

London Borough of Islington
Children's Services Scrutiny Committee - Tuesday, 17 January 2023

Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Town Hall, Upper Street, N1 2UD on Tuesday, 17 January 2023 at 7.00 pm.

Present: **Councillors:** Chapman (Chair), Burgess, Craig, Jegorovas-Armstrong, Ogunro, Ozdemir and Pandor

Also Present: **Councillors**

Co-opted Member Mary Clement, Roman Catholic Diocese
Zaleera Wallace, Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)
Jon Stansfield, Parent Governor Representative (Primary)

Guests

Councillor Sheila Chapman in the Chair

57 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (ITEM NO. 1)

Apologies were received from Cllr Bossman-Quarshie

58 DECLARATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS (ITEM NO. 2)

None.

59 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (ITEM NO. 3)

None.

60 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (ITEM NO. 4)

The minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2022 was confirmed as an accurate record and the Chair was authorised to sign them

61 CHAIR'S REPORT (ITEM NO. 5)

As part of evidence gathering for the scrutiny report, select members of the committee attended a coffee morning with Islington Foster Carers Association on 11th January 2023. The session was useful in obtaining suggestions and advice that can feed into the recommendations of the review.

Additionally, a series of one-to-one testimonials with families who have electively home educated are scheduled for this week (w/c 16th January) and the following week (w/c 23rd January), which will be held over Microsoft Teams and similarly will feed into the recommendations of the review. A visit to the Platform Islington Youth Hub will also be rescheduled and a suggestion from Cllr Jegorovas-Armstrong at the previous scrutiny meeting of 29th November to incorporate evidence from Islington's Library service will also be progressed.

62 **ITEMS FOR CALL IN (IF ANY) (ITEM NO. 6)**

None.

63 **PUBLIC QUESTIONS (ITEM NO. 7)**

None.

64 **EXTERNAL ATTENDEES (IF ANY) (ITEM NO. 8)**

None.

65 **MAKING CHILDREN VISIBLE SCRUTINY REVIEW - WITNESS EVIDENCE (ITEM NO. B1)**

The Committee received a presentation from Curtis Ashton, Director of Young Islington, on vulnerable adolescents within the borough. Key points highlighted included detail on:

- Commissioned Services in 2021-22; there were a number of specialist services that provide services to vulnerable young people during this time, such as Abianda, St Giles Trust, WIPERS and Chance UK
 - Chance UK focus on an intervention and prevention service, provide mentoring to primary school children who are experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties, who are at risk of educational exclusion, anti-social behaviour and/or criminal behaviour in adolescence and adult early life.
 - Chance UK supported 51 children and families in 2021-22 and delivered 68 1:1 parent-carer sessions to completion. Good outcomes received from their work, with 100% of parents showing increased confidence and skills in parenting.
- Abianda's Star Project provides a specialist one-to-one service for young women aged 11-24 affected by gangs, providing support to develop healthy relationships and prevent violence, sexual violence and exploitation.
 - The project delivered 1:1 support to 25 gang affected young women and 63 young women engaged in group work; group work in two Islington secondary schools and two practice sessions. Outcomes included 71% of participants feeling able to keep themselves safe after the intervention ended and 100% feeling their knowledge of sexual violence and exploitation had improved.
 - Islington were one of the few local authorities to obtain additional funding from the Home Office pertaining to interventions for young women that will ensure that Islington can continue to work with Abianda for a further three years.
- St Giles Trust supports people facing severe disadvantage into sustainable employment, housing and other appropriate support.
 - In 2021-22, 190 people were referred and 184 young people were successfully engaged. 324 successful outcomes were achieved for young people with 90% supported around Education, Training & Employment, 80% achieving a positive outcome in health and wellbeing, 90% supported with

interventions around offending behaviour and 70% supported around family and social life matters.

