



City of Westminster

Business and Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date: 2nd February 2022

Report of: Councillor Timothy Barnes

Portfolio: Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning

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1. Child and Adolescent Mental Health

The Westminster Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), which is commissioned by Health partners and delivered by Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL), offers assessment, diagnosis, treatment and support for young people who are experiencing problems with their emotions, behaviour or mental health. The service are now reporting an increase in the demand and the complexity of presentations and needs as a result of the pandemic. This increased complexity requires additional clinical capacity and therefore places strains across the local mental health system in Westminster.

To address this, the CAMHS team have recruited agency staff to provide additional sessions and have introduced weekend clinics. In addition, the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and CNWL have commissioned Healios to provide assessments for neurodevelopmental disorders, and anticipate that they will begin to take cases from February.

The Council continues to support a robust range of local early intervention emotional wellbeing and mental health services to strengthen the whole school and community-based offer. These largely provide support below that of the Specialist CAMHS threshold and deliver services in places where children and young people are comfortable accessing support. Local services include NHS England funded Mental Health Support Teams in 43 schools providing one-to-one therapeutic support; psychoeducation groups for pupils, and various sessions for parents; online counselling and information service for children and young people aged 11-25; and a Youth Mental Health Worker service embedded in our five Westminster Youth Hubs. We have continued to train and upskill our partnership workforce so that they are better able and more confident in supporting local children and young people and we have continued to communicate and promote our local offer to young people.

2. Employability, mental health and emotional wellbeing support for 16-25-year-olds

To support employability for young people in the borough, the council are launching an exciting new integrated Mental Health and Wellbeing and Employment offer for 16-25 year olds. The Bridging the Gap (BTG) pilot will run for two years and will be centred at a Young Adults' Hub. This holistic wraparound support, co-located and easily accessible in the same place, will be key to helping young people to enter employment and make a successful transition to adulthood. The service will be launched in a graduated approach, starting in February 2022, and will be fully launched by 1st May 2022.

We have now formally secured internal and external partner commitment to resourcing the hub, offering employment coaching, housing support, sexual health and substance misuse services, and clinical therapeutic input. A suitable site has been identified and we are undertaking viability checks with Corporate Property.

3. Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme

This year, as part of the Department of Education's Holiday Activities and Food Fund we have supported over 2,500 disadvantaged children and young people to access additional enriching activities and healthy meals over the holidays. These activities have been delivered by over 30 local providers and partner organisations to provide a hugely varied and creative offer, including indoor and outdoor sport and recreation, nature and conservation, arts and culture. Targeted programmes for children with special needs and disabilities had good take-up.

The feedback we have received has been overwhelmingly positive. Parents have reported that the provision over the last eighteen months has changed the lives of their children, boosted their confidence and improved their social skills, emotional intelligence, fitness and well-being. Likewise, the overwhelming response from young people was that they had fun.

Funding of £730,000 has now been confirmed for the Holiday Activity and Food Fund for 2022. The Council will continue to work with partners to arrange and deliver a variety of enriching activities for those children most in need.

4. School attendance and Elective Home Education (EHE)

School attendance is currently above the national average. For the second half of the Autumn term, overall attendance in Westminster Secondary schools was 89.7% which is 1.6% above the national average of 88.1%, and Primary school attendance was 92.0% which is 0.6% above national average of 91.4%.

Since the start of the pandemic, the number of families registered as Home Educating has increased substantially, from 111 families in 2019, to 165 families in 2020 and a further increase to 176 families in 2021. There are a variety of reasons for the increased number of families choosing to educate their children at home; including hesitancy in returning to school due to clinical vulnerability of the child or family members; fear of contracting the virus; and families having adapted well to the experience of home education during the school closures, and preferring this to mainstream schooling.

We have a robust Elective Home Education (EHE) policy and practice to ensure that all children within the borough are in a safe and suitable learning environment, whether they are in a school or another setting. Within 8-12 weeks of a registration of Home Educating, our elective home assessors visit the home for an initial assessment to ensure that we are satisfied that the child is in receipt of a suitable education and is in a safe environment. Any resulting action around non-compliance with our Home Education standards (as outlined in our EHE Policy), is also actioned within this timeframe.

5. New 0-5 Integrated Health Visiting and Early Years Service

Children's Services has worked closely with practitioners and residents to develop a graduated offer to support early years, enabling investment in communities and families with the highest level of needs. A new integrated Health Visiting and Early Help service, based on shared management and co-location, is due to launch in April 2022. This team will jointly deliver the 0-5 Healthy Child Programme as well as providing whole-family targeted support. The service seeks to strengthen our offer to those the most in need, improve school readiness and identify needs sooner.

The new delivery model will deliver efficiencies of over £2 million over 5 years, equating to an average saving of £410,000 per year.

6. Primary School Capacity and the proposed amalgamation of Westminster Cathedral and St Vincent de Paul Roman Catholic Primary Schools

Following an informal consultation stage led by both governing bodies, the council has now issued a statutory notice proposing to amalgamate two schools in South Westminster (Westminster Cathedral and St Vincent de Paul RC Primaries). If implemented, this amalgamation will remove 30 school places per year. All stakeholders have the opportunity to make representations throughout a four-week consultation period from the 6th January to 3rd February 2022.

Based on the October 2021 school census, the current surplus of primary school places across Westminster stands at 22%. The latest school rolls are shown at the end of the report.

