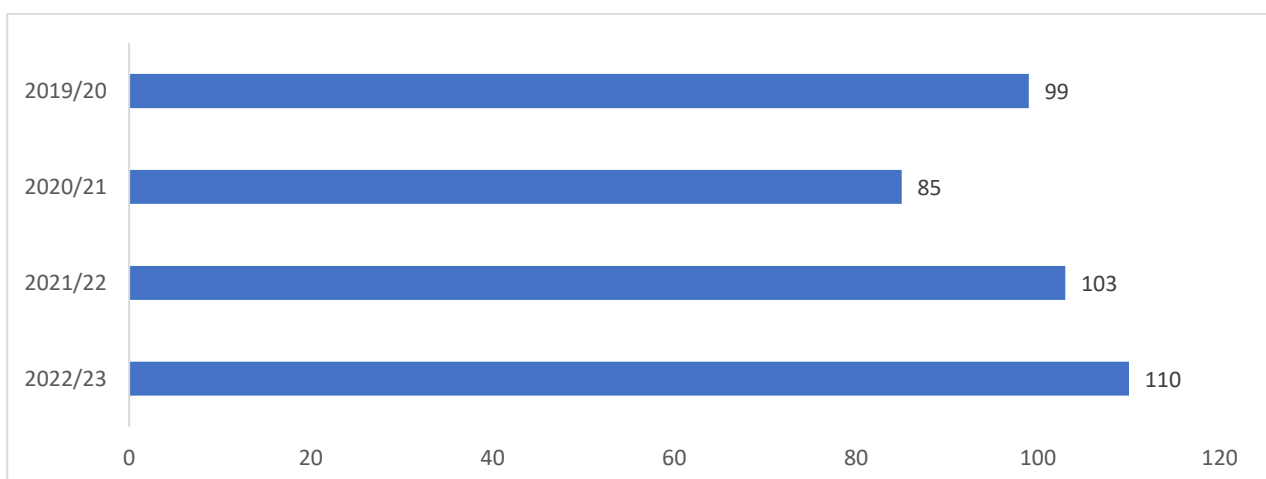
Our one-stage process for statutory complaints is in line with the Department of Health and Social Care's (DHSC) legislation and guidance. All complaints are logged and acknowledged by the Customer Engagement Team (CE Team) within 3 working days. The Council will try to resolve the complaint within 10 working days. If more time is required, this is agreed with the complainant.

Anyone who has received a service, is currently receiving a service, or is seeking a service from the Council can make a statutory complaint. This includes anyone who is affected by decisions the Council might make about social care, including a service provided by an external provider acting on the Council's behalf. The Council will conduct a thorough and fair investigation into the concerns raised and provide a comprehensive written response with clear findings and recommendations. The Council will also outline the complainant's right to escalate to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) should they remain dissatisfied with the Council's response.

Volume of complaints

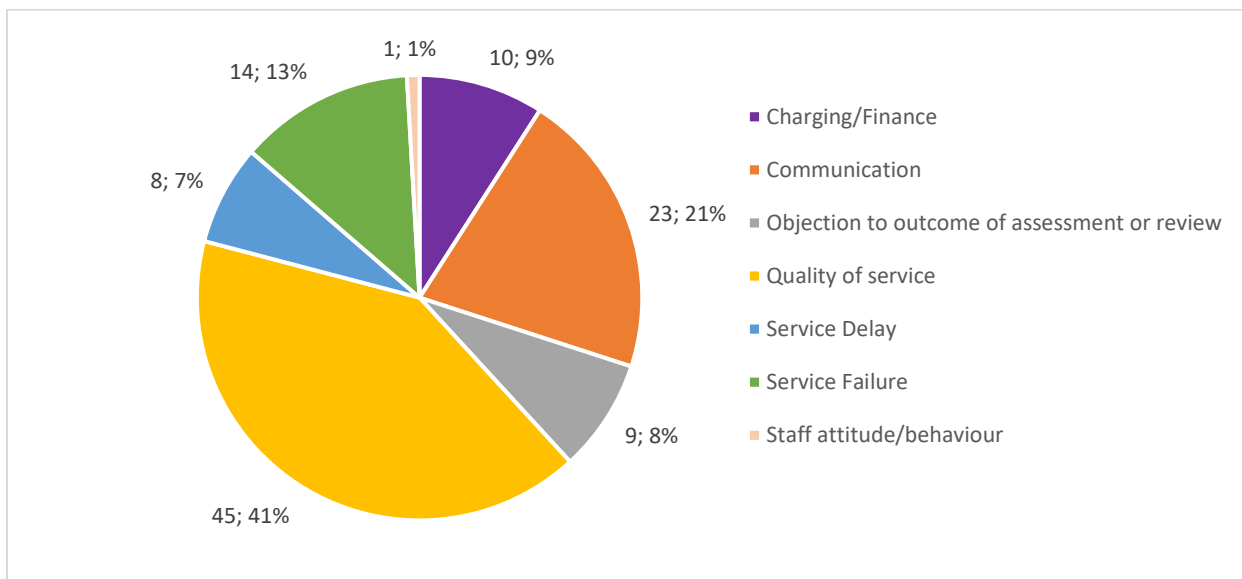
Between April 2022 and March 2023, 2,749 people were supported with a long-term package of care. In this same period, the CE Team recorded and investigated 110 complaints from 99 individuals (about 3.6%) in this same cohort. This number is 7% higher than the complaints received in 2021/22. Figure 1 demonstrates this trend. The breakdown of the reasons for why complaints were made in 2022/23 is shown in Figure 2 using actual figures and percentages. In 2020/21, we believe the number of complaints was lower because of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact and that the increase shown reflects numbers returning to pre-pandemic levels.

Figure 1 – Number of complaints received, 2019/20 – 2022/23



Nature of complaints

Figure 2 – Complaints by nature of issue for 2022/23 (actual figures and percentages)



The category with the most complaints was “Quality of service.” This is a broad category that could include (but is not limited to) lack of cleanliness for home care, inconsistency in carers not completing care tasks and/or not completing them to a good standard, or loss/breakage of items. Of the total complaints, 21% were focussed on the communications residents received, and 8% were related to an assessment or its outcome not being implemented.

Complaints activity by team

As shown in Table 1, the majority of the complaints (57%) in 2022/23 were about assessment and care services.

This year 27% of complaints were about homecare services. Most homecare complaints have been about the quality of service or service failure. The CE Team is committed to working with providers and the Contract Monitoring Team to ensure issues are identified and dealt with in line with contractual arrangements and the LGSCO’s guidelines.

The complaints that are made to the Council are investigated and resolved in line with statutory guidance. These are separate to the complaints received directly by the provider and resolved under a Care Quality Commission (CQC) complaint process. The LGSCO advises that it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure there is oversight on such complaints as well as those made directly to us. The Council works in partnership with the providers to investigate these complaints and ensure that action is taken to resolve the complaint and prevent the issue from happening again.

In line with the LGSCO’s categorisation, the CE Team has tabulated all the complaints it received in 2022/23 in the table below.

Table 1 – Number complaints by the LGSCO breakdown in 2022/23

	Area	Total no of complaints	% of total complaints	Number of cases fully or partly upheld	LGSCO cases
Arranging Social Care	Assessment & care planning** (Complex Social Work Teams)	62 (24)	57% (22%)	26 (6)	1*
	(Learning & Disability Partnership Team)	(5)	(5%)	(3)	
	(Information and Advice)	(6)	(6%)	(2)	
	(Review Team)	(5)	(5%)	(1)	
	Charging/Finance	8	7%	5	0
	Hospital Social Work Team	2	2%	1	0
	Older People’s MH	1	1%	1	0
	Occupational Therapy	6	5%	4	0
Providing Social Care	Homecare	30	27%	22	1*
	Reablement & Community Independence Service (CIS)	1	1%	1	0

*same case

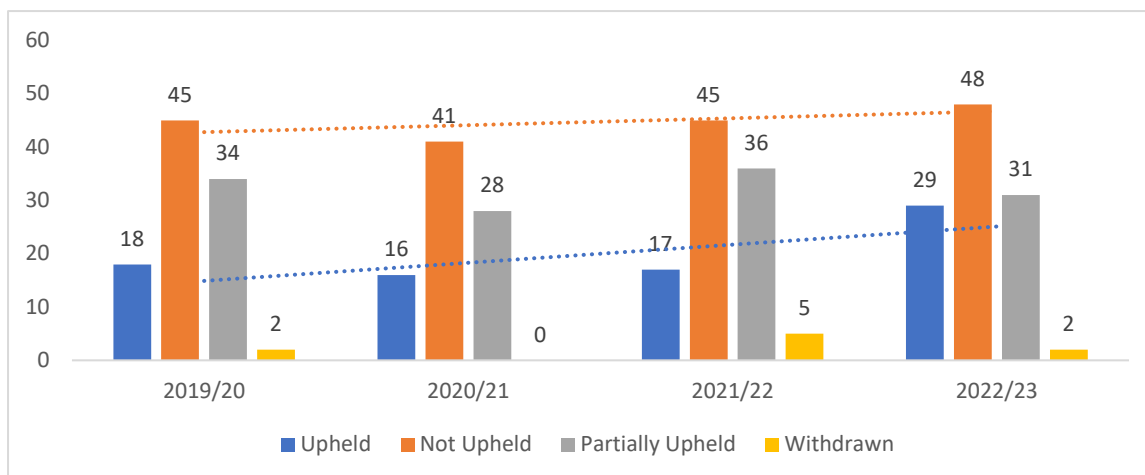
** There were 22 other complaints over 10 areas, but the top four areas are shown here

Outcomes

In 2022/23, twenty-nine complaints were fully upheld and thirty-one were partly upheld. Where the complaint has been upheld, the Council (or its commissioned partners) have offered an apology where appropriate, made commitments to improve the service, clearly explained reasons for delays, and addressed ineffective communication if that was identified as an issue.

Figure 3 below shows the outcomes of all complaints made to ASC since 2019/20. In 2022/23, there was a small increase in the number of complaints not upheld, following a consistently flat trend. There was also a marginal increase in the number of cases upheld, but the four-year trend is relatively consistent. However, as a proportion, the number of complaints that have not been upheld remain steady at 44% compared with last year when 44% of complaints were not upheld. This is similar for complaints partially upheld. For complaints upheld, this proportion increased from 17% in 2021/22 to 26% in 2022/23; however, the overall numbers remain relatively low.

Figure 3 – Complaint outcomes, 2019/20 – 2022/23



Timeliness in responding to complaint

The DHSC’s statutory complaints regulations stipulate that the method and time frame for response must be commensurate to the seriousness of the complaint and completed within 6 months. The CE Team always seeks to resolve the complaint as soon as possible. In the absence of a prescribed timescale, it uses an internal ambitious timescale of 10 working days, in consultation with the complainant. Of the complaints received this year, 64% were responded to within 10 working days. A further 25% needed an additional 10 working days, and only 11% took more than 20 working days to complete. This is in line with last year.

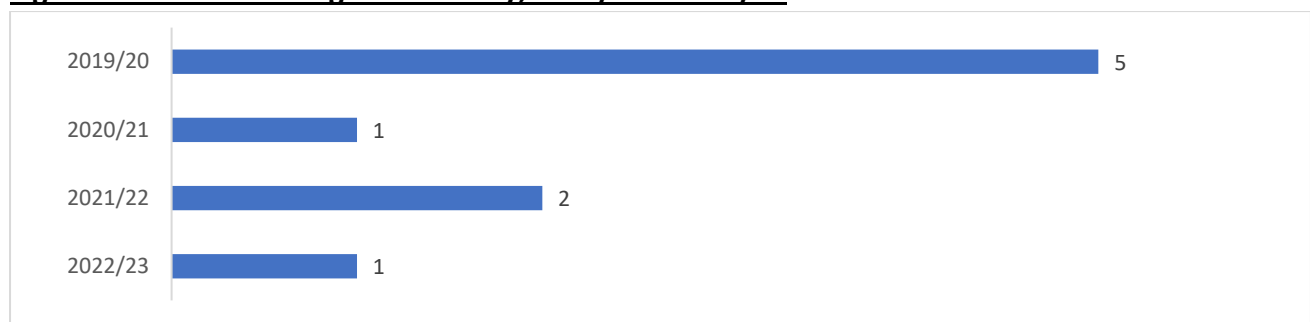
Some delays are unavoidable and the reasons for this are listed below. When it has not been possible to meet the 10 working day timescale, the complainant is kept up to date with the progress of the investigation and advised of revised timescales.