- Wipers Mentoring Service supports young people aged 11-17, and helps provide a bridge to education, training, and employment.
 - In 2021-22 they delivered mentoring and 1:1 sessions to 39 vulnerable young people, with over 390 hours of mentoring support provided. Support was extended from 3 to 6 months to ensure vulnerable young people's needs are met. 90% of participants received a minimum of 24 hours support, 60% presented an increase in their 'hopes, dreams and aspirations', 70% increase in 'Education & Work', 55% received extended monitoring supported and 100% made significant progress across all areas of the programme.
- MOPAC Disproportionality Crime Fund – Islington as the lead borough of a consortium consisting of Camden, Hackney and Haringey Councils – has been allocated £250,000 to run a Disproportionality Leadership Project. The funding itself has come from a partnership of MOPAC (The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime), London Councils and the Youth Justice Board – with the purpose of tackling systemic issues that contribute to disproportionality in the youth justice system at a local level.
 - In Islington, mixed-heritage children were recorded to have higher custody rates than most other groups of children from 2017-18 to 2020-21, and across all boroughs of the consortium, the rates of school exclusion for black and mixed-heritage children were disproportionately high. Additionally, while the serious of offences committed by children of black heritage in Islington was lower than that committed by children of White or Asian heritage, they were more likely to be remanded in custody.
 - The Disproportionality Leadership Project will be a year in duration and is already taking referrals across the four boroughs. Participants will also be interviewed by researchers from City & Essex Universities about their experience and what can be done to help them. It will be delivered over a minimum of 12 weeks – actual time will vary depending on the needs of the young person although the recommendation is approximately six months – and mentoring support will include ETE (education, training and employment) opportunities via WIPERS' community and corporate partners.
 - The Chair requested that an update on this programme be submitted to the Committee in September 2023.
- Islington will be further rolling out the Violence Reduction Unit Parental Support Champion Network as funding has been received to continue this work for the next few years. Securing good education training and employment outcomes for the participants is a priority. A number of parent champions from ethnic backgrounds were supported to train other parents about how to keep their children safe.

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- The Parent Champion Network Project is commissioned to Minority Matters in Islington. It offers self-development classes and awareness engagement workshops for the Somali community delivered in partnership with Islington Council and Al-Abrar Foundation.
 - The service is working with community wealth building to support parent champions in long term. Keeping these parents in employment raises the outcomes for the family overall. The Executive Member for Children, Young People & Families also noted that the service is collaborating with Minority Matters to ensure that participating parents have the confidence to overcome the barriers that might be preventing them from accessing education and/or employment.
 - The service is also working to engage more fathers in the programme.
- The Youth Counselling, Substance Misuse and Alcohol Service was created from two Council services to provide a holistic health service for young people that will allow for closer partnership work between the two interventions provided (Youth Counselling and Substance Misuse). Both services also offer informal consultation for colleagues, other professions, and parent/carers
 - Total of young people seen by YCSMAS = 161
 - TYS Youth Counselling referrals =138 (of which 99 became young people seen)
 - IYPDAS referrals = 92 (of which 64 became actual number of young people seen)
- The Youth Justice Service (YJS)
 - In July 2022 the number of YJS young people engaged in Employment, Training and/or Education was 72% (target is 65%). The target of 65% was deemed to be a realistic measure of success, given that some of the young people engaged are extremely vulnerable and there is much difficulty in keeping them in education and employment.
- Targeted Youth Support (TYS) work with young people aged 10 to 21 years old (12 – 21 for Youth Counselling), who require support to enable them to make informed choices and decisions and maintain positive pathways. An independent review of the work TYS delivers with schools took place in 2021. The inquiry and reporting framework used the SOAR model
 - TYS' complements that of Islington Child and Mental Health Services (CAMHS), and the service also work closely with the local clinical commissioning group (The NHS North Central London CCG), who are also a contributor of funding.
 - There is a proactive approach to ensure that there aren't large numbers waiting for these interventions, and the service is working with partners to ensure that children who are in need of support are able to access this as soon as possible.

In response to a member's concern about intervention and legacy long-term, and the availability of formal/informal alumni groups to participants of these programmes, the Director of Young Islington assured the committee that there was a step-down process in place for all of the programmes discussed. Long-term evaluation is something that would be discussed with all commissioned groups and they each would inform their supported young people that a universal offer is available more broadly through the Council.

