

Decisions of the Barnet Children's Partnership Board

15 July 2021

Members Present:

Chris Munday	Executive Director for Children's Services (Chair)
Councillor David Longstaff	Lead Member for Children, Education & Safeguarding and Deputy Leader of Barnet Council
Ian Harrison	Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning
Neil Marlow	Director, School Improvement and Traded Services, BELS
Helen Phelan	Director, SEND & Inclusion
Lee Robinson	Children's Strategy & Policy Advisor
Sarah Sands	Head of Garden Suburb Infants, Chair of Nursery and Primary Headteachers' Forum
Ben Thomas	Assistant Director Education, Strategy and Partnerships, Family Services
Luke Ward	Assistant Director, Development & Economy
Jess Baines-Holmes	Deputy Director for Adults Joint Commissioning and CYP Health Commissioning
Rebecca Morris	Voice of the Child Participation Officer
Sharon Smith	Public Health Strategist, Children & young Peoples' Team
Emma Burton-Lee	Senior Communications and Campaigns Manager
Lisa Coffman	Barnet Parent Carers Forum
Tal Berman Howarth	Barnet Parent Carers Forum
Graig Bradley	Metropolitan Police Barnet

1. WELCOME

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

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING - TO FOLLOW

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS'

Apologies for absence was received from Elizabeth Longworth and Janet Matthewson.

4. EDUCATION RECOVERY

Following the return to school in March, school leaders focused on learning which was impacted by student absence as a result of Covid-19. The curriculum has been adapted accordingly and disadvantaged students have been receiving the support needed to fill in the gaps.

The Recovery, Reset and Renaissance (RRR) Project has been developed. £600,000 of funding was made available to fund projects with £321,000 used for successful bids by schools or partnerships of schools to deliver bespoke projects supporting recovery, reset and renaissance. Expected outcomes from RRR included diminishing gaps in learning, a range of provision for academia and Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs as well as increasing schools' resilience to meet the needs of children and young people.

Speech and Language was as an area of concern for which the Speech and Language Enrichment training had been offered and provided which was successful.

The Compass for Life programme provided action planning tools to help teachers and pupils through recovery, reset and renaissance.

From September, support for SEMH needs would be provided by the Educational Psychology and Inclusion Advisory teams. Free workshops on how to maximise attendance at school were being run by the Educational Welfare Team and Barnet Partnership for School Improvement (BPSI) offered training adapted to the school's recovery to ensure the curriculum was correct.

Other projects looked at reducing the number of Black exclusions in schools and engaging care leavers with employment, education and training. A working party found that the number of exclusions amongst Black Caribbean and Black African pupils were disproportionately higher than other ethnic groups. Therefore, a sub board had been set up to look specifically at exclusions and attendance. In addition, the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) provided mentoring support to help identify barriers and how to overcome to enable Black pupils to remain in the system.

A contract with Growing Against Violence is being formed to expand services and support to schools. The recruitment of Black and Ethnic Minority Governors was also underway to ensure that governing boards were more representative of the community.

In support of inclusion and diversity, relevant training, sharing good practice and Early Years projects to support the needs and equalities of committees were being set up in schools.

Nearly half of the RRR bids (20 bids) were successful albeit some only part funded. 55 schools will benefit from this funding and over 13,000 pupils. The total amount allocated to schools was **£321,000**. Added to this 7 further schools benefitted from the Speech and Language Therapy funding of £50,000 meaning that 62 schools received some funding from this process.

5. SEND SELF-EVALUATION

The Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection and Self-Evaluation (SEF) had to be completed to identify strengths and areas of improvement. It was linked to the SEND Strategy 2021-2024 and partnership work involving education, health and social care, parents and young people.

Strong partnership working and coproduction were areas of strength for Barnet in terms of the SEF and SEND workstreams. The SEF included the local context and needs in comparison to other areas as well as outcomes for children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and SEND.

A SEND assurance visit from Ofsted and CQC looked at the impact of the pandemic on children and young people with SEND and their families and the response to the impact on families. The views of families and children were obtained and positive outcomes were found. There were elements to be taken forward which have been incorporated into the action plans for SEND workstreams and the SEF.

It was a statutory requirement for the local area to have a Local Offer website to include information on the provision and resources available. The website also contained up to date information on personal budget, health and social care and personal budget.

Data showed an increase in the amount of SEND requests in Barnet with 3.5% for EHCPs and 2.5% for SEND support. It was also linked to accessing Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational therapy.

Strong working partnerships had been formed to increase engagement from parents and young people. There was parent representation on the SEND Development Group and SEND Partnership Board. Parents and Carers were also involved in complex needs panels and the auditing of EHCPs.