- Complexity of the case.
- Co-managed cases, such as those with Health partners or commissioned providers.
- Provision of a supplementary/ additional response.
- Availability of key staff to participate in the investigation.

Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) activity

One LGSCO investigation occurred this year, which was focussed on homecare provision, record keeping and a carer’s assessment. The complaint was partially upheld and the LGSCO made a number of recommendations, all of which have been completed.

Figure 4 – LGSCO investigation activity, 2019/20 – 2022/23

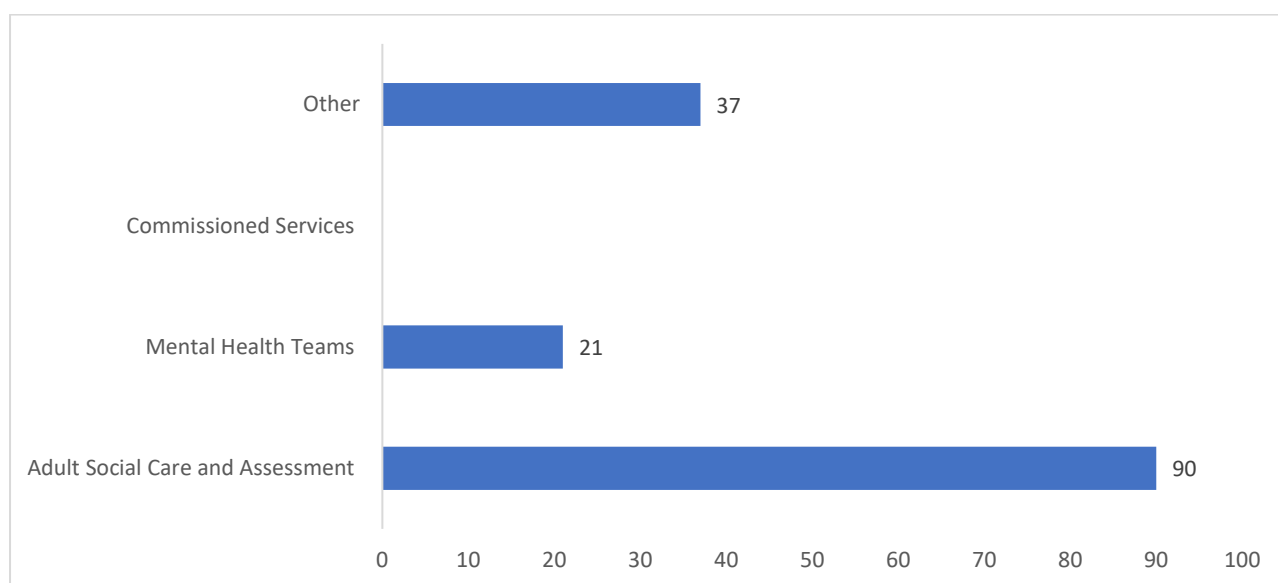


As shown in Figure 4, the number of cases escalated to and investigated by the LGSCO continues to be low compared to previous years. All complainants are informed of their right to escalate their complaint if they remain dissatisfied. It is likely that these figures remain low due to the team’s proactive approach in trying to provide a resolution to complaints.

Member enquiries

Member enquiries are defined as enquiries received from Elected Members of the Council or Members of Parliament acting on behalf of their constituents. The CE Team facilitated 148 Member Enquiries in 2022/23. 75% of the enquiries have been on behalf of constituents and in relation to either a request for care and support or about existing arrangements within Adult Social Care and Mental Health Teams. Of these 148, 9.5% were received from Members of Parliament. Figure 5 shows these enquiries by service area.

Figure 5 – The distribution of enquiries



Of the enquiries received, 76% were responded to within the agreed Council-wide 5 working day timescale. This is lower compared to last year. In some cases, where the issue being raised is complex, requires consent or involves input from a different Council department, the response may take longer to complete. When this happens, elected members are advised of the delay and provided an expected date for response. The teams are committed to working together to provide one cohesive response for the resident and to share updates where possible.

Compliments

Customers and their representatives are encouraged to tell the Council if they are happy with their care or to highlight a good service. They can complete a feedback form as well as contact the relevant social care team to express this. There were 16 compliments recorded this year for WCC. 7 were related to “Care and Assessment”, 7 were related to “Commissioned and Provider Services”, and 2 were related to “Community Independence Service.”

Below are a few examples of what our service users and/or their relatives have shared with us in terms of their positive experience about the service they receive.

From a service user who received a service from the WCC Learning Disability Partnership Team;

‘My son was transferred to the Adult Social Services support team in 2021. During the transition period, I was a little bit stressed and overwhelmed, thinking that I need to go all over again to introduce my son and his needs. Luckily our key worker was extremely professional and very helpful. She did everything on time to gather all the information needed to minimise my stress. Overall I am very pleased with the adult support team, as everyone is so professional and helpful. Many thanks to the team for the help and support.’

From a service user’s daughter about Ashbourne Care;

‘Daughter of SU explained that she was very happy with the carers from Ashbourne and happy that the carers are Gujarati speaking. She explained that the carers have given her and her family confidence that their mother will be cared for properly.’

From the daughter of a service user about their carer;

‘Please note that Mr YY 's daughter and NOK has emailed VCP today to notify of how pleased and reassured she has been of late when reading on the birdie app, how her father is being actively encouraged to eat & drink by his regular carers. For this, she says, ' A big thank you to you'.’

From a service user about Community Independence Service;

‘She was absolutely overjoyed and so happy with her RR chair. She was able to get from sit to stand independently without asking her daughters or grandson for support. Ms X is very grateful for the chair and thanks the service for supporting her independence. Upon the initial assessment she was very tearful and yesterday was beaming with smiles.’

Learning from complaints

Learning from complaints provides valuable opportunities to adapt services based on customers’ experiences. Staff and managers who respond to complaints are required to identify lessons learned that can lead to service improvement, and Learning Outcome Action plans are completed for the more complex complaints received. Lessons learned, actions and the themes drawn from complaints are presented regularly for discussion and challenge at meetings with Heads of Service and Operational Teams to improve the quality of social care practice. Some general learning actions are listed below:

- Teams have been reminded that all complaints, especially those made verbally, must be logged with the CE Team to ensure due processes are followed and complaints are not escalated.
- Working with homecare providers to ensure all complaints handled under their own CQC compliant processes are also reported to the ASC CE Team to ensure a satisfactory resolution is achieved. This should also be done in line with the LGSCO’s directive that the Council is aware of what actions have been taken that relate to its service users.
- To work with the Quality Assurance Team to improve services in the care provider sector.

- The Complaints lead has advised Heads of Service to ensure for complex multi-disciplinary complaints a meeting must take place early on to ensure a good investigation plan is implemented and we can also prevent escalation to Ombudsman investigations.

Case studies of how lessons learned from complaints have been taken forward are included below:

You complained: About the lack of financial support put in place for your family members who have various physical and mental needs following the relevant assessments being carried out and the lack of follow through and clear communication.

We: Investigated this carefully and upheld the complaint. The communication with the allocated team and the information required from it was not transparently outlined. It was confirmed that an increase to care hours had been assessed and agreed, and it was explained that the implementation of direct payments could be introduced once the service user had been discharged from hospital.

You complained: That carers often do not arrive on time or stay for the full duration of care calls, and do not complete all tasks as outlined in your care plan. You said you are never informed when the carer is running late and do not receive an explanation when they arrive.

We: Worked with the care provider to establish the facts and find out why the care was not being provided as expected. The provider acknowledged the complaints and apologised for the timeliness of the care worker. The provider also assured you that it would reiterate the importance of communication with all care workers in instances where they may be running late for care calls. The provider advised that you should contact them if you have any further issues.

You complained: About the delay in receiving care assistance which has been promised since last year. You said you have had three assessments and were advised you qualified for support. However, after repeated telephone conversations and emails, you had not received a response. This lasted for over a year. You were also advised you could not receive last year's allowance.

We: Accepted your complaint and apologised for the delay in completing the assessment for the carer's allowance and communicating the outcome to the complainant. We also confirmed the assessment was completed and that £600 would be awarded.

You complained: About a few points such as not being promptly being provided with a care plan, carers not arriving on time, carers failing to use key safe, inadequate, inappropriate and incompetent care, and poor communication.

We: Acknowledged and apologised for the concerns you raised, and we explained that the allocated worker asked the care agency arrange to provide you with a physical copy but that this was not completed. We confirmed that care plans should be readily available to service users at all times. We also clarified that a meeting was scheduled to address concerns raised with the allocated worker's line manager and ensure this situation does not re-occur. The care agency advised that there had not been a delay to the care state date, and that it had not cancelled calls. We advised you that the key safe and timeliness issues would be addressed in a separate apology letter.

You complained: About a carer rushing you and not staying the entire length of the sitting visits. You also complained about your wife's contact with the office and being told to go elsewhere if she was not happy.

We: Apologised for the carer rushing and not staying the entire length of the visit. We also apologised that you felt office staff did not investigate the incident with the carer. We did not uphold the claim that your wife had been told to go elsewhere, as we said should could not have your preferred carer allocated to your package of care since he works in a different post code.

Future development work for 23/24

In 23/24, the CE Team will be making further developments in the following areas:

- Continuing to develop work with our partner providers through contract monitoring meetings and provider forums to ensure their complaints are handled effectively and in line with the LGSCO's guidance on third party complaints.
- Continue to work with Social Care Managers and Market Managers to improve the following: service users' access to the complaints process, complaints investigations and responses, and consistent implementation of learning outcomes.
- Continue to develop the CE Team's relationship with the Quality Assurance Team to improve services in the care provider sector.
- Continue to undertake service user consultation activity on behalf of the Department where services are being transformed.
- Working with the Principal Social Worker and Learning and Development Team to develop and provide effective training on complaints resolution and managing difficult situations.

Team contact details

The CE Team can be contacted using the details below if there are any questions or suggestions about this report.

E-mail: ASCCustomerfeedback@westminster.gov.uk

Phone: 0800 587 0072



City of Westminster

Westminster City Council

Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report



Westminster Participation Team: broadening young people’s experiences!

Reporting Period	April 2022 – March 2023
Report of	Independent Reviewing Service
Report to	Senior Leadership -Children’s Services
Report Author	Vivette Jenkins – Service Manager for Independent Reviewing Service, Bi Borough Children’s Services
Date of Report	20th June 2023

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1. Executive Summary

The report provides an overview of the activities and impact of the Independent Reviewing Service 2022-2023, highlighting areas of good practice and development in driving forward improvements in care planning and delivery so our children can have the best outcomes possible.

The key highlights of this report are:

- The number of children in care increased by 11 (6%) at the end of this reporting period. The overall numbers of Looked After Children has increased slightly; whilst the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children arriving in Westminster has remained steady, the numbers of adolescents becoming looked after from our local population has increased. We believe this reflects rising concerns about contextual safeguarding and children at risk from extra-familial abuse.
- Improved timeliness of Looked After Child reviews; of 505 Looked After Child reviews were held in 2022-2023 with 99% undertaken within the statutory timescales.
- Increased opportunities to ensure the voice of the children and young people is key to all discussions and care planning arrangements; 91% of children contributed to their statutory review, with 80% of children attending their review.
- Dispute Resolutions remain consistent with previous years with 12 challenges raised, 10 informal, 1 formal and 1 service themed challenge; of these one was escalated to stage two with no escalations to Senior Management within this reporting period.
- During this reporting period, we have seen the publication of the final report of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care and welcomed the DfE's response to support and continue to strengthen the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO).

2.The Legal Context and Purpose of the Independent Reviewing Service

The IRO has a key role in quality assurance and service improvement of the Local Authority's care planning for Looked After Children. This is delivered through oversight of care plans and providing scrutiny with an emphasis on raising challenge to prevent drift and delay.

Westminster City Council's IROs are skilled scrutineers, systematically performing their statutory duties set out in Section 25B (1) of the Children Act 1989;

- Monitor the performance by the local authority in relation to the child's case.
- Participate in any review of the child's case.
- Ensure that the wishes and feelings are given consideration by the authority.
- Administer statutory regulations to ensure compliance.

The Independent Reviewing Service operates within the framework of the updated IRO Handbook, statutory guidance, issued to Local Authorities in April 2011 and linked to the revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance (2011).