In response to a member's concern that families from Turkish / Kurdish backgrounds may not be aware of the clear pathways to referrals, and the assurances sought that agencies such as the Police are also aware of the clear pathways to referral, the presenting officer informed the committee that each of the services have been briefed on this.

Laura Eden, Director of Safeguarding and Family Support, delivered a presentation to the Committee – which had been circulated prior to the meeting – about Children with a Social Worker.

The committee was informed that there had been lots of research conducted on children in need / children with protection plan, in contrast to before when the focus was greater on looked-after-children and attainment. Research showed that by the time children reached Key Stage Four, there was a real difference in the wellbeing of children who were known to social services and those who weren't, regardless of attainment or attendance.

Some of the key points raised in the presentation included.

- £100,000 in funding had been received from the DfE which funds the Deputy Head and a virtual teacher for the virtual school. Islington were at an advantage because of a previous, successful bid to the DfE to trial this programme (virtual school), which then became national guidance shortly after.
- There are currently 800 Children in Need and 150 on a Child Protection Plan
- There are currently 351 Children Looked After.
- The average attendance for Children Looked After in 2021-22 was 88.1%. 21% were persistently absent from school.
- 61% of care experienced-young people were in Employment, Education or Training (EET), which is among the highest in the country. top quartile for care experienced young people in EET in country. The presenting officer attributed the high jump in success rates to commitment from Councillors, Officers and lifelong corporate parenting.
- Some of the factors that can affect attainment include trauma. Children who achieved better were more likely to be in stable foster-care placements. Girls outachieved boys, but progress was being made on narrowing the gap.
- Islington looked-after children fared better when there was a trauma informed approach to their care. Additionally, schools

and colleges who adopted trauma informed approaches were shown to produce better outcomes.

- Islington looked-after children who attended schools within the borough performed better than those who attended out of borough schools.
- Islington wanted to ensure that care-experienced young people were able to have adult conversations, such as encouragement and assistance with job applications.
- The contributing circumstances behind the NEET (Not In Employment, Education or Training) cohort include mental health, offending issues, and/or lack of engagement.
- Islington's offer was well-received in OFSTED focus visits.

A member of the Committee expressed concerned that, particularly within some ethnic minority communities, misogyny and domestic violence could be masked from the wider community at large, which can greatly impact these children and as such, the member wanted to know if procedures were in place to pick up on this. In response, the Committee was informed that all staff, including early-help and social workers, were trained to spot signs of abuse and that schools had a designated safeguarding lead. It was acknowledged that some families can be both invested in a child's education and masking signs of abuse simultaneously, however it was stated that signs of abuse would still be identifiable by staff and that they were trained to handle this appropriately.

A member raised concern regarding the statistic that only 68% of young people with a social worker received any qualification at all, insisting that the target could be higher and that data on this cohort attempting to enter higher education would be useful to see. The response to the member was that some children in need of a social worker would have experienced traumatic situations that can affect their development and that some children have poor experiences of education due to neglectful situations at home. The response also noted that some children may not always be present at school because there is no one is to take them there, and that some children enter care as teenagers, by which time prior years of poor experiences would have taken its toll. However, the response also noted that a lot of the children in need do attain a qualification but that it takes them longer to experience those forms of education.

The Director of Safeguarding and Family Support stated that Islington aimed to protect young people's experiences of childhood. In part this involved identifying safeguarding issues at an early stage and working to ensure that children's emotional capacity was not taken up by adult issues. The Director of Safeguarding and Family Support also noted that the service was facilitating opportunities to bring young people into employment at Islington Council through channels such as internships, education and work experience to name a few. The intention was to set an example for partners to follow. A recent advertisement from Thames Water advert had helped raise visibility of children

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in care, leading to a spike in such opportunities being offered to care experienced young people more broadly.

The Committee received a third presentation on Children Missing in Education by Sarah Callaghan, Director of Learning and Achievement.

The Director of Learning and Achievement informed the Committee that the National research identified some patterns in terms of those children who are disproportionately represented in not accessing formal education.

