

## **CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **CO-ORDINATED AND JOINED UP SERVICES FOR VULNERABLE ADOLESCENTS REVIEW 2017/18**

#### **DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. A borough-wide pledge to support vulnerable young people should be developed. All council services should commit to working collaboratively to reduce the risks to young people and improve their wellbeing. Partner organisations should also be encouraged to commit to the pledge. This would assist in developing more joined up early intervention approaches.
2. It is suggested that the delivery of the pledge should be monitored through existing multi-agency forums. A member of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee should be invited to observe relevant meetings.
3. To foster a more effective and joined-up approach to safeguarding across London, Children's Services should seek to work with neighbouring boroughs and other agencies to develop a contextual safeguarding approach. This approach is focused on reducing risks and vulnerabilities and promoting safeguarding by intervening in the social environments experienced by young people, rather than focusing interventions on individuals.
4. A high number of vulnerable adolescents have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse earlier in their lives. It is recommended that the council and police work together to develop stronger and earlier interventions on domestic abuse.
5. Children's Services should review if greater information can be shared between agencies to develop a more joined up approach to working with vulnerable adolescents. For example, it may be beneficial for schools to be notified of domestic abuse incidents affecting their pupils, or if a child is considered vulnerable to gang activity or another form of exploitation due to their siblings being involved in such activity. It would also be beneficial for the Police to notify schools and other professionals of lower level non-criminal concerns, such as a young person's behaviour on the streets. This may help to better target interventions, early help services, and other resources.
6. The Committee considers that greater use could be made of safer schools officers. Children's Services and the Police should review how these officers are promoted, and schools should be further encouraged to make use of the resource.
7. The council should review if it can offer voluntary and community sector organisations more support in developing early intervention approaches. This would be consistent with the council's priorities and enable a greater join up between the sector and council services.
8. The council should consider if it can incentivise the community and voluntary sector to adopt early intervention approaches by aligning grant funding more closely to the delivery of council priorities.

9. Children's Services should consider the feasibility of linking specialist workers to major voluntary and community sector organisations, in a similar way to how specialist workers are linked to universal services. This may assist in generating referrals, normalise accessing support, and help to ease transitions between services.
10. The council should work to improve the reach of its communications to marginalised young people. Social media, youth hubs, schools, and community and voluntary sector networks could be used further to communicate health and wellbeing messages to young people, including targeted messages to vulnerable adolescents.
11. Subject to the results of the trauma-informed approaches pilot, Children's Services should support and encourage primary schools to adopt trauma-informed approaches and related screening tools. This may assist in identifying a range of issues, including the diagnosis of mental health issues, at a much earlier age.
12. The council should further promote the directory of services to professionals in the health, education, and voluntary and community sectors to raise awareness and understanding of the range of support services available to vulnerable adolescents. This could include attending meetings of professional bodies to explain when and how the directory can be used. This may assist in generating referrals. The council should consider making a printed or printable version available.