The IRO Handbook sets out the statutory roles and duties of the IRO and the strategic and managerial responsibilities of the Local Authority in establishing an effective Independent Reviewing Service which include IROs;

- Chairing the child's review meeting
- Monitoring the child's progress on an ongoing basis.

The average caseload for a full-time IRO is between 50-60 which is consistent with the IRO Handbook recommendation of caseloads between 50 and 70. Oversight of case allocation activity, variation of case work and lead areas is maintained by the Service Manager through formalised mechanisms.

As a service we recognise the importance of having an operational and strategic lens on practice through representation at designated panels, forums, and planning groups. IROs provide an independent champion role for children and young people by **giving them a greater agency in the major decisions that affect their lives**, ensuring their voice has been considered and actioned. The IRO role is valued as part of the decision-making process as their focus is on children's best interests, holding a mirror up to practice and raising challenge when needed.

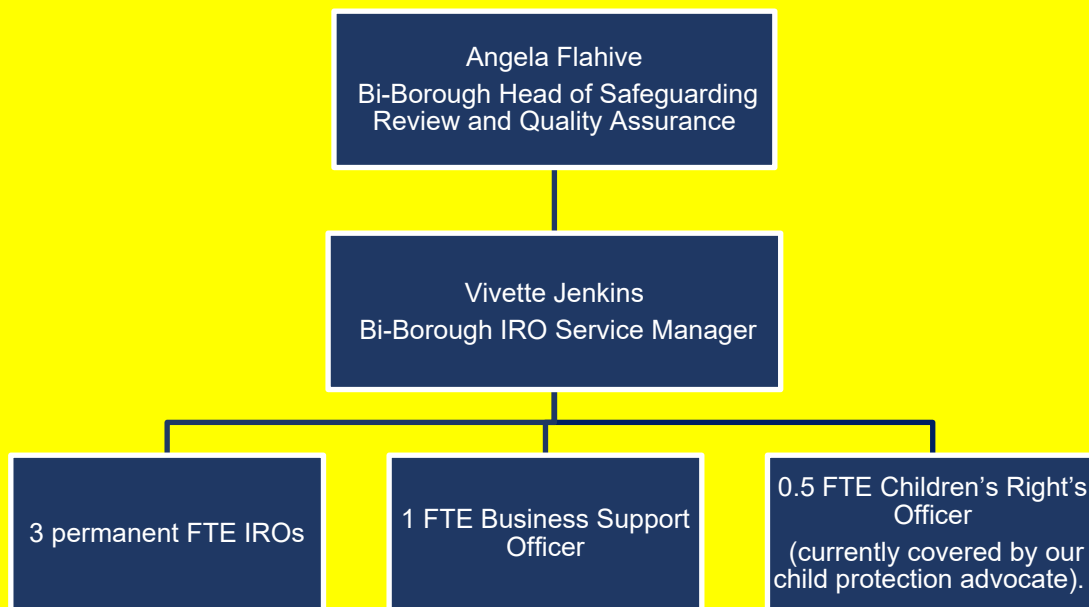
The Independent Reviewing Service provides representation at;

Westminster Guardians Board
Care Panel
Bi-Borough Permanency Board
London IRO Managers Forum
London IRO group
Contextual Safeguarding and Exploitation Champions Meetings
Lifelong links case discussion
Permanency Planning Meetings
Disruption Meetings
Strategy/review strategy meetings
Nation Referral Mechanism (pilot project) Steering Group
IRO regional conference
Cafcass Guardians Liaisons meetings

3. Profile of the Westminster Independent Reviewing Service

The Westminster Independent Reviewing Service is part of the Bi-Borough Safeguarding, Review and Quality Assurance Service. This is so the position of independence, from the frontline service line management arrangements is maintained.

The Independent Reviewing Service in Westminster staffing structure



The team provides quality assurance oversight to influence practice and wider service delivery to achieve positive outcomes for all our Looked After Children. IROs ensure care plans are timely and informed through assessments that provides a real and genuine response to the assessed needs of individual children. IROs take a lead role in ensuring care plans have given proper consideration and weight to the child or young person's current views, wishes and feelings, checking they fully understand any implications of changes to their care plan.

As a service the IROs strengthen their challenge to the Local Authority through the dispute resolution protocol which has been effective in driving forward improvements in outcomes for the young people we review.

IROs are responsible for

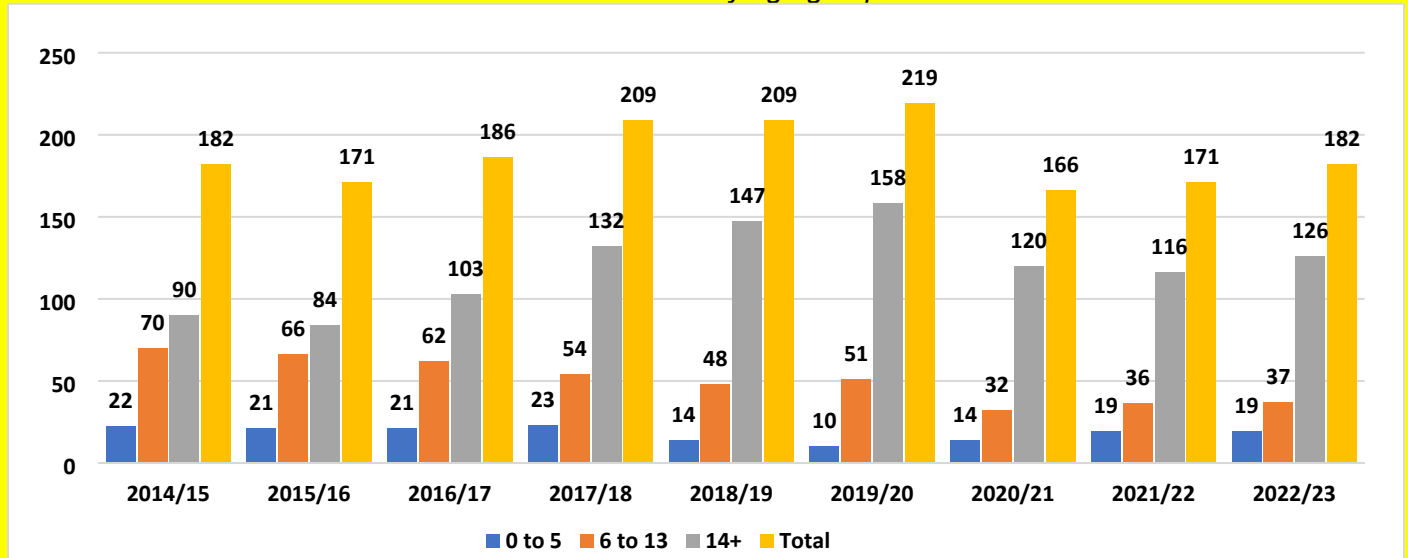
- Convening and chairing of reviews for Looked After Children.
- Convening and chairing of reviews for children placed for adoption.
- Convening and chairing of reviews for children placed under an intercountry adoption arrangement.
- Carrying out the LADO functions in respect to allegations against staff and volunteers.
- Holding team links meeting with the locality service they are attached to.
- Carrying out themed based audits.
- Participating in peer-on-peer observations.
- Delivering training about the function of the IRO to existing and new staff.

4. Profile of the Looked after Children Population the Independent Reviewing Service support

4.1 Data profile

On the 31st March 2023 there were 182 children and young people in care, this is up 11 from the previous year. A breakdown by age over time can be seen in Table A.

Table A - WCC Looked After Children - Total numbers by age group as of 31st March 2023



There has been a slight upward turn in the total numbers in, the care population in Westminster. Our new starters in the generic resident care population have remained consistent, while the numbers of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) arriving in the Local Authority have slightly increased in year.

Table B indicates new starters broken down by age group and generic compared with our unaccompanied minors population;

Table B: New LAC starters

	0-5	6-13	14+ (excl. UASC)	14+ UASC	Total
2016/17	35	31	30	50	146
2017/18	21	11	25	105	162
2018/19	23	10	39	103	175
2019/20	12	41	28	69	150
2020/21	19	10	29	34	92
2021/22	22	24	44	38	128
2022/23	25	23	40	46	134

Table C provides a breakdown of the reasons for new care episodes for 14-17-year-olds during 2022-2023. This cohort represents 86 children (64%) of new entries to care, of which the highest proportion entered care due to absent parenting 49 (57%). UASC accounted for 46 children (53%) of adolescent care entrants. During 2022-23 the proportion of adolescent entries into care due to remand arrangements remained low with 2 young people remanded into Local Authority Care;

Table C – Need type of young people aged 14-17 years entering care:

Need type for entries to care in 2022-23, aged 14 to 17 years	Total
Abuse or neglect	12
Child's disability	0
Parental disability or illness	0
Family in acute stress	11
Family dysfunction	12
Socially unacceptable behaviour	2
Low income	0
Absent parenting	49
Total	86

Historically, Westminster's UASC numbers have impacted greatly upon our overall current Looked After Children and Care Leaver populations with an increase in the total number of UASC care entries since 2016/17 (see Table D). However, we have seen a decrease in the numbers of UASC and it is reasonable to attribute this in part to the covid-19 pandemic travel restrictions which limited movement across borders. Fewer new arrivals have provided some opportunity for the IROs to undertake a wider range of quality assurance activities.

Table D – UASC at the end of each year

	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23
Total UASC at year end	47	69	82	89	58	50	48

4.2 Placement Profile

The Local Authority has a range of placement options when a child or young person comes into care:

- Kinship Foster Care (placement with extended family supported and regulated by the LA)
- Foster Care
- Independent Foster Care (private agency)
- Residential care (Children's Homes, Mother and Baby Units, Residential Schools, Health settings)
- Supported Lodgings (semi-independent)
- Other (independent housing, placed with parents, and youth offending Institutions)

In 2022-2023, of the 48 children aged 0-13 (90 % - 43) were placed with foster carers (kinship, LA, and independent agencies) or placed with parents. In 2022-23 most children aged 14+ becoming Looked After were placed in supported lodgings 50 (58%) or in Foster Care 34 (40%). The high proportion of children aged 14+ being placed in supported lodgings mostly relates to UASC coming into Westminster who are almost all aged 16 and 17 years old.

Table E Placement Type by age

Placement Type New starters aged 0-13, Placement Type	Total	Placement type New starters aged 14+, Placement Type	Total
Kinship Foster Care	9	LA Foster Care	28
LA Foster Care	24	Independent Foster Care	6
Independent Foster Care	10	Residential Care	2
Residential care	5	Supported Lodgings	50
Total	48	Total	86

5. The Independent Reviewing Service Role in Reducing the Numbers of Looked After Children

IROs are responsible for ensuring that Looked After Children achieve permanence and that this occurs without unnecessary drift or delay. During 2022-2023, 123 children were recorded as having left care (see table F).

In 2022-2023, 3 children (3%) who left care, did so because of adoption. 36 children (29%) left care because they returned to their parents. Work is continuing to ensure these children do not remain on care orders any longer than is necessary to ensure their reintegration into their family is timely. 4 (3%) exits from care related to children on a Special Guardianship Order. Table F below provides a full breakdown. Most of our children cease to be Looked After as they reach 18 years of age.

Table F – Reason for ceasing being child in care 2022-23

Reason Episode Ceased	Total	%
Care taken over by another local authority in the UK	6	5%
Returned home to live with parent(s), relative(s), or other person(s) with parental responsibility as part of the care planning process	35	28%
Returned home to live with parent(s), relative(s), or other person(s) with parental responsibility which was not part of the current care planning process	1	1%
Left care to live with parent(s), relative(s), or other person(s) with no parental responsibility.	5	4%
Moved into independent living arrangement and no longer looked-after supportive accommodation providing formalised advice/support arrangements Includes both children leaving care before and at age 18	2	2%
Adopted - application for an adoption order unopposed	1	1%
Adopted – consent dispensed with by the court	2	2%
Accommodation on remand ended	1	1%
Age assessment determined child is aged 18 or over and E5, E6 and E7 do not apply, such as an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child (UASC) whose age has been disputed	6	5%
Child moved abroad	1	1%
Aged 18 (or over) and remained with current carers (incl. under staying put arrangements)	49	40%
Special guardianship order made to former foster carer(s), who was/are a relative(s) or friend(s)	2	2%
Special guardianship order made to former foster carer(s), other than relative(s) or friend(s)	1	1%
Special guardianship order made to carer(s), other than former foster carer(s), who was/are a relative(s) or friend(s)	1	1%
Period of being looked-after ceased for any other reason (where none of the other reasons apply)	10	8%
	123	100%

Permanency planning remains a priority and is now fully embedded into the Looked After Child review process. Where appropriate, the option of a child or young person remaining in family placements is prioritised with a focus on returning children and young people to their birth families. Within the care planning, IROs monitor permanency planning from an early stage of a child's time in care. As a result, we have seen a slight increase in securing family-based options 2022-2023 (43) in this period.