In terms of the young person's voice, the Barnet Inclusive Next Generation (BING) group had been consulted with regards to strategies. The views of children and young people in need of SEND support were also represented more widely in the area of work undertaken.

It was noted that excellent outcomes were achieved for children with SEND and those with an EHCP in terms of attainment and progress data.

Innovative practice in response to the pandemic have been demonstrated well in the Open Spaces Project, providing families with a safe space to go to.

The key areas of strength were noted as follows:

- (a) Good quality of education provision for pupils with SEND
- (b) A good Local Offer
- (c) Development of a Mental Health Zone with links to CAMHS and other services
- (d) Good Early Years Offer with well-coordinated arrangements focusing on early identification
- (e) Clear outcomes for pupils with SEND and pupils with EHCPs
- (f) Good transitional support for pupils between primary to secondary and secondary to Post-16
- (g) Good range of support available across Health and Social Care.

Work in relation to the Therapy Recovery Programme linked to language enrichment would be extended next term for Early Years and PVI's.

Good pathways for Autism action plan and SEMH provision had been developed, ensuring clarity on what was available for parents, carers and schools.

The SEF would be updated in August before the next inspection anticipated between this September and March 2022.

It was noted that prioritising an additional resource provision would help support schools and Barnet children. More work on SEND transition support was needed for several schools and the substantial amount of work needed on therapies could be taken forward with the right provider in place for a comprehensive programme of continuous improvement to lead to the correct support for children and families.

6. SCHOOLS ENGAGEMENT - TO FOLLOW

A verbal update was provided. Policing had not been up to its maximum strength in the Borough due to recruiting problems. It was noted that only officers with specialised skills could take on the role of working with children and young people.

The lack of vehicles reduced the effectiveness of police presence for schools.

For patrols, partnership working continued with Safer Neighbourhoods, BTP and Safer Transport which generally occurred at the end of term. As there was a shortage of after school patrols a joined up approach was being developed to encourage school staff and parents to partake in patrols.

Sexual inappropriateness and sexual violence were highlighted as big issues faced by schools. Training was being offered to all secondary schools on areas such as personal safety, what constitutes sexual misconduct and what constitutes a sexual offence. Anti robbery and personal safety talks were being held in September on self-awareness.

A Safer Schools Board was being set up in Barnet in relation to safeguarding needs of the school.

It was noted that young people's views on policing needed to be captured during summer camps and to ensure that as many officers were available.

7. YOUNG PEOPLE - TO FOLLOW

None.

8. FAMILY FRIENDLY BARNET

An overview of the family friendly vision was provided. The growing population of children in Barnet and changing numbers made it difficult to predict future school places. The number of pupils with EHCPs and those in need of SEND support had increased by more than 20% in a single year.

There was an increase in the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children (UASC) in Care due to Home Office restrictions during lock down.

The outcomes from children and young people plans and their measures in RAG ratings were presented. Significant changes were noted post pandemic particularly with revenue and benefits support and UNICEF badges.

Children and Young People's views on whether Barnet was family friendly were acquired through the youth perception survey. It was found that 84% of children and young people thought that Barnet was a family friendly borough.

Safe and secure outcomes were supported by a resilient social care service evidenced by audits and performance reporting, service user feedback as well as a good Ofsted rating in 2019.

Crime was the biggest concern amongst young people with knife crime being on the top of the list, showing that perception was quite different to reality. Barnet was one of the safest boroughs with crime rates being low. Youth reoffending rates also remained low in comparison to national figures.

The Education Strategy had continued to produce very positive outcomes. 500k in funding had been allocated to RRR in response to the impact caused to education by the pandemic.

Health and Wellbeing outcomes were generally good but there was an increase need for the provision of therapies. The pandemic has had a huge impact on mental health of young people and the demand for services. A lot of work was being done in response to that need. As part of the Council's Covid response, an additional £1.5m funding had been agreed for mental health support in all schools.

In terms of family and belonging, revenues and benefits was one area which was significantly impacted by the pandemic as well as the increase in unemployment and free school meals.

As part of the Covid Winter Grant Scheme, more than 33,000 vouchers were given out to support vulnerable families.

There has been an increase in demand for housing among Care Leavers as the numbers had risen in the last year for both permanent and transitional housing.

Young people also felt that they were being involved in decision making. Barnet was the first borough that signed up to the UNICEF Child Friendly Cities accreditation. Good progress was being made although there was not much flexibility on achieving the certification.

In Barnet, low figures for those Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) had been achieved and additional Covid funding was being invested to reduce unemployment figures especially among those from Black ethnic groups.

9. JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ANALYSIS - TO FOLLOW

None.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

The meeting finished at 6pm