

## **Barnet Children's Partnership Board**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 27 April 2023 AT Virtual meeting - Online**

#### **PRESENT:**

Cllr Pauline Coakley Webb	Chair of Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee
Chris Munday (Chair)	Executive Director for Children's Services
Ben Thomas	Assistant Director Education, Strategy and Partnerships
Collette McCarthy	Assistant Director Commissioning
Rebecca Morris	Participation Officer
Neil Marlow	Director of School Improvement and Traded Services (BELS)
Janet Matthewson	Chief Executive Officer, Young Barnet Foundation
Joanne Kelly	Community PRU Headteacher
Emma Waters	Public Health Consultant
Liz Longworth (Co-Optee)	Head of Northside School
Sarah Sands (Co-Optee)	Garden Suburb Infants

**APOLOGIES:** L Robinson (Commissioning Strategy & Policy Advisor)  
Youth Ambassadors x 2

#### **1. WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

#### **2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

#### **3. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Lee Robinson and both Youth Ambassadors due to exams.

#### **4. MY SAY MATTERS**

The Chair welcomed the member of Youth Parliament to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. Liz Shaw -Practice Standards Manager -Children's Services offered her congratulations to the young person present and their peers having been received an 'Outstanding Service to the Community as a Young Citizen of Barnet' for their contributions, promotion and creation of 'My Say Matters'. The young person updated the Board and explained that concern remained about levels of knife crime and the impact that this had on young people's safety and noted that some progress had been made as the Police had proposed a School Officer. A meeting was due to be held between the Head teacher and the Police School Officer but this had been delayed due to strike action of teachers.

The Chair thanked the young person for attending and congratulated them on their civic award.

## **5. ADOLESCENTS AT RISK**

Chris Kelly - Partnerships and Engagement Lead - Children's Services, gave the Board a verbal update on Adolescents at risk. It was noted that the current Adolescents at Risk Strategy ran from 2020-2022 and an updated version was currently being updated and revised, prior to it going out for consultation. It was reported that there had been collaborative working on the strategy with the inclusion of children and young people and also the voluntary and community sector to gain a better understanding of community and to build and maintain strong links. A number of key areas from the last strategy would be brought forward and included in the updated version as there would be a continuation of building on the current coherent approach regarding early help. The Board discussed the importance and significance of early intervention and early help which would include working with social workers and schools whilst targeting hot-spots and identifying exploiters.

## **6. AUTISM, RACE AND CULTURE**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of Barnet Children's Partnership Board.

## **7. EDUCATION STANDARDS REPORT**

Neil Marlow - Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning gave an update to the Board and reported the statistics for attendance were positive and that Barnet was currently in the top 20% for Local Authorities. Early Years provision remained strong, and data was being studied to ensure any weaknesses could be identified or improvements made.

The Phonics method of teaching had been introduced across all schools in Barnet; there had been some hesitancy nationally, but Barnet schools had implemented it straight away and embedded it into their systems.

At Key Stage (KS) 1 level it was reported that Barnet were above the national average, with writing continuing to improve as focus had been placed on this and efforts were being made to improve writing abilities. SEN schools were doing well at KS2 although there were some ethnic groups doing well, there were other ethnic groups underperforming and continued support would be needed to achieve improvements. Progress 8 was reported as being 7<sup>th</sup> best in the Country in Barnet although it was noted that prior to covid Barnet was 2<sup>nd</sup>.

The Board discussed the availability of data for parents/guardians who chose to opt for home-schooling for their children and it was agreed that Lauren Jefferson- Education Welfare Officer and Helen Morrison - Learning Network Inspector be invited to a future meeting to update colleagues on available information on home-schooling, including for looked after children.

## 8. STABLE HOMES - BUILT ON LOVE

The Chair introduced the report and explained that the strategy set out a vision to rebalance children's social care away from costly crisis intervention to more meaningful and effective early support. The main actions would address urgent issues facing children and families, set national direction for change and lay the foundations for whole system reform; the reform would be carried out in phases over the next 2 year and there would be investment of £200 million.

It was explained that the Families First for Children Pathfinder would see £45 million invested in it to test key elements of Family Help, child protection and kinship reforms in up to 12 areas.

It was explained that there were 6 pillars of reform:

**Pillar 1:** Family Help provides the right support at the right time so that children can thrive with their families.

**Pillar 2:** A decisive multi- agency child protection system

**Pillar 3:** Unlocking the potential of family networks.

**Pillar 4:** Putting love, relationships and a stable home at the heart of being a child in care

**Pillar 5:** A valued, supported and highly skilled social worker for every child who needs one.

**Pillar 6:** A system that continuously learns and improves and makes better use of evidence and data.

It was noted that Barnet had very few high-cost placements and work was underway in collaboration with other local authorities who had high costs placements. Barnet had relatively few children in care compared to other local authorities and it was emphasised that very few children were taken away from their homes.

## 9. SEND & ALTERNATIVE PROVISION ACTION PLAN

Karen Flanagan, Director SEND and Inclusion updated the Board which informed the board members that the Children and Families Act1 (CFA) was enacted in 2014. Part 3 of the Act relates to children and young people in England with Special Educational Need and/or Disabilities (SEND). It was explained that the aims of the reforms were for children's needs to be identified earlier; families to be more involved in decisions affecting them; education, health and social care services to be better integrated; and support to remain in place up to the age of 25 where appropriate.

Since then, there has been much criticism about the system from families, Councils, and wider professionals. This has included the National Audit Office report into SEND 2019 and the Inquiry by the House of Commons Select Committee. It was noted that the proposal for Education and Health Care Plan's to be more digitalised resulted in those on

the lower incomes with the fewer opportunities to access smart tech and actually get the necessary information.

It was explained that it would be positive for the Action Plan to be developed in conjunction with Partners. The current biggest implication was capacity and there would be a requirement for data analysts to be employed as the data required to inform and co-produce the local area Needs Assessment, SEF and LIP and to be ready for the Area SEND Inspection would be significant. A dedicated data analyst would be needed to set up the systems needed to collect, cleanse, report and analyse the data needed and to determine the longer-term data resources to support this ongoing work. This will need to be supported by a data support worker. The Chair commented that whilst additional funding would be available in some areas of Children's services, there was a desire for this to be spend on the needs of children rather than the provision of administrators.

A detailed action plan, including timescales and accountability would need to be drafted, discussed and agreed at the next SEND and AP Strategic Board meeting on the 13 June 2023 and brought to a future Children's Partnership Board.

## **10. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board were invited to send suggestions for inclusion in the Work Programme at any time to the Chair.

**The Forward Work Programme was noted.**

## **11. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

The list of abbreviations was noted.

## **12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Ben Thomas, Assistant Director of Family Services updated the Board and commented that the Draft Children and Young people's plan had been circulated to the Board. It was explained that it had been designed in collaboration with children and young people and would be going out for public consultation week commencing 1 May 2023 for a 6-week period.

The meeting finished at 5.49pm