Where children or young people require alternative long-term care outside their family, permanency planning continues to be tailored carefully to each child's needs. The Bi-Borough matching protocol maps out the local pathways when a child or young person is placed in long-term fostering which as part of their agreed permanency plan. For a child or young person aged 13 years and under, the process is managed by the Fostering Permanence service and presented to the fostering matching panel.

For those young people over 14 years old, the IROs take a lead on scrutinising the timeliness of permanency planning, which informs the Looked After Child review. The pandemic exacerbated an already bleak picture of backlogs and delays in the court process; this has continued to adversely impact on the timeliness of achieving permanency for those within care proceedings and in the Adoption process. The IROs continue to maintain oversight of permanency planning at every subsequent Looked After Child review, until permanency is achieved to ensure there is no drift.

The Independent Reviewing Service have been influential in ensuring the matching protocol for those children over the age of 14 years, who have a care plan of long-term fostering has been embedded in the Looked After Child review process. This has ensured young people are matched with their Foster Carers at the earliest opportunity, avoiding any drift or delay.

The information in the table above (*table F*) would suggest that care planning for Looked After Children continues to remain dynamic, that there is good throughput, and there is a positive focus on achieving permanence through family-based options.

6. Timeliness of Looked After Child Reviews

Between 1 April 2022 and 31 March 2023 a total of 505 Looked After Child reviews were chaired by an IRO.

Table G – Looked After Child Reviews undertaken in 2022-23

REVIEWS UNDERTAKEN 2022-2023	
Total number of Looked after Children reviews April 22 to March 23	505
Numbers of reviews held within timescale	499
Number reviews held outside of timescale	6
Percentage of reviews held within statutory timescales	99%

Looked After Child reviews held outside of statutory timescales are due to several reasons, workforce pressures, incorrect data input, late notifications to the service. Highlight reports have been introduced to prompt actions to address discrepancies. To improve the timeliness of Looked After Child reviews, the Independent Reviewing Service is now informed when approval is given by the Head of Service for a child to become Looked After which has contributed to initial Looked After Child reviews being arranged in a timely manner.

It is important to note that these strategies have had a positive impact, as we have not seen an increase in late notifications. Overall, late notifications have reduced from 30 in 2019-2020, to 3 in 2021-2022, which has been maintained in 2022-2023.

As a service we will be undertaking the following activities to support the continued improved timeliness of Looked After Child reviews during 2023-2024

- Continue to strengthen support to locality teams and business support officers, to reduce the number of late notifications to the Independent Reviewing Service, by ensuring all details of new looked after children are recorded timely on the system so the correct electronic processes are triggered.
- The Independent Reviewing Service will, with the assistance of Business Support, map informal alerts which relate to late notifications, which will be shared periodically with Heads of Service with the aim of improving the timeliness of late notifications.
- Strengthen the working relationship with our Business Intelligence team to ensure we are coordinated in the way LAC reviews are recorded to minimise any discrepancies in the data that is being collected.

7. Participation in Looked After Child Reviews

The Independent Reviewing Service is committed to ensuring that all Looked After Children have the opportunity and are encouraged to participate and engage in their Looked After Child review process. In general, the feedback about utilising virtual platforms for Looked After Child reviews has been positive. The IROs continue to write the minutes of their Looked After Child review in the form of child centred letters.

In 2022–2023 91% of children over 4 years of age contributed to their statutory review, with 80% of children attending, which is down 4% from last year. IROs use a range of methods to seek the views of children and young people.

The table above shows the vast majority of children and young people attend or speak for themselves, at their Looked After Child reviews. However, in this reporting period we have seen a decrease in the participation at Looked After Child reviews. A possible hypothesis, particularly for our older young people is that they may have become more accustomed to using virtual platforms which means an in-person Looked After Child review maybe less favourable for them.

The table below provides the participation descriptions for Looked After Child reviews undertaken in 2022-2023.

Table H - Participation codes for reviews undertaken in 2022-2023

Participation Code	Total
PN0 - child under 4 at time of review	54
PN1 - child attend and speaks for themselves	349
PN2 - Child physically attends and an advocate speaks on his or her behalf. (Attendance views represented by advocate or independent reviewing officer (IRO))	6
PN3 - child attends and conveys their views non-verbally	3
PN4 - child attends; does not speak for themselves / convey their views	2
PN5 - child does not attend but asks advocate to speak for them	4
PN6 - child does not attend but conveys their feelings to the review by the facilitated medium	45
PN7 - child does not attend nor conveys their view to the review	42
Total	505

Particular focus has been placed on developing ways in which allows the service to respond differently to Looked After Children who are non-verbal or have SEN needs; to increase their participation, in line with their wishes, in the Looked After Child review process. Working in this way is a demonstration of our commitment of ensuring our Looked After Child review process, remains inclusive of all the children and young people we look after.

8. The IRO Role in Quality Assurance and Safeguarding

The Service Manager provides oversight and quality assurance by routinely observing Looked After Child reviews. This provides the opportunity to not only observe and reflect on the practice of the IRO but to hear directly from children/young people, parents/carers and professionals about their experience of being involved in a Looked After Child review. This feedback loop provides reflections which help to inform and review our delivery.

The IROs quality assurance oversight is demonstrated through their “footprint” on the case file, an audit of midpoint monitoring in-between Looked After Child reviews, pre-review discussions and case consultations with Social Workers. Pre-review discussions are a mechanism to facilitate dialogue between the IRO and social worker to share any risks in advance of the Looked After review.

Complaints by Looked After Children are shared with the IRO, who will explore the issues leading to the complaint and where applicable use the reviewing process to achieve resolution.

IROs maintain oversight of the missing children/young people reporting mechanism, to ensure the missing protocol is being applied and return home interviews are being carried out. The information provides insight of the push and pull factors that are contributing to the missing episodes and identifies areas of work to be addressed. The Independent Reviewing Service has a contextual safeguarding and exploitation champion as part of the wider council response to tackle online harms, digitally enabled grooming, and child exploitation

IROs provide a duty service to primarily support the Local Authorities Designated Officer (LADO) function. Whilst this provides opportunities to develop safeguarding practice in a specialised area of work it brings a noticeable increase in the volume of work that is generated through managing the administration of LADO. Going forward further consideration needs to be given to how demands are managed.

9. Dispute Resolution Protocol

The dispute resolution protocol is a key mechanism by which IROs highlight concerns and raise challenges with the Social Work locality teams and the Looked After Children service. A function of the IRO role is to identify and resolve issues, highlighting any trends which emerge from the care planning process. Any concerns are addressed as part of the quality assurance processes through the informal or formal dispute resolution protocol.

During 2022–2023 there were 12 occasions when the dispute resolution protocol was applied; 10 were informal challenges, 1 formal challenge and 1 themed service challenge. Within this, 1 challenge was escalated to stage two and no challenges escalated to Senior Management in this reporting period.

Noticeable trends include late notification of new Looked After Child arrangements, late/non receipt of social work reports/care plans, initial health assessments not completed within timescales, drift in registering young people to health care professionals and the IRO not being informed of changes in court decisions in a timely manner. The themed service alert related to a number of children and young people whose Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting fell significantly outside timescale or the PEP meeting held but not recorded on the system in a timely manner.

Challenges raised by the IROs are encouraged and welcomed by senior managers as a lever for service improvement. Overall, there has been a reduction in the number of formal dispute resolutions being raised, which can be attributed to the IRO efforts of improving practice and supporting locality teams develop a greater understanding of the collective contribution needed to improve outcomes for children.

10. Care Planning

The role of the IRO is instrumental when considering any implications for care planning when there are changes in legislation or new case law. The service is currently working collaboratively with the Local Authority to consider the recent judgement by the Court of Appeal regarding the use of S20 and the interplay between s.20 and s.31 Children Act 1989 in care planning, particularly when parents agree with the care plan.

The IROs have a lead role in ensuring children and young people are supported to contribute to their care plan in a way that is meaningful for them and ensuring they have a child friendly copy they can refer to as and when necessary. This practice continues in producing minutes for a LAC review in the form of a child friendly focused letter that explains how well they are doing, what people are worried about and what the next steps are to address worries.

We are currently reviewing the way recommendations are written to ensure they remain SMART and consistent across the service, linked to clear outcomes which directly impact on the child or young person and clearly identify who is responsible for taking an action forward and in what timescale. This will be informed by a review of the approaches currently used.

The service is also currently piloting an easy read social story format and widget symbols as a way of simplifying discussions held in the Looked After Child review for those with additional needs. This ensures that all of the minutes of Looked After Child reviews are accessible and meaningful to all the children and young people we look after.

11. Learning and Development

Westminster City Council continue to provide core Children's Services training which is available virtually or in person. IROs are equipped with the right knowledge and skills that enable them to scrutinise practice, plans and arrangements for our children and young people effectively. We have created learning and reflective spaces for the IROs based on the principle of promoting reflective practice to develop creative thinking skills and encourage active engagement with work processes. IROs have continued to build upon their systemic training and learning to drive forward positive outcomes for Looked After Children.

The IROs are becoming more familiar with carrying out peer-on-peer observations, which were introduced in the last reporting cycle; where IROs observe their IRO peers', chairing Looked After Child reviews. As we go forward, the aim is to draw on the data collected from each cycle of peer-on-peer observations, pulling out areas of good practice to be rolled out across the service. The data will also be used to identify any areas that can be strengthened within the Independent Reviewing Service, thus supporting the professional development of the IROs. Participating in peer-on-peer observations has enabled the IROs to evidence their peer reflection as part of their re-registration for Social Work England.

A number of IROs participated in "*Supporting effective IRO practice*" Course, run by Edge Hill University. This course enabled the IROs to engage in a critical analysis of the IRO role, to drive forward positive outcomes for Looked After Children.



A **Shared** experience!

12. Participation and Engagement

The Independent Reviewing Service remains committed to ensuring that the voice of the children and young people is key to all discussions and care planning arrangements. IROs build relationships with the children and young people they review, by raising their profile and ensuring children and young people are aware of the various opportunities available for their voice to be heard.

As a result of a closer working relationship with the Participation team, IROs are now able to routinely promote upcoming participation activities in Looked After Child reviews. IROs also actively raise awareness of Independent Visitors in ensuring all Looked After Children are aware they can speak to the Children's Rights Advocate, if they are concerned that the service, they receive is not responsive enough for them.

Seeking ways in which attendance and engagement in Looked After Child reviews could be increased has been a key priority, particularly for those who are non-verbal or have communication challenges. Working alongside our Bi-Borough participation team, the service is developing new ways in which to engage and obtain the views and wishes of our children and young people in their Looked After Child review through the introduction of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). The PECS are visualised symbols in the form of cards, which can be sorted in a way which will communicate the wishes and feelings of those with communication challenges, with the aim of increasing participation.

Since the pandemic we have noted a drop in the return of consultation forms due to several factors, including timeliness of their distribution, accessibility to the forms which was designed as a hard copy and not easily accessible through mobile devices. A new electronic contribution form was successfully trialled, evidencing improved accessibility and an increase in consultation returns. The electronic consultation process will be rolled out in 2023-24, which will be an additional way of driving up participation in the Looked After Child review process.

13. Summary and Conclusion

Strengthening our permanency planning processes for young people over 14 years old through the Looked After Child review process has been a key area of improvement. As we go forward the service will support the Local Authority to embed the matching process for young people in long term foster placements, to ensure matches take place timely with senior management oversight.

The IROs have continued to bring rigour and challenge to care planning. Recommendations arising from the regular Looked After Child reviews provide a good overview of progress made and actions needed which ensures that drift is avoided in most cases. The IROs demonstrate their quality assurance oversight through their IRO “footprint” on the case file. This has proved to be an invaluable way of the IROs maintaining oversight and scrutiny of care plans with a clear emphasis of raising challenge to improve outcomes for our children and young people.