The Children's Commissioner's report investigated off-rolling. It identified in the period 2015-19 that there was a 50% increase in children being electively home educated. The Committee were told that it is a parental right to make that choice, however there is some disproportionality in the children being homed educated, particularly SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disability) children. The research also identified a practice where some schools were actively encouraging families to take up home education.

The Director of Learning and Achievement noted that this wasn't to say that there wasn't excellent practice in terms of home education but that in the context of the current scrutiny review into 'Making Children Visible', this one of the ways in which children can fall off the authority's radar. The report also picked up on exclusion, whereby some children had been off-rolled or encouraged to leave mainstream education as they were at risk of being excluded. In Islington, it was known that this was used as a last resort, however there is practice nationally that has identified some groups of children as being overrepresented. In Islington's own data, 39% of exclusions had some form of educational support / health and social care plan attached, and BAME children were overrepresented in exclusions.

The Committee was informed that permanent exclusions was not a particular issue in Islington – 73% were within three secondary schools, but if those were to be removed then Islington would be in the top quartile for performance nationally. What the borough does have an issue with is recurrent patterns of fixed-term exclusions. Schools can choose to have fixed-term suspensions of up to 45 days in that academic year.

The Committee was told that the service is working with the City of London Multi-Academy Trust to establish a better working relationship with them and have arranged to meet with the Trust's new Chief Executive about shared priorities. Additionally, academies have different levels of autonomy and the Council needed to build stronger relationships with them.

Another issue highlighted was "unexplained pupil exits" – where children may have moved schools for reasons that could include better OFSTED ratings – the process of which could also serve to make children less visible to the local authority.

Regarding Elective Home Education (EHE), the Committee were informed that the role of the local authority was only to see that students were accessing

education, but that collaborative working can overcome this. As a last resort and/or if other issues were present, the local authority can use safeguarding legislation to intervene.

The withdrawn Schools Bill would have created in effect a register of "ghost children" – such as children not in school – and would have increased powers of the local authority to identify and have greater visibility of those groups of children.

The Committee was also informed that the service was strengthening monitoring of Islington's home-educated children through a new, dedicated post that would work with parents where appropriate to re-engage them with formal education.

The Committee was informed that the local authority was visited by the Department for Education (DfE) just before Christmas 2022. This was concerning new guidance to be implemented by September 2023 regarding exclusions. The local authority would be required to have half-termly meetings with schools to challenge their levels of attendance.

The Committee was also told that a forum had been established through which Islington have been able to secure agreement from the participating school leaders to share data on exclusions.

In response to a member's question as to whether officers were enquiring with the children themselves to establish solutions regarding their absence from school rather than just corresponding with parents, the Director of Learning and Achievement referred to the Education Plan which was informed by direct discussions with groups of young people who were not in education or had been excluded. Additionally, a highlight that came out of national research was the branding of alternative provision for those at risk of exclusion, which has been adopted – in dialogue, the borough's Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) is never referred to by that name, but by the facility's name instead. This is to not stigmatise its' attendees, particularly given its purpose is to enable students to return to school.

Responding to a member's question regarding creating an inclusive environment in the borough's schools, the Director of Learning and Achievement stated innovative work with several of the borough's schools, was being undertaken to create a supportive environment. This involved engaging with pupils to understand their views on what created an inclusive culture, and also having some primary school children survey their peers about what they feel helped them feel included and what things helped create belonging.

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EXECUTIVE MEMBER QUESTIONS (ITEM NO. B2)

The Committee discussed the questions put to the Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families. Written copies of the responses provided to these questions were circulated to the Committee which were as follows:

Questions from Cllr Sheila Chapman:

1. What can be done to help give social workers a deeper understanding of the day-to-day challenges (practical, emotional, financial) of being a foster carer? Could social workers and prospective foster carers do training together?

All CLA and fostering social workers are provided training in Level One Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) and all foster carers are offered PACE for Parenting training (DDP for all foster carers) to develop understanding of our Practice Model and encourage a deeper understanding between social workers and foster carers.

Joint training used to be in place but is being re-launched, starting with joint training for foster carers, social workers and YPAs in managing professional relationships, positive endings and child protection, with a view to opening others up as appropriate.

