

Decisions of the Barnet Children's Partnership Board

22 April 2021

Members Present:-

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| Chris Munday | Executive Director for Children's Services (Chair) |
| Councillor David Longstaff | Lead Member for Children, Education & Safeguarding and Deputy Leader of Barnet Council |
| Neil Marlow | Director, School Improvement and Traded Services, BELS |
| Lee Robinson | Children's Strategy & Policy Advisor |
| Janet Matthewson | Chief Executive Officer, Young Barnet Foundation |
| Sarah Sands | Head of Garden Suburb Infants, Chair of Nursery and Primary Headteachers' Forum |
| Ben Thomas | Assistant Director Education, Strategy and Partnerships, Family Services |
| Cassie Bridger | Assistant Director, Greenspaces and Leisure |
| Luke Ward | Assistant Director, Development & Economy |
| Jayne Abbott | Resilience Programme Manager, Resilience Schools |
| Sharon Smith | Public Health Strategist, Children & young Peoples' Team |
| Elliott Roy-Highley | Public Registrar |
| Mav Ghalley | Designated Clinical Officer – SEND, NCL CCG |
| Rachel Wells | Consultant in Public Health, Children & Young People's Team |
| Martin Serrao | Principal of St Marys and St Johns CE School |
| Emma Burton-Lee | Senior Communications and Campaigns Manager |
| Danielle Gopie | Communications Coordinator – Strategy & Communications |
| Lisa Coffman | Barnet Parent Carers Forum |
| Rebecca Morris | Voice of the Child Participation Officer |
| Joyce Mukoko | Youth Engagement Officer, BICS |
| Tal Berman Howarth | Barnet Parent Carers Forum |
| Liz Longworth | Headteacher of Northside Primary School |
| Joanna Yong | Children's Clinical Lead NHS |
| Dara Darkwah | Member of Youth Parliament |
| Ishaan Shah | Member of Barnet and London Youth Assembly |
| Tani Ilemobola | Member of Youth Parliament |

1. WELCOME

The Chairman, Chris Munday, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2020 were agreed as an accurate record. In matters arising, an update to education and recovery was provided by Neil Marlow. The term 'Lost Learning' was used in relation to mental health and students being concerned about their loss of learning. The Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) has adopted the term 'Renaissance' in relation to recovery from lost learning.

The Conference Renaissance on the 11th of May would provide an opportunity for discussions about the DFE's plans and what would work well within Barnet. Schools continued to ensure that the wellbeing of students were strong and that any gaps in relation to lost learning due to remote education had been filled. Attendance following a return to school was reported at 95-96%, higher than the national data. Schools had made a good start to recovery and control measures were said to be working well.

3. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS'

None.

4. YOUNG PEOPLE - TBA

Ishaan Shah informed members that the last meeting of the Barnet Youth Assembly focused on work around LGBTQ+ communities. LGBTQ+ inclusive teaching had formed part of the national curriculum and support was needed to help plan content around this subject area to ensure that schools had adequate support for students who needed it. The Barnet Youth Assembly intended that Barnet lead the way in ensuring that schools were places for open and honest conversations.

A key resource from the Health and Education Partnership was provided to schools to ensure that teaching and guidance on relationships, health and sex education was available and that the new framework was being implemented. LGBTQ+ would be featured within the school policy being implemented.

It was noted that schools received good support from the Barnet Partnership School Improvement (BPSI) team through which schools could also access training and termly meetings focusing on sex and health education.

The following links for support were shared at the meeting.

https://www.mosaictrust.org.uk/young-persons?gclid=Cj0KCQjwvYSEBhDjARIsAJMn0lh_k2pJR_2ca1-jjH23NMIjRxz1oKE98Bi0JSzwbS6Mt0awSNG0030aAsAEEALw_wcB

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Tani Ilemobola provided an update from the Career Insight event with over 70 sign-ups. Many young people provided positive feedback about the information received at the sessions. Further plans included holding a session on devising personal statements for university. The free Years 5 and 6 programmes that were held free of charge were very successful with over 50 children who had signed up. Parents also provided positive feedback on the programme. It was suggested that BPSI include some young people led sessions for the future.

5. MENTAL HEALTH - TO FOLLOW

Elliott Roy-Highley presented the key points on Covid-19 and its impact on the wellbeing of children and young people nationally, as well as within Barnet. Partners were encouraged to think about future services and how they could be adapted in response to the implications on mental health. It was noted that mental wellbeing was more than just mental health with inter playing factors such

social, emotional and psychology wellbeing, influenced by environment. Issues such as crime, lack of green spaces and institutionalised racism could all have an impact on wellbeing. The goal was to promote good mental health and for it to be managed alongside the stresses of life whilst being able to build strong relationships.

Between 10-20% of children and young people experienced mental health conditions including self-harm, many of which were unrecognised or untreated. 28% of the 99,000 young people affected in Barnet were between the ages of 5 and 9. Barnet children differed from rest of the UK with higher numbers in Black and Asian communities disproportionately affected by Covid-19.

Evidence had shown that routines, social interactions, and friendships were crucial for children's normal psychological development, all of which were taken away due to Covid-19 restrictions. Factors such as social isolation has had a negative impact on mental health and the duration of loneliness was strongly linked to increasing mental health symptoms.