The voice of the children and young people remain key to all discussions and care planning arrangements. The IROs relationship with the children and young people they review is important. Significant efforts have been taken to address the changes in the IRO staff group, with the newly developed “all about me” information sheet. This sheet has a photo of the IRO and information about them, which includes a summary of what an IRO is and most importantly how IROs can be contacted in-between Looked After Child reviews. We have seen that whilst a very high proportion of children take part in their Looked After Child reviews, we have acknowledged that this was an area where further improvement could be made.

We have reviewed how the service could respond differently to those who are non-verbal or have communication challenges to increase participation in the Looked After Child review process. Working alongside our Bi-Borough participation team, the service is developing new ways in which to engage and obtain the views and wishes of our children and young people in their Looked After Child review through the introduction of Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). As we move forward further consideration will be given to explore ways to continue to increase participation.

Although we are currently at 99% of reviews Looked After Child review held within timescale, as a service we continue to strive for 100% timeliness. To achieve this, we are making efforts to strengthen our working relationship with our Business Intelligence team. This is to ensure we are coordinated in the way Looked After Child reviews are recorded to minimise any discrepancies in the data that is being collected.

14. Westminster Independent Reviewing Service annual work programme for April 2022- March 2023 – Analysis and Action Plan

Below is a Signs of Safety model tool which allows the Independent Reviewing Service to take reflective stance to having a lens on their own practice and how services and partners collectively promote the care planning needs of our Looked After Children.

What's working well	What are we worried about	What do we need to do?
<p>Page 61</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There has been an improved picture regarding late notification of children and young people becoming looked after which has had a positive impact on the timeliness of Looked After Child reviews, • The service is fully staffed with permanent members of staff who have caseloads below the national average. • The IROs have developed an “all about me” information sheet to raise their profile whilst also providing a simplified overview of the role of the IRO, so this can be better understood by children and young people. • A new electronic contribution form was developed. • Greater focus has been given to ways in which to increase participation of children and young people who have a disability, are non-verbal or have communication needs, through the use of PECS. • Strengthened partnership work with our Commissioning team when quality assuring the provision of placements for children and young people. • A robust system is in place to monitor unregulated placements and the permanency matching process for children 14 years plus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timeliness of social work reports, pathway plans, IRO letters and Looked After Child reviews being completed/distributed within the agreed timescale. • The increased demands of the LADO function on the IROs. • The continued depletion of experienced Social Workers through recruitment and retention challenges has led to a changing face of the front-line social workforce in Children's Services. • How the IROs provide continuity of care planning to Looked After Children who were previously subjected to a CP plan. • Evidence IROs are contributing to the promotion of seeking family-based care options for Looked After Children. • Ways in which IROs evidence the voice of children and young people who choose not to attend their Looked After Child review or convey their views is considered in the decision-making process. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The IROs to achieve the target of holding 100% of LAC reviews within timescale. • Complete the IRO/Commissioning workshop where the devised action plan of improving the quality assurance of placements and accommodation for Looked After Children can be implemented. • Complete the review of the LADO service. • Continue to develop the Looked After Child review process so it remains inclusive of all our children and their families by ensuring our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy remains embedded in the Looked After Child process where anti racist practice, Adultification, absent fathers and disproportionality is challenged. • Greater focus is to be given to a small cohort of children and young people who choose not to attend their Looked After Child review or convey their wishes, to ensure their views are being considered. • Incorporate the on-line consultation forms into the already established consultation processes to strengthen ways in which we consult and capture the views and wishes of children and young people.

- The Service Manager for IROs has oversight of individual IRO challenges which are escalated through the dispute resolution protocol which are tracked until they are resolved.

- To provide continuity in care planning explore ways in which the Child Protection Advisors can be involved in the initial Looked After Child review of any child who was subjected to a CP plan, as a way of contributing to robust care planning.
- Develop opportunities to work in partnership with the Family Group Conference coordinator to ensure all family placements have been explored and prioritised before permanency planning begins in earnest.
- Review the trial practice of completing letters using a social story framework in an accessible easy read format as a way of improving the active participation of children and young people who have a disability, are non-verbal or have communication needs.
- A dispute resolution tracker is to be devised to ensure where thematic challenges arise these are escalated to the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance to ensure there is senior management oversight.

Appendix 1 Independent Reviewing Service Action Plan for 2023/2024

	Priority	Area for development	Outcome/value for children	Lead	Time scale	
Page 63	1	Going forward into 2023-2024 the Independent Reviewing Service action plan will address the timeliness of Looked After Child reviews.	Bring about an improvement in the number Looked After Child reviews held within timescale.	Children and young people will have their Looked After Child reviews held in a timely way, which enables the IRO to review the care plan and maintain oversight that individual care plans meet the child or young person's needs. Timely Looked After Child reviews will also enable the IROs to oversee the permanency plan and raise challenge through the dispute resolution protocol which will contribute to reducing drift and delay in the care planning process.	IROs / Service Manager	September 2023
	2	Ensuring children and young people remain the central focus of our work.	Roll out the on-line consultations for Looked After Child reviews to increase opportunities to capture the voice of children and young people, and their network prior to the Looked After Child review. Implement the introduction of the "all about me" information sheet, as a form of introduction and simplifying the role of the IRO to drive up meaningful	The use of electronic consultation forms will be embedded into practice as a way of elevating the voice of children and young people in the Looked After Child review process. Provides increased opportunity for children and young people to share their views including those who have disabilities, additional communication needs or are non-verbal.	Participation team and IROs	December 2023

		<p>engagement in the Looked After Child review process.</p> <p>Trial the use of PECS, to create new ways of engaging children/young people who have a disability, are non-verbal or have communication needs.</p> <p>Review the trial practice of completing letters using a social story framework in an accessible easy read format as a way of improving the active participation of children and young people in their Looked After Child review process.</p>	<p>Children/young people who have a disability, are non-verbal or have communication needs are better able to share their views and engage in the decision-making process.</p>		
Page 64	<p>Enhance the Quality Assurance function of IROs within permanency planning and care planning process.</p>	<p>A review of the IROs contribution to the LADO service is to be undertaken. This is so consideration can be given to how IROs continue to contribute to LADO safeguarding function without negatively impacting on the IROs capacity to effectively carry out the quality assurance function of their role.</p>	<p>The outcome of IROs having reduced or streamlined LADO responsibility will give IROs greater capacity to effectively undertake the Quality Assurance function of their role with more vigour.</p> <p>The impact on Looked After Children and young people will be evidenced through the IROs increased capacity to robustly scrutinise care plans in between Looked After Child reviews, ensuring the care plan meets the needs of the young person, preventing any drift and delay in the care planning process.</p>	<p>Head of Service and Management team in the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance team</p>	<p>July 2023</p>
4	<p>Contribute to the service objective of seeking family-based care options for Looked After Children and where this is</p>	<p>IROs to be proactive in ensuring family-based care options have been explored prior to initial Looked After Child</p>	<p>Increased opportunities to consider suitable placements with birth family for children and young people.</p>	<p>IROs, the Family Group Conference coordinator and</p>	<p>February 2024</p>

	not possible permanency is achieved at the earliest opportunity.	<p>reviews with a focus on engaging fathers and extended family as potential care givers.</p> <p>IROs to develop opportunities to work collaboratively with the Family Group Conference coordinator to ensure all family placements have been explored and prioritised before permanency planning begins in earnest.</p> <p>A robust system is to be maintained to monitor the matching protocol for young people aged 14 years and over.</p>	<p>Children and young people will observe the efforts undertaken to prioritise them remaining in family placements.</p> <p>Where children and young people require alternative long-term care outside their family, IROs will be instrumental in progressing a permanence plan at the earliest point which is tailored carefully to each child's individual needs.</p>	Children's Services	
5 Page 65	Strengthen the care planning processes.	<p>Embed team links in locality teams to promote stronger working relationship with new and existing Social Workers to strengthen practice.</p> <p>A dispute resolution tracker is to be devised to ensure where thematic challenges arise these are escalated to the Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance to ensure there is senior management oversight.</p> <p>IROs to continue carrying out themed audits and midpoint monitoring, scrutinising care plans to ensure they are based on sound assessments and needs led.</p>	<p>Through team links, evidence of disseminating good practice, and driving forward the shared vision of improving our collective responses to children and young people to improve outcomes for them.</p> <p>Stronger evidence of the dispute resolution protocol being used by IROs to capture emerging trends and provide robust challenge to contribute to reducing drift and delay in the care planning process which has senior management oversight.</p> <p>IROs able to evidence review decisions have a direct link to improving outcomes for children and young people.</p>	IROs, Service Manager, Head of Service for Safeguarding Review and Quality Assurance and Children's Services	March 2023

6	Consider learning from National Children Safeguarding reviews and Care Review that can be applied.	Develop ways to collectively consider learning from reviews to ensure any practice implications are considered.	The IROs will be better able to evidence the impact their work is having on improving	IROs, Service Manager, Head of Service for Safeguarding Review and Quality Assurance and Children's Services	March 2023
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Report originator: Vivette Jenkins

Report sign off:

Date: 20th June 2023

Date:

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City of Westminster

Childrens Participation Annual Report

2022-2023

Westminster Children's Services

May 2023



This report aligns with Priority Five of our Children and Young Peoples Plan: **All our young people feel listened to, empowered to take action, and have opportunities to co-produce.co-design services that affect them.**



FORWARD

In Westminster, we value the **quality of conversation**. We know that if children and young people can help to shape the services we provide, they are more likely to find them **meaningful** and **relevant**.

Capturing their voice is integral to our core business. By being open to exploring different ways of engaging, listening, participating, and collaborating with children and young people, they have helped us **shape the design and delivery of our services**.

We asked the Tuesday Group for Looked After and Care Leaving Young People if they would like to write the forward and this is what they said.

The group is a space where young care experienced people in Westminster can get together. We cook together, socialise, and have fun. We plan and do activities and events together for us and other young people in Westminster.

Everyone is more than welcome to join the group; it doesn't matter who you are or where you are from. If you don't speak English, it is a good place to practise and learn. The group is cool and chill, with tons of games and activities to keep the good vibes. It is also a place to make friends and has like a family vibe.

This group encourages social interaction and helps you with communication skills. **It offers different perspectives on people's choices on education, work, and lifestyle**. It provides informative sessions on different topics like cooking, sexual health, mental health, and work opportunities, aiming to help your journey towards becoming an independent adult. We learn lots about what is available in Westminster for young people as well as learning more about what we are entitled to as care leavers.

Going forward we would like **more interaction with senior leaders and managers**. They can come and spend the time with us, answer any questions we have, cook with us, and tell us more about what they do, just basically get to know them better.

We would like to do more social activities together as a group like football in the park and bowling. We also want to have more workshops that look at the issues affecting care leavers like **housing** and **mental health**.

Thank you for listening!

Tuesday Group



Purpose of report

- 1.1. This report sets out the mechanisms we have in place to have a meaningful conversation with Children and Young People to inform the services they need, how we capture their views, hopes, fears and aspirations and how we fulfil our statutory duties to keep them safe and realise their ambitions.
- 1.2. The report reflects on what we are currently doing and what we want to do to achieve our priorities in working with children and young people.

2. Introduction

2.1. **Listening to children and young people lies at the very heart of Westminster's Childrens Services commitment to improve outcomes for children and young people.** Our systemic practice model adopts a Child Centred Approach (Working Together, 2018) that is fundamental to safeguard and promote the welfare of every child. This means keeping the child in focus when making decisions about their lives and working in partnership with them and their families.

2.2. Our participation, advocacy and collaborative offer reflects the wider Councils "Our Strategy for a Fairer Westminster "and is embedded in our Children and Young Peoples Plan 2023-2026. The C&YP sets out our vision to deliver outstanding services that enable all children and young people to reach their full potential including those who are most vulnerable. Priority 5 of our 7 priorities is for "All our young people feel listened to, empowered to take action and have opportunities to co-produce/co-design services that affect them".



2.3. Our Children's Rights, Advocacy and Participation Service is part of the Safeguarding Service within Children's Services. Our role is to support the participation structures, processes, and systems that listen to and respond to the needs of children, young people, and parents across the wider reach of the Council and our partner agencies. We are committed to promoting children and young people's rights to be informed, listened to, and actively involved in decisions that affect them, determined by Article 12 of UN Convention of the Rights of the Child



2.4. Advocacy in its broader sense is about empowering children and young people to make sure that their rights are respected and that their views and wishes are fully considered and reflected in decision making about their own lives including any problems, concerns, and complaints.