Fostering staff are co-located with CLA staff, which has assisted with a greater level of working together across teams in the interests of foster carers and the children they care for.

The fostering team has two 'fostering champions' who attend the group supervision of CLA social workers on a rotational basis in order to bring a foster carers perspective to any cases presented.

The Service Manager raises the fostering perspective at all meetings she attends with colleagues across senior management.

Trauma formulation meetings are encouraged prior to matches being agreed and at other times where a joint approach is needed.

Fostering managers regularly invite themselves to other team meetings to keep the perspective of foster carers active in other professionals' thinking.

2. When a foster carer adopts a child, they lose a carer's allowance which makes sense but they also lose the support and benefits of being a carer (for example quicker access to mental health support for their young person). Does it make sense for this non-financial support to fall away? Does this disincentivise foster carers from adopting?

In relation to adoption vs fostering:

Education: as adopted children, they do still receive priority school places (as with CLA). However, the only other support offered to adoptive families by the Virtual School is at the level of 'advice and guidance'. For example, the Virtual

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School Head can advise the school on how best to support the individual child from exclusion and/or how best to use the pupil premium to which they are entitled. Similarly, adoptive parents can contact the Virtual School Head for advice or to answer specific queries.

Health: whilst there are no specific health offers available to adopted children, Dr Evanson confirms we can support with some things, e.g., waiting lists, on a case-by-case basis but there is no standard offer.

CAMHS: as with other aspects of health noted above, there are no specific health offers available. However, on a case-by-case basis we can consider support with waiting lists. This would not necessarily result in a faster service given how stretched CAMHS services are already.

Adopters are entitled to seek support with applying for and financing therapeutic intervention via the Adoption Support Fund, which Special Guardianship carers are not.

People who express a wish to adopt are more often than not seeking to parent a child without a high level of state intervention, either financially or from social workers. There is however, a means-tested adoption allowance, dependent upon the child and family's level of need.

In theory, this retraction of support does not make sense given the needs of the children remain the same post-adoption order that they were upon placement.

This is why comprehensive support plans are an essential part of the planning process to ensure a child's individual needs are considered in the immediate, short- and longer-term.

There is no evidence that the above disincentivises foster carers from adopting as they still receive better support than if going down the SGO route, where families are not entitled to support from the Virtual School in the same way, for example.

Questions from Cllr Ernestas Jegorovas-Armstrong:

3. May we have an update on the implementation of the school organisation plan?

Further to the approval of the School Organisation Plan in October a 6 week consultation was carried out during November and December 2022 on a proposal to amalgamate Copenhagen and Vittoria schools.

The outcomes of this consultation and the recommended next steps will be considered by the Council's Executive at its meeting on 9th February.

The Local Authority admissions consultation also took place during this period to consult on the reducing the Published Admission Numbers of:

Highbury Quadrant, Pooles Park and Montem Primary Schools, alongside which the Learning in Harmony Trust also consulted on reducing the Published Admission Number of New North Primary Academy.

Supplementary: When did the council first become aware that the school population numbers at Primary will be decreasing?

In 2019, the GLA identified problems of overestimation in the official ONS migration estimates, this is particularly acute in areas of London with high international flows and can lead to inflated numbers of children in the projections. Falling EU migration is a recognised factor driven by the decrease in immigration, particularly for work.

4.What is the council doing to ensure that schools make the most of the National Tutoring Programme?

Schools receive regular reminders and updates from the DfE on National Tutoring Funding. Schools are responsible for the implementation of the funding. Many schools have now opted to access the school led tutoring route, which means that school staff are delivering the programme, rather than relying on external providers.

All schools must now complete a financial return to the DfE to indicate which pupils have received tutoring and the number of hours the pupil received. If schools do not spend the money, it is now returned to the DfE.

Supplementary: What percentage of the NTP subsidy has not been spent?

In 2021-22 academic year, the grant was called School-Led Tutoring. During this period, the local authority distributed a total of £ 1,617,581.25 to schools including academies, free schools and special schools. In the summer term of 2022 all schools were requested to record and report on the total cost incurred and the number of tuition hours delivered.

