



Report of: **Executive Member for Children, Young People and Families**

Meeting of:	Date	Ward(s)
Executive	6 September 2018	All
Delete as appropriate		Non-exempt

## **SUBJECT: Vulnerable Adolescents – Response to the report of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee**

### **1. Synopsis**

1.1 The Executive received a report from the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee which reviewed how effective the council is in providing joined up services and whether there are effective processes and practices that ensure young people are involved in all aspects of their support and intervention. The scrutiny report proposed 14 recommendations to further improve the co-ordination and join up of services for vulnerable adolescents. This report proposes actions to be taken in response to the vulnerable adolescents’ scrutiny.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 To welcome the findings of the Vulnerable Adolescents Scrutiny Review.
- 2.2 To agree the Executive responses to the recommendations of the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee as set out in section 4 of this report.
- 2.3 To agree that officers report back on progress to the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee in one year’s time.

### **3. Background**

3.1 During 2017/18, the Children’s Services Scrutiny Committee conducted a review on the co-ordination and join up of services for vulnerable adolescents. Overall the Committee was impressed with the wide range of support services available for vulnerable adolescents. The Committee considered a number of examples of different services and agencies working together to provide co-ordinated services for the benefit of young people. It concluded that the council and its partners recognise that providing joined up services is the best approach to supporting vulnerable young people. However, further improvements could be made which are related to a greater strategic join-up between services; working differently by adopting new practices, such as trauma informed and contextual safeguarding approaches; closer work with the Police around domestic violence and the

sharing of intelligence; making the most of existing resources; and communicating more effectively with young people and the professionals that support them.

## **4. Response to the Scrutiny Committee recommendations**

**4.1 Recommendation 1. A borough-wide pledge to support vulnerable young people should be developed by Summer 2018. Ownership of this pledge at Chief Executive level will help support accountability cross the council. 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.**

**Recommendation 2. It is suggested that the delivery of the pledge should be incorporated into the terms of reference and work plans of all relevant multi-agency forums. These forums should monitor delivery of the pledge through their work. A member of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee should be invited to observe relevant meetings. In addition, the Youth Council and CAIS should be invited to undertake an annual review of the effectiveness of the Pledge and report their findings back to the Chief Executive.**

The Executive supports this recommendation. It also understands that one of the recommendations from the Fair Futures Commission is for Islington Council and its partners to develop and communicate an 'Islington Guarantee' or 'Promise for Young People' for those living and/or studying in Islington. It should be from birth to adulthood. It should set out the life and work skills, outcomes and support young people can expect or are entitled to at different stages of their lives. The Executive will ask the Children and Families Board to bring this and other pledges together, build the delivery into its constituent partnership groups and ensure that young people review its effectiveness and report their findings to all senior leaders.

**4.2 Recommendation 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. As part of this work, the council should lead on the development of protocols across borders with neighbouring local authorities focusing on risk management and the sharing of good practice.**

The Executive recognises the good work to analyse and map current risks related to vulnerable adolescents. It is aware that the Safeguarding and Family Support Service has agreed to be a control group for Hackney who are leading on contextual safeguarding and a new approach to child protection conferencing for their evaluation. This will enable Islington to learn from an established contextual safeguarding model. The Executive is also aware that the service will be piloting a contextual safeguarding approach to 3 Islington hotspot areas so that we can test the approach and involve all relevant agencies.

**4.3 Recommendation 4: Subject to the results of the trauma-informed approaches pilot, Children's Services should work with the community of schools to encourage schools to engage with these approaches and adopt related screening tools. This may assist in identifying a range of issues, including the diagnosis of mental health issues, at a much earlier age. The five schools engaging in the ARC pilot project should be asked to support in cascading this approach.**

The Executive notes that an information event for schools was held on 8 June where the pilot schools described their experience. The council and CCG will roll out TIPS (Trauma Informed Practice in Schools) to a further 4-5 primary schools and to pilot the model with 1 or 2 secondary schools in addition to continuing support and evaluation with the pilot schools. TIPS will use the learning from the pilot to roll out an Islington ARC (attachment, regulation and competency) informed model of work with schools, including whole school staff training, consultation and support and Islington-wide network meetings. Schools have been invited to apply for this project.

To ensure that schools with vulnerable children are supported, a project team from CAMHS, Schools Improvement Health and Wellbeing Team, Education Psychology Service, The Virtual

School and New River College Outreach team has been established. In addition to supporting TIPS they have agreed a 3-hour trauma awareness training for schools. This training has been piloted with two primary schools with training planned in June for a secondary school.

Additional funding has been agreed to support another year of ARC and we are currently working with schools to identify the next cluster.

**4.4 Recommendation 5: A trauma-informed approach to working with young people should be embedded in multi-agency training through a review of the Safeguarding Children Board training offer.**

The Executive notes that the Islington Safeguarding Children Board (ISCB) considered developing this approach and reviewed its multi-agency training offer to ensure that a trauma-based understanding is incorporated into the training plan going forwards. The ISCB has proposed a multi-agency training audit, one year after training implementation to determine if TIP approaches are being embedded across the partnership. The council will take this work forward at the July ISCB with a view that the approach will be formally adopted by the ISCB as an inter-agency way of working.