3. So How Are We Doing?

Activity for 2022-2023

3.1. Child Protection Advocacy

3.2. Our two specialist practitioners provide advocacy for children prior to and during their child protection conferences and reviews, supporting each child or young person to express their views and feelings, helping them to understand their rights and be involved in decision making. In addition, the advocates advise social workers and other multi-agency professionals how to capture children's views.

"I liked attending the meeting. It felt official and grown up and showed me things were being taken seriously".

3.3. During 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, 226 child protection conferences were held with a total of 73 children and young people receiving a direct advocacy offer. Most children will experience more than one conference and will receive the service throughout their journey with us.

3.4. By exploring different ways to involve children, an advocate works alongside the child to get their views across whether attending a conference, through a film recording, letter or pictures that can be shared. Recognising some children feel more comfortable to contribute online, we offer hybrid conferences when required. Children and young people have also been involved in changing the environment where we hold conferences to become family friendly room with soft seating, toys and pictures.

"It was good being able to be there and see in person all the people supporting us".

3.5. We are to find ways to support and engage children and young people through this journey and seek feedback at every stage.

"I'm glad you visited after the meeting to let me know the plan, so I know what is happening"?

"The plan made it really feel like 'our' plan".

- 3.6. This includes why the service has not been accessed, consulting with parents and young people to further understand some of the reasons for this. This feedback has told us they feel upset with the child protection processes as a whole, feeling overwhelmed by the number of professionals involved and not wanting their children to speak to another professional. We value this insight and will continue to explore ways to engage, learning from counterparts and considering other initiatives including peer support.



3.7. Advocacy for Children Looked After and Care Leavers

- 3.8. During 2022 / 2023, we received 23 children and young people referrals to the Looked After Children's Advocacy Service. Referrals ranged from asking for help with perceived delays to housing, placement options and support to change their allocated social worker or personal advisor if a care leaver.
- 3.9. Of the 23 referrals ,12 young people issues were resolved through clarification and conversations with the relevant practitioners and young people. The remaining 11 referrals were resolved through formal advocacy work with meetings undertaken, complaints made, and resolutions sought. Two of the cases are ongoing.
- 3.10. Feedback from both children and young people about the service has been positive, especially around the support offered. However, several care leavers have told us they experience wider challenges in their transition to adulthood, and what they feel is a reduction in support when moving from care to being a care leaver. Going forward we want to consider how to use this feedback to help shape the service more widely.
- 3.11. All children and young people are encouraged to attend the Tuesday group that often act as a consultation group for the Council. The Westminster Guardians Board is also overseeing work about how we strengthen the varying support networks for care leavers, and how to reduce the number of formal systems that create barriers.

- 3.12. Feedback from Children Looked After and Care Leavers receiving an advocacy service:



"I am happy to have an Advocate and want to be listened to by everyone. I want to keep talking until something changes".

"I want to come to the meeting so I can see everyone that is there".

"I want to come to the meeting so I can say my views myself to everyone there, so I know they have heard me".

"I want people to know what I think and happy you can help me tell them this".

3.13. Independent Visiting

3.14. Independent Visitor: *“...a volunteer who visits and befriends a children or young person living in care.....the unique role of an independent visitor enables children and young people to have at least one consistent, trusting relationship which is built over time. The IV will endeavour to become and remain a stable adult in the child’s life who doesn’t change with placements or social work changes and will always stay child focused.”* (The National Independent Visitors Network)

3.15. Established over 5 years and continuing to thrive our Independent Visitor Service seeks to support, promote, and reflect the needs of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers. To continue to support the success of this offer we deliver **on-going recruitment campaign and training sessions**. A key achievement has been the identification of a number of our former care leavers who want to contribute to the service.



3.16. Our Independent Visitor Co-ordinator meets monthly with the appointed independent visitor to **review their support needs** and **gain feedback** and updates on activities. Key themes arising from feedback inform any further learning and development of the offer. We encourage independent visitors to maintain independence from the professional network but also to contribute to our understanding of the young person’s well-being; this supports young people to feel confident in engaging with their independent visitor.

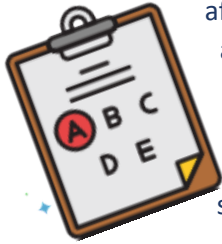
3.17. Young people report they value and enjoy the time they spend with their independent visitor. For a small number of young people, they have continued to have sessions with their independent visitor whilst disengaged from other services, a tribute to the power of these relationships.

“She’s a very open person, you can talk to her without any worries. I can tell her anything and she won’t judge me.”

3.18. Westminster Guardians Board

3.19. The Westminster Guardians Board delivers on Westminster City Council and our partners’ collective corporate parenting responsibilities for children in care and care leavers in Westminster. The Board champions children in care and care leavers, ensuring a strategic oversight of needs and outcomes and appropriate high-quality responses from all partners. The Council and the multi-agency partners are held to account by the Board, with challenge taking place to ensure that all are delivering upon our commitment and ‘pledge’ to our children and young people.

3.20. The role of the **Guardians Board** is set out in the Westminster Guardians (Corporate Parenting) Strategy. The group undertake specific tasks and projects on behalf of all our looked after children and care leavers, informed by the Annual Survey. 2021/2022 the annual survey was sent out to all our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, with 133 returns received. The survey informed our understanding of the level of support children and young people feel they receive and need around their care, accommodation, contact with family, health, education, and services that support transition to adulthood.



3.21. Being aspirational for our children and young people is a key driver for the Board. This year, responsibility for chairing the Board have been taken up by a former Care Leaver, who is supported by the Director of Family Services and key council officers to set the agenda and ensure the voice of children and young people is at the forefront of all activity.



3.22. The Lead Member for Children’s Services is a member of the Board, taking the political lead as ‘**corporate parent**’ taking the opportunity to hear directly from children and young people on their experiences and needs, and ensure that services are responding effectively to support achievement and positive life outcomes.

3.23. Key Achievements and Reflections from the Board



- The delivery of the annual fostering awards 2022, acknowledge the **importance that foster carers play** in the lives of children.
- Development of a **virtual reality training package** which enables foster carers to see through the eyes of a child, and their experiences of becoming looked after.
- Revised the fostering training programmes to include a **minimum expectation of 20 hours per year** is completed, with a **mental health component** to the package, informed by feedback from young people regarding emotional wellbeing and mental health.
- Developing further the engagement and participation activities for our Looked After Children and Care Leavers, to **build the membership** of the Tuesday Group, **bring in resources** such as Elements and Dream Arts to support emotional wellbeing, career workshops, training, **work experience and employment opportunities and tenancy workshops**.
- Navigation of the services and **pathways to access Child and Adolescent Mental Health** has been especially key within the year. Agreement that it is important to have a range of services, and whilst KOOH online offer is good for some it is not for all.
- The work of the subgroups has been driving through the priorities determined by the Annual Survey for the year. The **Health subgroup** contributed to looked after children service development across the Northwest London and the promotion of the Public Health resources to keep all informed.
- The **Education Subgroup** has ensured collaboration across services with children to promote both enrichment and educational activities and support to achieve, **reintegration back into education or employment and access to apprenticeships**.
- The **Housing Subgroup** has work to ensure a comprehensive offer is in place for those seeking a final housing offer and managing tenancies. **Joint working with our Housing Directorate** has ensured **access to a significant number of studio flats** within the borough, with a necessity for all to learn **financial independence** and attend the tenancy workshop prior to their case being presented to housing panel. The work of this Board has contributed to care leavers to successfully **manage their own tenancies**.

3.24. Westminster Youth Council

3.25. In 2022-2023 the Youth Council management and support arrangements were transferred to the Safeguarding Review and Quality Assurance Service in Children's Services, giving us a significant opportunity to strengthen our focus on the 'voice of the child', to **promote inclusion and maximise the offer to include our Looked After Children and Care Leavers in the wider contributions to our local community.**



3.26. The Westminster Youth Council is an inclusive and diverse platform for 11–18-year-olds (up to 25 for those young people with additional educational needs or disabilities), who live or study in Westminster, to come together and discuss issues that matter to them. The Youth Council seeks to work collaboratively across the Borough both corporately and through the elected political representation. The Council also works with a range of statutory partners locally and across London, including the Mayoral Office for Policing and Crime, the Greater London Assembly, and the Houses of Parliament. A Key stakeholder in the decision making and development of all Children's and Youth Services related strategies and policies, ensuring youth consultation in service design. Members of Youth Parliament attend Full Council with Leadership and Cabinet members.

3.27. In 2022 / 2023, 28 sessions took place, with an average attendance of 15 young people per sessions. Over 400 attendees present and contributing to the discussions and activities taking place.



3.28. Going into the new financial year we will strive for greater inclusivity and opportunity to contribution as we seek to **expand the membership** and the **range of activities** we can influence.

3.29. The Youth Council is the main and primary platform for youth stakeholder and community engagement across Westminster City Council. This follows national practice and policy as set out by the UK Youth Parliament and The British Youth Council. **Our aim and ambition is for Westminster to be an example of best practice nationally.**

3.30. Key Achievements and reflections of the Youth Council



- In July 2022, members attended the **Youth Parliament annual conference**.
- The Youth MPs and the Youth Council lead have attended policy and scrutiny committees including Children’s and Adults, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee, the Extraordinary Full Council Meeting following the Queen’s Death, and Full Council to address councillors on their priorities and how this links to the work of the Youth Council.
- Regular meetings with the **Lead Member for Children and Families** have taken place, with a range of key issues discussed including **mental health** which is one of the year’s key priorities.
- Together with the Mayor of Westminster, the Youth Council shared the **lead on an Islamophobia panel event** in November 2022.
- The Youth Council has contributed to the development of several council and borough wider strategies including **Fairer Westminster Strategy** and the **Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Team**.
- Our Youth MPs regularly attend the Houses of Parliament, attend the **APPG on Youth Affairs**, and engage with activities of the London Council and London Mayoral Office.
- In March 2023 the Youth Council election planning took place and we have two Youth MPs leading on the manifesto for the coming year.
- The Youth Council played a key role in contributing to the Children and Young Peoples Plan
- An influential contributor to the British Youth Council Work and the development of the Youth Strategy





3.31. Participation and Engagement Activities

3.32. Our participation and engagement offer is delivered through **our Children and Young People’s Panel (CYPP)** and our **Tuesday Group activities**.

3.33. The Children and Young People’s Panel supports the engagement of younger cohort of Children Looked After, with a targeted offer focused on those under 16 years of age although mindful of our changing profile of children who become Looked After and leave care there is some flexibility in some young people joining the Tuesday Group earlier when appropriate.

3.34. Each week young people enjoy learning about how to cook, play games and have the opportunity to make new friends and share their experiences. One key strength of the long-standing support provided has been **care leavers taking a lead role to support, engage and enable others**. A former Care Leaver has become a peer mentor to the Tuesday Group. She has been supported to run a series of career workshops once a month, to bring in others to share their experiences and advice on different career pathways, advice on further learning/study and employment, as well as assisting others to think how they get to where they want to be in the future.



3.35. We recognise the need to continue to be **flexible and responsive to our diverse population**, prior to Ramadan the children and young people were asked if they wished to continue with group activities as many of our Looked After Children and Care Leavers are practising Muslims and it was important to be inclusive by asking this question. Unanimously there was a wish to continue, even if some were fasting. Arrangements were made for those fasting to take food away with them, to break their fast later after participating in the activity.

3.36. Tuesday Group's focuses on meeting the participation and engagement needs of a slighter older group of young people of 16 years and up, with a large number being care leavers. Tuesday Club every Tuesday at our Westminster Offices in Orchardson Street, Lisson Grove. The membership of the Tuesday Group is long standing, on average 14 – 16 young people attending, with new members are always welcome.



3.37. Over 2022 / 2023 the Tuesday Group and the Children and Young People's Panel were involved in several activities and contributed to a wide range of engagements and consultations.

3.38. **Our Looked After Children and Care Leavers hold Children's Services to account in delivery of our corporate parent and 'Westminster Guardian' responsibilities.** We evidence and reflect the work with children and young people the framework of 'You Said – We Did'.