The National Tutoring Programme commenced in 2022-23 academic year. During this period, it is estimated that the local authority will have distributed a total of £1,249,037.78 to schools including academies, free schools and special schools. In the summer term of 2023, all schools were requested to record and report on the total cost incurred and the number of tuition hours delivered.

As the recording is completed at school level, the LA does not receive the year-end statement information submitted per school.

5.What work has the council done to increase the attendance of children to school?

Reducing levels of persistent absenteeism at school is one of six priorities identified within the Councils' 'Putting Children First' Education Plan 2023-30. We are currently co-ordinating school attendance support resource across the Children's Services partnership (including Health Partners) to form a virtual School Attendance Support Team in line with new guidance issued by the Department for Education, and which will be made a statutory requirement by September 2023.

We are currently delivering training to those identified as part of that team to enable a consistent response. We have categorised all schools based on three levels of need using persistent absence and other contextual data.

This term we will begin Targeting Support meetings with those schools in the highest category (eight primary and four secondary schools). Termly meetings which all schools will have in place by April 2023.

The Department for Education Adviser has commented favourably on our local plans to date and will be carrying out a deep dive later this month to further assist.

6.What is the council doing to support schools to raise awareness of the climate emergency?

School Improvement are working with partners to plan an event with schools in the summer term. This will be an opportunity to showcase what schools are doing to respond to the climate emergency.

This will build on and the previous work that was celebrated through the Great Science Share, which has focused on the climate and the environment.

7.What is the council doing to ensure there is ongoing provision for young people to learn watersport skills?

It is a statutory requirement that all primary schools provide swimming provision. Schools must report on this through their annual PE and Sports Premium report. These reports are published on the school website. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are expected to swim 25 meters of any preferred stroke.

In addition to this, is a significant focus on developing rescue ready skills. Many Islington Primary schools are now conducting intensive 10 day swimming programmes to ensure that these skills are secure.

In addition to the teaching of skills, Islington runs swimming carnivals for Key Stage 2 pupils to further develop water skills and resilience.

Islington's Secondary Schools

In secondary schools, Islington has been at the forefront of offering "Active Row" for secondary schools. This is another opportunity to develop water sports skills.

There is a strong promotion of the wider curriculum across every secondary school in Islington which is broadly themed into adventure and sport; community and culture; the creative arts; public speaking and debate; science and technology. These wider curriculum opportunities expose students to experiences that extend beyond the studied curriculum and enables them to practise and apply skills across a wide spectrum of contexts.

These opportunities are delivered as part of an extensive programme of out of school hours learning activities which includes before school, lunchtime and after school, activities. All schools also organise trips abroad, and trips to outdoor activity centres that provide a range of water sport activities. In many schools, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE) scheme also gives students the opportunity to engage in water sport activities through the Bronze Award (Year 9) and Silver Award (Year 12) pathways.

The wide range of water sport activities enjoyed by Islington students includes:

- Canoeing
- Sea Kayaking
- Dinghy Sailing
- Rowing
- Surfing
- Swimming
- Rafting
- Windsurfing
- SUP – Stand UP Paddle boarding

Disadvantaged students access these activities through the schools' Pupil Premium fund allocation and support from third sector organisations like the Jack Petchey Foundation.

Active Row Islington

London Youth Rowing Website

In September 2022, London Youth Rowing (LYR) expanded its flagship programme, Active Row, launching a new inner city rowing programme called Active Row Islington.

Every secondary school in Islington, two special schools and New River College are now involved with this exciting programme delivered by LYR at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park (QEOP).

Active Row Islington provides over fifty Concept 2 rowing machines to secondary schools in the Borough of Islington, with funding also supporting the allocation of an LYR Active Row coach to oversee the project, set up indoor rowing clubs in each of the schools and run on-water rowing sessions for participating students. Students are given the opportunity to take part in extracurricular indoor rowing clubs, before getting out on the water at QEOP, where they can hone the skills, they have learnt in the indoor rowing club in boats. The programme will focus on working with Year 8 pupils, many chosen by their schools from disadvantaged backgrounds as well as young people at risk of exclusion or NEET later in their school careers. Although primarily an early intervention strategy for some of the borough's most vulnerable students, as the programme develops, opportunities will be given to all age groups and all students.