**4.5 Recommendation 6: A high number of vulnerable adolescents have experienced or witnessed domestic abuse earlier in their lives. It is crucial that these young people receive support at the earliest possible opportunity. It is recommended that the council and police work together to develop stronger and earlier interventions on domestic abuse. This work should include the development of Operation Encompass in schools and a focus on partnership work through Islington Safeguarding Children Board.**

The Executive is pleased to confirm that the council succeeded in a bid to the Ministry for Communities and Local Government for 'Earned Autonomy' under the Troubled Families Programme. This funding will allow the council and its partners, which include the police, to develop and test a new 'prototype' approach to domestic abuse, through the creation of a service which will work across thresholds and agencies and will focus on recovery and repair as well as prevention of harm. The focus of this project will be on families with very young children with a view to prevention of vulnerability later on.

The Metropolitan Police Service is in the process of drafting a general guidance policy around information sharing under Operation Encompass. This will be disseminated to all Police Basic Command Units (BCU) to adopt.

**4.6 Recommendation 7: 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. The Council should work with Police to ensure that lower level non-criminal concerns about young people are reported to the school via the Safer Schools Officer, so that young people's behaviour can be monitored and they can be referred to appropriate support services as appropriate.**

The Executive notes that this forms part of the information and intelligence sharing initiative which is a priority for the ISCB Missing & Child/Adolescent Exploitation sub-group. The initiative seeks to inform individuals from all partner agencies how information and intelligence can be shared much more effectively and in a far more proactive way. This work has just commenced and will be subject to a review.

**4.7 Recommendation 8: The Committee considers that greater use could be made of Safer Schools officers. The promotion of Safer Schools officers and their role in safeguarding children should be reiterated through Islington's community of schools.**

The Borough Commander and Safer Schools Inspector have both attended headteacher briefings to talk about their role with schools. The Executive notes that further meetings are planned for the autumn term.

All Islington schools' designated safeguarding leads were visited to discuss schools' practice and support needs. These meetings included discussions relating to the role of the Safer School Officers. Feedback from these discussions will be taken forward with the Police.

4.8 **Recommendation 9: The council should ensure its strategic and commissioning priorities for vulnerable adolescents are shared with the voluntary and community sector and that priorities between the council and voluntary and community sector organisations are aligned. This could include the alignment of grant funding to these priorities.**

**Recommendations 10: Children’s Services should continue to work closely with voluntary and community sector organisations and develop these relationships further as appropriate. This may assist in generating referrals, normalise accessing support, and help to ease transitions between services.**

The Executive will ask the Children Employment and Skills department to pull together concise and collated information on all services for vulnerable adolescents including referral mechanisms. This will be shared via the Children and Young People’s Voluntary and Community Sector Forum and Voluntary Action Islington’s network.

The Executive is aware that commissioners worked jointly with VAI on a workshop for third sector organisations to support potential bids to the Young Londoners Fund in June 2018. This helped to raise awareness of youth crime issues and the exploitation of vulnerable young people in Islington, the services available and how to access these. Officers will continue to raise awareness about the ISCB training offer and encourage providers to access these.

4.9 **Recommendation 11: The council should work to improve its communications to young people. The Council should lead on the development of a multi-purpose young people’s app/website to ensure a wider reach for communicating targeted messages and information about health and wellbeing and support services.**

**Recommendation 12: Children’s Services should review the feasibility of allowing young people to contact their social worker through instant messaging.**

The Executive notes that a new website and app to facilitate targeted messages and information about health, wellbeing and other support services is in development. Social workers have been allocated smartphones to enable contact and engagement via WhatsApp with young people.

4.10 **Recommendation 13: The council should review its directory of services and ensure it is proactively promoted 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.**

The Executive will ask the Children Employment and Skills department to review the Family Directory so that there is a focus on the range of support services available to vulnerable adolescents. This will be proactively promoted to professionals in different sectors. Other directories created to support schools and other organisations will be asked to link to information within the Family Directory.

4.11 **Recommendation 14: The council should review if support services for young people are sufficiently flexible and accessible, and should consider the appropriateness and feasibility of providing evening and weekend support services, if such services are not already available.**

The Executive notes that services for young people are reviewed and monitored to best respond to their needs and ensure engagement. Young people will respond to different opportunities at different times of the week and at weekends, for example, leisure based opportunities such as performances, film showings or music are more appropriate for Saturday evenings than counselling.

A review of The Zone youth club is currently taking place to see whether an enhanced set of opportunities to support vulnerable adolescents through the day time, in the evenings and at weekends can be offered. This would extend the existing open for all youth work at The Zone and could include both formal and informal counselling, health and education services.

Saturday evening sessions at Islington’s youth hubs, Lift and Platform were piloted during the Winter. The learning from the pilot identified a need for a seasonally differentiated offer as young people are less likely to be on the streets in the colder months. In response to this, there will be an offer of ‘Summer Weekend’ opportunities within the successful Summersiversity and Launchpad programmes throughout the summer holiday period this year. It is also intended to provide some

detached youth work on Saturdays to engage with young people and signpost them to these sessions. The core TYS detached youth work programme will also run later in the evenings between May and September to respond to need.

## 5. Implications

- 5.1 **Financial implications:** All the recommendations will be implemented within existing budgets.
- 5.2 **Legal Implications:** There are no specific legal implications arising from the recommendations in this report.
- 5.3 **Resident Impact Assessment**  
Resident Impact Assessments will be undertaken as part of the process of developing and implementing policies and actions arising from this report.

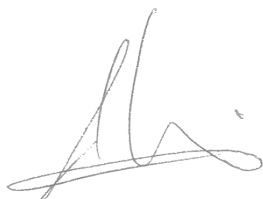
## 6. Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 6.1 This report details the Executive's response to the recommendations from the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

### Appendices: None

Final report clearance:

### Signed by:



24 July 2018

Executive Member for Children, Young People  
and Families

Date:

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