**See Appendix 1 for examples of this work.*

3.39. Consultation

3.40. We are committed to finding ways to ensure **every child and young people who is Looked After, or a Care Leavers is given the opportunity to engage in feedback and express their views.** Their voice needs to be the foundation to building services which are responsive and effective. Consultations are regularly undertaken to engage children and young people. (**See Appendix 2 for consultations and feedback.*)



4. What have we learnt and how will we take it forward?

4.1. We are **immensely proud** of our Children Looked After and Care Leavers, and the achievements they have made in the last year. As we have emerged out of the Pandemic, it is clearly evidenced that the impact is long reaching, especially in relation to emotional wellbeing and mental health. **Housing** is a key factor in stability for any person and this continues to be a priority for the whole Council. Our **education offer** seeks to recognise achievement in all aspects of life and support our children and young people to secure a positive future in education, training, and employment.

4.2. We have included in our Children and Young Peoples Plan **a commitment to producing an annual update of progress and to report directly back to those groups of young people we engaged with when developing the Plan.** We will consider other ways of involving young people more directly in assessing whether it has achieved its aims and whether these continue to be relevant.

- 4.3. Systems of support and access to services, advice and guidance have been key themes emerging from all our engagement and participation activities delivered within the last year. Looking to the future we are focusing on several key areas set out in our Action Plan 2023-2024 (*Appendix 1).
- 4.4. We wish to **strengthen our participation and engagement offer** to bring care leavers and former care leavers into roles of support and mentoring for those younger, to better show those currently in care or leaving care the potential **pathways to success**.
- 4.5. We are developing a comprehensive plan to improve the different pathways and processes involved **in transitioning from care to adulthood**, supporting young people to have a clear idea about what to expect and when.
- 4.6. Finally, we are ensuring that as the Guardian / Corporate Parent we continue to challenge ourselves and **multi-agency partners** to continue to **prioritise** our children and young people, giving them **high aspirations** and providing them with the **best opportunities to meet their goals both now and in the future**.



Appendix 1: Examples of work undertaken - You Said / We Did

YOU SAID	WE DID
Young people wanted more opportunity to engage in Bi-Borough events to be able to meet more young people from RBKC.	There was Bi-Borough collaboration in several events in the year including trips for young people to enjoy: the orbit slide, theatre trip to the Lion King and to Ballet Black. A member commented “we had a lovely time today, thank you for inviting us!”
Muslim young people wanted to mark the end of Ramadan with a bigger event. They were helpful in contributing their ideas to what the Eid celebration should look like.	We hosted a Tuesday Group Eid celebration open to all looked after children and care leavers and staff to come together and celebrate. Fun games were played and there was a good turnout.
Young people told us they want more activities available around creative arts and to learn more about existing work that some had already engaged in with external services.	DreamArts were invited to offer a taster session to Tuesday group to encourage new young people to join their sessions. Young people already involved helped to lead on some ice breaker activities. DreamArts provides the creative space for children and young people to express themselves in a variety of ways.
Young people tell us they want more support with careers that are specific to their hopes and dreams. They want more information on how to start their own business.	We invited the one of our Senior Clinical Practitioner to Tuesday Group to run a ‘Tree of Life’ workshop. The group enjoyed using arts and crafts to depict their life journeys, and to think about aspirations. Career workshops are also in place, with guests invited.
Meeting together as a group and sharing a meal is an important way for young people to support each other and learn about different opportunities	Further additional activities for the Tuesday Group such as picnics in the park and lawn bowling to develop relationships and encourage a wider attendance.
Young people told us they want more information about their rights and what opportunities are available for them. They also want to know more about how they can access support for their education and their emotional well-being.	We have arranged for a series of talks on subjects chosen by the young people (mindfulness, housing options, sexual health) to take place during Tuesday group. The feedback was positive.
Young people want more opportunities to develop their knowledge on mechanics and learn useful skills around fixing broken items. They enjoy spending school holidays on structured activities with other care leavers and children in care as this builds their community.	<p>Work from the employment steering group continued to develop links between front-line staff in the Care Leaving Service and the Westminster Economy team to ensure Care Leavers are at the forefront of planning and have access to opportunities in the local economy.</p> <p>We successfully continue to partner with external companies to run careers events for our young people. In quarter 4, we ran our third event with mobile barbering start-up company Trim It as seen on Channel 4’s ‘The Money Maker’. The day included a visit to their office, a Q&A with the CEO, and a tour of the van. Young People who had a specific interest in barbering left feeling inspired and could relate to the team members they met.</p> <p>In collaboration with the Bi Borough Enrichment Programme Coordinator, the second cohort of young people joined the Build A Bike session taking place during the whole week of the Easter holidays.</p>
In December 2022, the Tuesday group was consulted about the available services and what they could access. The young people stated that they would like to have weekly guest speakers to talk on interesting topics to help improve their wellbeing and personal development.	Topics raised by young people include health and wellbeing, housing, education, sexual health, relationships, and financial budgeting. Topics have started running from February 2023.



Appendix 2: Examples of consultation work undertaken 2022 - 2023

YOU SAID	WE DID
<p>In April 2022 UASC young people told us that they need more support when they first arrive to the UK to navigate the processes and policies that England has when young people are looked after by the local authority.</p>	<p>In June, we held a consultation with UASC young people entitled “Welcome to the UK.” This was a workshop which aimed to explore expectations about the UK before they arrived here and hear their views about the realities and educate them on the processes that are involved in UK legislation and policy. This covered significant aspects of young people’s experience of being in care such as housing, education, finances, job search, Police, volunteering – what is working well and areas that can be improved upon.</p> <p>A report was created thereafter and shared with wider teams and management which captured feedback from young people to highlight their experiences¹.</p> <p>One young person said: <i>“it’s good to tell us clarity from the beginning: what you can/can’t do if I don’t know the rules for care leavers and social services. It’s good to know that from the beginning.”</i></p>
<p>Young people want to know more about what happened to former care leavers – what are they doing now? What made the difference for them? Can we learn from their experience?</p>	<p>We contacted former care leavers to find out what their outcomes were and to identify what they may be able to feedback into the service.</p> <p>Most of our alumni care leavers spoke about the groups and the educational support they received as being crucial to their current success.</p> <p>Action – Alumni meetings set up to bring care leavers together and support these relationships. Many young people attend university around the UK, and on-line meetings are also in place.</p> <p>We are exploring ways they can contribute strengthening the support to those in care in Westminster today.</p>
<p>Young people want to participate in selecting children’s department staff, so they have a say in who provides their services.</p>	<p>Young people have contributed to interviews panels over the year. Training and support has been provided to the young people, and guidance to interview panel chair about how engage young people in effective recruitment. Action – to build upon this programme over the next year and ensure that attention is paid to diversity in the recruitment process.</p>
<p>Young people told us they want more information about their rights and what opportunities are available for them. They also want to know more about how they can access support for their education and their emotional well-being.</p>	<p>We have arranged for a series of talks on subjects chosen by the young people (mindfulness, housing options, sexual health) to take place during Tuesday group. The feedback was positive.</p> <p>This work lead Children’s Services to think further about how we ensure our children and young people are informed. The work of the advocacy offers within Children’s Services was also reviewed, and we continue to strengthen our communication pathways to ensure information is shared at the right level for the person concerned.</p>



YOU SAID	WE DID
<p>Annual Report - the outcomes of the 2021/22 survey were reviewed at the start of year to inform work going forward.</p> <p>133 child and young people completed the survey, split into two groups of 15 years and under, and 16 years +, looking at key areas of housing, education, health, and support from professionals.</p> <p>7 key areas to develop included: helping prepare for own housing, increasing/strengthening support networks, promotional activity on support available from professionals, opportunities to meet other young people, help for UASC to integrate more, and continue to create programmes of activities.</p>	<p>The Westminster Guardians Board has overseen and driven this work forward, through the subgroups. A range of activity has taken place to address the development areas arising from the survey and are reference in detail within this report.</p>



Appendix 3: Action Plan 2023/2024

	Priority	Area for Development	Outcome / Value for Children / Young People	Lead	Timescale
1	Annual Survey 2022/2023 to be completed.	Westminster Guardian's Board to analysis outcomes. Strengthen approach and outputs by requesting key agencies contribute commitments to the delivery of work in the subgroup.	All partner agencies taken accountability to responding to the survey outcomes in practical ways which make a difference directly to children and young people.	Hayley Moore (Participation Officer and Independent Visitor Coordinator) Kembra Healy (Quality Assurance Manager)	June 2023
2	Strengthen support networks for care leavers.	Care Leavers often raise the challenging impact of moving from care to being a care leaver. This is especially challenging for those living out of borough or studying away.	Online support group to be set up to bring care leavers together who are studying across the UK. Support activities to meet in holidays. Widen membership of the Tuesday Group.	Hayley Moore (Participation Officer and Independent Visitor Coordinator)	April 2023
3	Build on the success of the independent visitors' programme	Joint activity to be undertaken with RBKC to develop an independent visitors' programme.	Recruitment programme to be put into place which reflects more extensively the ethnic and religious background of our young people. Children Looked After and Care Leavers are supported by role models in their lives which are not professional involved.	Hayley Moore (Participation Officer and Independent Visitor Coordinator)	Summer 2023
4	Peer Mentoring offer to be put into place.	Joint activity to be undertaken with RBKC to build a responsive to needs programme.	Young people are supported by individuals who have a shared life experience, which could be that they were Looked After, or have a particular	Hayley Moore (Participation Officer and Independent Visitor Coordinator) Kembra Healy (Quality Assurance Manager)	Summer 2023
5	Joint Children Services plan to	Activities programme is devised to reflect	Children Looked After and Care Leavers are aware	Jon Turner & Nasheen Singh - LAC and Leaving	Draft April 2023



	support activities throughout the year.	the needs of children and young people over the year. Roles and responsibilities are clearly set out, and financial contributions are transparent.	of the key programme available, and contribute to its further development such as achievement and religious celebrations, holiday activities, key national events etc.	Care Team, Kembra Healy and Angela Flahive - Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, Natalie Stephenson – Virtual School	
6	Support to new Youth MPs	Comprehensive programme of support is put in place to support the newly elected Youth MPs and the delivery of their manifesto.	Contribution to the success of our Youth Council and its range of influence on decisions at a local and national level.	Shofa Miah – Youth Council Lead	April 2023 onwards
7	Build on the membership of Youth Council	Ensure that our Children Looked After and Care Leavers have the opportunity and support to participate.	Inclusion in wider work of the council and political life. Promote our Children Looked After and Care Leavers to have a voice on a wider platform and influence local decisions.	Shofa Miah – Youth Council Lead Hayley Moore – Participation Officer.	April – August 2023.





Children and Adults, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	27 July 2023
Classification:	General Release
Title:	2023/2024 Work Programme
Report of:	Head of Governance and Councillor Liaison
Cabinet Member Portfolios:	Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure and Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector
Wards Involved:	All
Policy Context:	All
Report Author and Contact Details:	Linda Hunting lhunting@westminster.gov.uk

1. Executive Summary

1. This report asks the Committee to discuss topics for the 2023/2024 work programme. The proposals set out in appendix 2 have been developed in consultation with senior officers as well as members of the Executive (Cabinet) on their plans for the year ahead to ensure scrutiny is focused on those areas where it may have most impact.

2. Meeting Dates for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year

- 2.1 The Committee is advised that the scheduled meeting dates for the 2023/2024 year are:
 - 21 September 2023;
 - 5 December 2023;
 - 5 March 2024; and
 - 18 April 2024.

3. Background

- 3.1 Since January, the Policy and Scrutiny team has been supporting the Chair

to consider the work programme for the next municipal year. The process for this included; consultation with the Cabinet Members, consultation with Executive Directors and relevant Heads of Service, following up on previous items and commitments from previous meetings, consideration of forward plans in the Cabinet Portfolios and challenges identified across the Directorates.

3.2 The aim of this process has been to culminate in a work programme which:

- Focuses on what is important;
- Focuses on areas where performance might be improved;
- Focuses on services which are important to residents;
- Focuses on where scrutiny can make a difference and add value;
- Proactively feeds into policy development by contributing to pre-tender considerations or strategy development for example; and
- Uses the insight of backbench Members to act as critical friend to services of the City Council and our partners thereby enabling good governance and excellent services.

4. Draft Work Programme for 2023/24

4.1 The Committee is asked to consider the draft work programme for the next municipal year, 2023/2024, set out in Appendix 2. The Committee is requested to discuss the proposed topics listed as well as provide comments and suggestions.