An LYR Open Club has been set up on the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park to provide the Islington students taking part the opportunity to train and compete in rowing independently, beyond their school. The pupils will also be able to try canoeing, SUP, and other paddle sports through new partnerships with British Canoeing, Sport England, and LYR Active Paddle, all based on the Olympic Park.

Supplementary: What mitigations are in place for the loss of Islington Boat Club and their service to Islington's young residents?

The lease came to an end on the 14th January 2023 and we are arranging to take back formal possession of the main building. We are liaising with the new board of Trustees of the club to put in place a licence to enable access to the basin to support existing activities. Options for a longer-term solution are being explored with the club.

8. May we have an update on the work of Early Help Services?

Early Help is an approach to supporting children/young people and their families at an early stage to prevent problems from occurring, and/or as soon as problem emerges to prevent it from getting worse. This is sometimes also referred to as early intervention and prevention.

Many services adopt an early help approach in their work (schools, health visiting service, play and youth work settings, children's centres). This means families benefit from a strong preventative offer from a range of partners in universal services who can provide the help families need in the first instance and know how to link them in to other services if this is needed.

Bright Start, Bright Futures and Targeted Youth Support provide a range of council run services that are part of the early help offer to children, young people and families 0-19. This includes family support, case holding of young people and outreach into schools, children's centres, play and youth settings and on estates. The purpose of these services is to intervene early to improve

outcomes and reduce escalation of needs. Outcomes they work on include improving school attendance and attainment, improving family finances, making progress towards employment, improved family relationships, improved health and wellbeing, stable and secure housing, reduced offending and anti-social behaviour, improving children's safety.

Last year (21/22) Bright Start and Bright Futures worked with 1860 families, up from 1120 in 20/21. The majority of referrals to the Childrens Services Contact Team (CSCT) come to Bright Start, Bright Futures or Targeted Youth Support (between April 21-August 22 6605 contacts compared to 3141 passed to Children's Social Care). Around 10% of families worked with in Bright Start or Bright Futures are stepped up to Children's Social Care.

Bright Start and Bright Futures currently sit across both Fairer Together and Children's Services within Early Intervention and Prevention. Targeted Youth Support currently sits within Childrens Services under Young Islington. Following consultation in December 2022, Bright Start and Bright Futures will move back into Children's Services with Bright Start going to Learning, Schools and Culture and Bright Futures to Safeguarding and Family Help. There are no changes to Targeted Youth Support.

Islington is one of 75 local authorities who have been selected by central government for funding to advance our early help ambition by implementing a Family Hubs model. Building on our Bright Start model, we will be taking the integration of support around families with children aged 0 – 19 (25 with SEND) to the next level through the family hub model to solve whole family issues, so children and young people are starting well, growing up well and progressing to adulthood well

The Independent Review of Children's Social Care (May 2022) proposed 80 recommendations including the introduction of 'Family Help' which would bring together the work currently undertaken at targeted early help and Children in Need, to form a new single offer of Family Help, delivered in local areas by multi agency teams. Currently a timeline has not been produced for implementation of the recommendations set out in the review.

The Early Intervention and Help Strategy 2015-2025 set the strategic direction for Early Help in Islington. The implementation of the multi-agency co-ordination of early help outlined in the strategy is currently overseen by the Islington Safeguarding Children's Partnership (ISCP) Early Help Sub-Group.

Supplementary: Early Help-Families worked with is rising, Q2 192 families worked with 2021-22 compared with 339 Q2 this year.

Although it is an increase on previous year when up to full staffing our capacity is about 400/450 depending on delivery of targeted parenting programmes.

Where cases are pending allocation, this is more to do with staffing situation-sickness etc

Managers triage all cases on the pending list and keep in touch with families and where appropriate link them into Bright Start or Bright Futures outreach workers

67 **WORK PROGRAMME AND FINAL SCRUTINY INITIATION DOCUMENT
(ITEM NO. B3)**

Noted.

MEETING CLOSED AT 9.13 pm

Chair