The impact of lockdown had exposed existing inequalities amongst children particularly those with disabilities and special educational needs, those from Black and ethnic minorities, lower economic groups, and young women. It was important to know how services were reaching out to those affected more acutely than others. At a national level, reluctance to accessing services was due to stigma and waiting lists but privacy was an important factor that had been raised.

A broad range of services was available in Barnet to meet current and emerging needs but there was a challenge in effectively signposting children and young people to see the right person in the right form at the right time. Dedicated communications on mental health services for children and young people have been set up.

Increasing demands across services have also increased in complexity which include crisis cases. The Board would have to work collaboratively to best support children and young people in order to flourish. To meet rising demands, factors such as access to digital demand, inclusion, family resilience and available equipment needed to be improved.

Members queried whether the use of face masks at school at all times had a damaging effect on children and young people. It was noted that face masks were not raised as an issue that affected the individual's wellbeing but that could be dependent on the age of the young person. Evidence of anxiety and perceived risk was noted to be high but educating children and young people was said to reduce that anxiety.

Members suggested including the Early Help element into future planning and its findings to be presented to the CAMHS transformation board as well as community review carried out by NCL CCG mental health services so that inequalities could be identified within Barnet as well as within the NCL CCG patch.

With transition arrangements being classified as a period of increased risk, besides digital services, courses on mental health first aid could help young people manage themselves and their peers who struggled to communicate with parents.

Dara Darkwah informed members the Youth Board had identified that more race and diversity training was need for professionals in health and wellbeing services. Research had shown that there was the lack of diversity within the mental health sector, which created barriers when dealing with people from Black and ethnic minorities. Training would help address cultural barriers so that understanding on how to provide affective treatment could be achieved.

It was noted that details on progress with regards to disproportionality around inequalities, training offers within the Council and externally should be brought to the next meeting to give focus to the issue.

Transition was tricky for young people and several suicides in the local area were reported. Transition support could help prevent that.

6. RESILIENT SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

Jayne Abbott presented the Resilience Schools Programme and its core components. The main approach was to raise awareness and de-stigmatise mental health across the whole school to help staff, parents and students to recognise their own mental health needs and seek support when they needed it.

The impact of the digital world on the mental health of young people has led to digital resilience being one of the components. The Thrive Model uses a preventative approach alongside Mental Health First Aiders and pastoral support through the Barnet Integrated Clinical team. Schools were required to complete a base line evaluation and strength-based audit for them to develop an action plan.

All schools have been asked to promote Qwell and KOOTH and have a self-harm and suicide document which has been added to their current safeguarding policy.

Youth Mental Health First Aid has been a robust piece of the programme dealing with a range of mental health issues and crisis situations of psychotic behaviour and thoughts, giving individuals the confidence to ask for help and information on accessing support. Over 80 schools have been trained in this area with 100 youth mental health first aiders. In peer mentoring, young people who were given the same training as adults, were able to come up with the most innovative ways on how they would use their training to help other young people.

A base line survey done in 2020 found that 1 in 5 students found it difficult to seek help from school staff and over half the students did not know how to access KOOTH. 1 in 10 students expressed unhappiness and a third experienced pressures online. In general, there had been a lack of awareness on the Resilience Schools Programme amongst staff and parents. Therefore, a promotional leaflet about the programme and termly newsletters have been created for schools.

Mental Health First Aid training had been targeted at Key Stage 2 and above but whether it could be applied to younger years would be further explored by public health.

It was suggested that KOOTH data be shared amongst relevant services to pick up on specific points. In terms of peer mentoring, evidence showed that it mainly helped and benefitted the mentor more than the person being mentored. Therefore, clear evidence base was needed for peer to peer interventions and whether there was an equally positive impact on the person being mentored.

7. PHYSICAL HEALTH - VERBAL UPDATE

Cassie Bridger talked about physical activity and its impact on daily lives. Overwhelming evidence over the last year had shown that any form of physical activity such as participating in community sport or walking had a big impact on mental and physical health.

Participation in secondary opportunities such as social cohesion and career networks at an early age could prevent illness through to older age. Focus for the coming year would be placed on children and young people to have positive experiences to lay foundations of an active habit in their lives.

Statistics from a leisure perspective showed a major decline in user base by 39%. Covid-19 meant the closure of leisure centres but the opening of outdoor space. Formal sports and events

schedules were suspended resulting in a review to existing communications in place and infrastructure across greenspaces. Litter, for example had been a big challenge for the service.

Risk assessments would have to be reviewed to ensure that continuing appropriate Covid secure measures were in place. Significant changes have been implemented at Leisure centres such as enhanced cleaning regimes to allow users to feel confident to resume their physical activity. A Covid Hub with Greenwich Leisure was set up which included daily virtual classes, podcasts, e-learning and nutritional guidance available to all Barnet residents.

Increased value of open parks and spaces facilities in relation to wellbeing was noticeable with the amount of people accessing them. Alongside the government roadmap, leisure centres were reopened on the 12th of April. All parks have remained open and other aspects such as licensed activity were to gradually open. The focus over the next twelve months was to continue to develop the investment proposals including West Hendon Playing Fields, Barnet Playing Fields and Copthall.

Board members were welcomed to work with Greenspaces and Leisure to help develop the new Sport & Physical Activity Strategy.

8. ENVIRONMENT/SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY - VERBAL UPDATE

To be reported at the next meeting.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The meeting finished at 6pm.