4.2 When considering the work programme, and agreeing an overall programme of scrutiny activity, the Committee should have regard to whether the work programme is achievable in terms of both Officer and Member time, taking into account that the Committee is scheduled to meet six times per year. Members are also reminded that it is advisable to hold some capacity in reserve for any urgent issues that might arise.

4.3 Each Committee has discretion to establish Task Groups to examine key issues in more detail and also to commission Single Member Studies. The Committee is asked to consider whether they would like to establish a Task Group or commission a Single Member Study. The Committee should be advised that both Members and Officers will only be able to successfully take part in and support a finite number of Task Groups at any one time.

If you have any queries about this report or wish to inspect any of the background papers, please contact Linda Hunting.

lhunting@westminster.gov.uk

Appendix 1: Terms of Reference
Appendix 2: Work Programme
Appendix 3: Action Tracker

CHILDREN, ADULTS, PUBLIC HEALTH AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

COMPOSITION

7 Members of the Council (4 Majority Party Members and 3 Opposition Party Members).

TERMS OF REFERENCE

(a) To carry out the Policy and Scrutiny functions, as set out in Chapter 4 of the Constitution in respect of matters relating to all those duties within the terms of reference of the Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure and the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector.

(b) To carry out the Policy and Scrutiny function in respect of matters within the remit of the Council's non-executive Committees and Sub-Committees, which are within the broad remit of the Committee, in accordance with paragraphs 18.2 and 18.3 as well as section 19 of Chapter 4 of the Constitution.

(c) Matters within the broad remit of the Cabinet Members referred to in (a) above which are the responsibility of external agencies.

(d) Any other matter allocated by the Westminster Scrutiny Commission.

(e) To have the power to establish ad hoc or Standing Sub-Committees as Task Groups to carry out the scrutiny of functions within these terms of reference.

(f) To scrutinise the duties of the Lead Members which fall within the remit of the Committee or as otherwise allocated by the Westminster Scrutiny Commission.

(g) To scrutinise any Bi-borough proposals which impact on service areas that fall within the Committee's terms of reference.

(h) To oversee any issues relating to Performance within the Committee's terms of reference.

(i) To have the power to scrutinise those partner organisations under a duty to that are relevant to the remit of the Committee.

(j) To consider any Councillor Calls for Action referred by a Ward Member to the Committee.

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**APPENDIX 2 – Children, Adults, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee
Work Programme 2023 /24 Municipal Year**

ROUND 3 21 September 2023		
Agenda item	Purpose	Responsible Cabinet Member and Executive Director
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure Sarah Newman, Executive Director of Children's Services Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change
Voluntary Sector Core Funding and Allocation Report	To update the Committee about what level of funds are available to the Voluntary Sector and how funding decisions are managed.	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change
Mental Health and Children	To review the Mental Health Support Teams, Suicide Prevention Strategy (public health), Emotional Wellbeing Strategy, and the impact of Covid-19 on the mental health of young people and how this is being addressed in the mental health plans for young people.	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care Sarah Newman, Executive Director of Children's Services
Work programme	To review the work programme in light of events and recent discussions.	Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

ROUND 4 5 December 2023		
Agenda item	Purpose	Responsible Cabinet Member and Executive Director
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure Sarah Newman, Executive Director of Children's Services Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change
The Council's Integrated Care Strategy	To update the Committee on the integrated care programme, the use of Council funds, and for the Committee to make future recommendations.	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care
Childcare Sufficiency Assessment Strategy	To review the assessment strategy for how childcare sufficiency is measured through services across Westminster and make recommendations.	Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure Sarah Newman, Executive Director of Children's Services
Work programme	To review the work programme in light of events and recent discussions.	Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

ROUND 5 5 March 2024		
Agenda item	Purpose	Responsible Cabinet Member and Executive Director
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure Sarah Newman, Executive Director of Children's Services Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change

Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change
The Council Drug Strategy	To review the Council's current drug strategy and make future recommendations.	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care
Public Health Investment Report	To Committee to review the effectiveness of the public health investment fund, how the Council invests the Public Health Grant, and promotes and protects the health and wellbeing of Westminster residents.	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care
Work programme	To review the work programme in light of events and recent discussions.	Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

ROUND 6 18 April 2024		
Agenda item	Purpose	Responsible Cabinet Member and Executive Director
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure Sarah Newman, Executive Director of Children's Services Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change
Cabinet Member Q&A	To update the Committee on key areas of work within its remit and the Cabinet Member's priorities	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change

Learning Disability Report	The Committee to review the provisions available for residents with Learning Disabilities and make recommendations.	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Bernie Flaherty, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director of Adult Social Care
Leisure Services Contracts	The Committee to review the current leisure services contracts and programmes, the future of these services in Westminster, and make recommendations.	Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure Pedro Wrobel, Executive Director of Innovation and Change
Work programme	To consider and agree the outline work programme for the Committee for the year ahead, with input from Cabinet Members, Executive Directors and other officers on how to make best use of the Committee's time and where the Committee will have the biggest impact.	Linda Hunting, Policy and Scrutiny Advisor

Unallocated items: this may either be substituted in for a substantive item elsewhere in the year or may be rolled over for future municipal years.

Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector
Attainment Gap Report	Autism Strategy delivery update
Annual Fostering and Adoption Report	The Gordon Hospital Campaign
Update on the Annual Youth Justice Plan (after results from the service's inspection have been released).	The Unison Ethical Care Charter - next steps
Westminster Guardian's Report (Corporate Parenting Report)	Update on the Westminster Mental Health Plan for Adults
Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) Strategic Plan (Autumn 2024) TBC	

Proposed Briefing Sessions:

Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	Purpose	Proposed Date
Review of primary schools for the 2023/24 academic year	Members to be briefed on falling rolls, potential amalgamations, and financial considerations of this.	Before summer 2023

Active Westminster	Members to consider the strategy being developed to include the service provided in the primary leisure service centres in Westminster.	Now Councillor Sanquest
Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) Strategic Plan Review	To review the draft WAES Strategic Plan and for Members to provide feedback on the strategy which considers the future offer of this service in Westminster.	November / December 2023
Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector	Purpose	Proposed Date
		TBC

Forthcoming Written Reports/ Updates:

Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	Purpose	Proposed Date
Annual Corporate Parenting Report	To update the Committee on the Council's annual review of supporting parents and families with children across the borough.	September 2023
Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector	Purpose	Proposed Date
Adult Social Care Outcomes Framework Data	To update the committee on the Council's results and compare WC results across other Council's nationally and make recommendations for future learning.	December 2023 / Jan 2024
Carer Strategy Report	To update the Committee on the how the Council's strategy in for supporting and working with carers across the borough is working.	March 2024

Cabinet Member Updates to the Committee:

Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	Meeting Expected	Councillor Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector	Meeting Expected
School Uniform Support Scheme	September / October 2023	TBC	
Supported Internships Annual Review	After August 2023		
Progression pathways for young people	July 2023		

Potential Visits:

- St. Charles Hospital
- Hallfield Primary School
- Family Hubs
- Voluntary sector organisations in Westminster
- Children in Care Council
- Organisations such as Substance Misuse facilities (CGL / Turning Point)

Possible Task Groups/ Single Member Studies:

- Primary school capacity, falling rolls, and the development of federations across Westminster
- Autism Strategy delivery update
- How is Meals on Wheels replaced / a food strategy for Westminster residents
- Housing Allocation and Learning-Disabled residents
- Obesity in Westminster

Appendix 3 - ACTION TRACKER
Children, Adults, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny
Committee

ROUND 1 12 JULY 2022		
Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up
Item 4 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector	That arrangements be made for Members to visit voluntary sector organisations in Westminster.	Ongoing / Member-led
Item 5 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	That the Children and Young People Mental Health Task Group Report be published and that an update on the recommendations contained in the report be circulated to the Committee.	In progress Update on this item in Sep 23.
	That details of how the schools were managing the school uniform scheme be circulated to the Committee.	In progress to be provided in the July CM update.
	That a visit to a family hub to be organised for Committee Members.	In progress / Member-led
Round 3 OCTOBER 2022		
Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up
Item 4 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	More information about the activities provided in the HAF programme and about what is being done to measure the effect of the HAF funding distributed and when this information can be shared with the committee, including, how the funds are spent with each provider.	In progress Update provided 25.11.22 Update provided 20.01.23 Officers to confirm when evaluation / measures information will be available for the Committee.
Item 5 Cabinet Member Updates	Members to request, via Scrutiny Officer, visits to the Crisis House - Paddington, St. Charles and the Gordon Hospital's.	In progress / ongoing Member-led.

Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector		
Item 6 Work Programme	A Task Group to consider the falling rolls of primary schools to be discussed and constituted by the Chair, as lead.	In progress Committee updated Dec 22. On hold till the next municipal year.
Round 4 DECEMBER 2022		
Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up
Item 4 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	That an optional session be arranged for Councillors to discuss with a Head Teacher /s, Ian Heggs (Bi-Borough Director of Education), and potentially others, the most pressing current issues in the schools and what can be done to support them.	In progress
Item 6 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector	Information be provided to the Committee about the Suicide Prevention Strategy and what the Council is doing to prevent suicides in the borough.	In progress This will come to committee as part of MH updates Sep 23.
Item 8 The Children and Young People's Plan (2023-2026)	The Committee to receive performance data for the priorities and outcomes of The Children and Young People's Plan (2023-2026) and officers will present to the Committee in due course.	In progress
Round 5 FEBRUARY 2023		
Agenda Item	Action	Status/ Follow Up
Item 6 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care,	Officers to provide an update on what types of webinars are currently planned for the future similar to the safeguarding webinar noted in the CM report.	In progress Zoe following up 16.06

Public Health and Voluntary Sector		
	Round 6 APRIL 2023	
Agenda Item	Action	Status/Follow Up
Item 4 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	Officers to provide the committee with a presentation about the adult education provision in the borough, possibly to also involve the Chair of Governors and members from WAES, to discuss the Strategic Plan and provide Members with an opportunity to provide feedback.	In progress This is being arranged with officers for December 23, in particular, for Members to provide a steer on how to take the Partnerships Development Plan forward – work will commence at the start of the new academic year.
	Officers to provide an update on the progress of the Bayswater Children’s Centre and for a visit for Members to be arranged when the centre is operational.	In progress / Member led.
Item 5 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector	Data and details about the support and services provided for Learning Disabled residents at the Beethoven Centre drop-in sessions to be provided.	In progress Possibly in July CM update.
	Members requested a demonstration of the new digital social care platform for residents.	In progress Scheduled for Sep 23.
	Round 1 JUNE 2023	
Agenda Item	Action	Status/Follow Up
Item 4 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Young People, Learning and Leisure	Information about the training and awareness of MET officers in relation to the stop and search of young Afro-Caribbean people (including examples) to be provided to the Committee.	In progress
	Information regarding absent black Afro-Caribbean fathers in relation to the effect that may have on disproportionate stop and search incidents and links to serious youth violence of	In progress

	with these young people young people of this group.	Update on Black Fathers Unheard to be provided.
	Information about HAF program, including who we are reaching to participate, to be provided after the summer holiday period of activities.	In progress To be provided in the July CM report.
	Information on the Children and Young People Substance Misuse Strategy to be provided to the Committee, when appropriate.	In progress Anna Raleigh to provide this information.
	The results of the We Got U, U Got This campaign, to be provided to Members when appropriate.	In progress Update to be provided in the July CM report.
	Information on the different levels and type of training that is provided for library staff to be provided to the Committee.	In progress A report is being provided by Paul Savage.
	Information about how the We Got U, U Got This campaign is being made accessible for young people who don't have devices or access to private technology to be provided.	In progress Update to be provided in the July CM report.
	Information on the plans for the Queen's Park Family Hub site and what the suggestions are for interim options at the Hub to be provided.	In progress
Item 5 Cabinet Member Updates Policy and Scrutiny Portfolio Overview: Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Voluntary Sector	Information about the total cost for a year of Stage 3 of the Ethical Care Charter which provides a link to London Living Wage and other conditions of employment, including travel time, to be provided to the Committee when available.	In progress
Item 7 Independent Review of the Covid-19 Pandemic Response	Professor Jill Manthorpe offered to consider the MENCAP report on the learning disability mortality question in relation to Covid and send a breakdown of the data in relation to residents.	In progress Request made for further information 26.06.23 and through ASC 29.06. Officers are compiling information.
Item 10 Work Programme	Distribute the response from the Gordon Hospital to Chair's letter to Members.	Completed Members emailed 16.06.23

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