7. Update on the closure of Sir Simon Milton Westminster University Technical College (UTC) and the future of the site

Due to continued low pupil numbers, the Department for Education (DfE) has taken the decision to close the UTC in August 2022, following the outcome of a listening period which ran from 15th September to 15th October 2021. This provided an opportunity for students, parents, staff and stakeholders to give their views, which were fully considered before a final decision was taken. Our priority now is to continue to support Year 11 and Year 13 students in planning the next stage of their education once they complete their studies at the UTC this summer.

The DfE has confirmed that the UTC building and facilities will remain in educational use. After an in-depth analysis and risk assessment by the Department of Education, Ada, the National College for Digital Skills, will move into the site. Ada will be a fantastic addition to the learning options for young people in Westminster and will build on many of the aspirations for the UTC, including the focus on skills and engineering-thinking, as well as making great use of the excellent physical infrastructure that was invested in. We are confident that this college will benefit many young people in Westminster for years to come.

8. COVID-19 Management in Schools

In light of the new Omicron variant, there has been a significant rise in positive cases across both Primary and Secondary schools, with positive cases peaking in the weeks before the winter holiday (week commencing 13th December, there were 95 cases among pupils and staff across 24 settings in Westminster). Upon return for the spring term, we have seen a decrease in cases compared to the end of last year with 61 cases among staff and pupils across 15 settings in the week commencing 3rd January 2022.

The Government has introduced new guidance for secondary schools for the Spring Term. As of 4th January 2022 it is recommended that secondary school pupils wear face coverings in classrooms. Tests, personal protective equipment (PPE) and funding to support school staff will be provided as before. The Council will continue to work closely with schools to monitor cases on a weekly basis and support them with required adjustments. Outbreak management plans remain in place and schools are receiving bespoke advice in line with their unique circumstances. Schools are maintaining risk assessments and contingency arrangements are in place for remote and online learning if required.

9. The 12-15 Vaccination Programme in Schools

The vaccination programme hosted by schools (including independent schools) is now continuing into the Spring Term to deliver second doses as well as maintaining the offer to children where this was not taken up in the Autumn Term. To date, all schools, both state and independent have been visited by the Immunisation team. There was an extended offer for children to access the vaccine at various vaccination centres over the school holiday period. Health colleagues are offering schools an additional visit, between January – March 2022. There is a continued focus on the 12+ Clinically Extremely Vulnerable cohort (such as children in special schools).

10. Continued Support to Afghan Children and Families

We continue to provide a high level of support to the 356 Afghan children and their 157 respective families who are currently being supported in the Bridging Hotel in Westminster. The majority of under-fives have had a full health assessment and all children of school age are being seen by school nurses for assessment. All school aged children have been enrolled in school, and schools are reporting very good attendance in the main. Schools are meeting regularly with the Head of Service and the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to discuss emerging needs and support. We continue to provide a range of extra- curricular enrichment activities, including English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and family-based activities.

There has been a well-coordinated, multi-disciplinary response to supporting the Afghan Evacuees and there are effective measures in place to ensure safeguarding concerns are being addressed in a timely manner. All families have been assessed by our Early Help partners, any safeguarding concerns have been addressed through the regular referral channels, including referrals to Early Help, Family Lives, assessment team, CAMHS), Short Breaks (for children and families with disabilities) and Adult Services.

11. Cabinet Member Key Decisions

Since the last Business and Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee, I have formally approved the following key decisions:

- Pre-Birth to 5 Pathway;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Passenger Transport (Taxis), Travel Care Services Framework for Vulnerable Children, Young People and Adults; and
- Outcome of the informal consultation on a proposal to amalgamate Westminster Cathedral and St Vincent De Paul Roman Catholic Primary Schools and a recommendation to the Council to publish a statutory notice about the proposal.

12. Appendices

Appendix One: School Rolls Autumn Term Census 2021

Appendix One

School Rolls - Autumn Term Census 2021

School Name	Phase	Published admission number	Autumn 2021 roll	Number of spare places	% Space capacity
Barrow Hill Junior School	Primary	240	230	10.0	4.2%
Edward Wilson Primary School	Primary	392	304	88.0	22.4%
Essendine Primary School	Primary	420	335	85.0	20.2%
George Eliot Primary School	Primary	420	233	187.0	44.5%
Hallfield Primary School	Primary	420	343	77.0	18.3%
Robinsfield Infant School	Primary	180	150	30.0	16.7%
Queen's Park Primary School	Primary	294	285	9.0	3.1%
All Souls CofE Primary School	Primary	210	183	27.0	12.9%
Burdett-Coutts and Townshend Foundation CofE Primary School	Primary	234	122	112.0	47.9%
Hampden Gurney CofE Primary School	Primary	210	197	13.0	6.2%
Our Lady of Dolours Catholic Primary	Primary	315	150	165.0	52.4%
St Augustines Federated Schools: CofE Primary School	Primary	210	198	12.0	5.7%
St Barnabas' CofE Primary School	Primary	161	115	46.0	28.6%
St Clement Danes CofE Primary School	Primary	210	200	10.0	4.8%
St Edward's Catholic Primary School	Primary	330	220	110.0	33.3%
St Gabriel's CofE Primary School	Primary	210	174	36.0	17.1%
St George's Hanover Square CofE Primary School	Primary	210	99	111.0	52.9%
Soho Parish CofE Primary School	Primary	164	135	29.0	17.7%
St James & St John Church of England Primary School	Primary	175	175	0.0	0.0%
St Joseph's RC Primary School	Primary	294	239	55.0	18.7%
St Luke's CofE Primary School	Primary	210	167	43.0	20.5%
St Mary Magdalene CofE Primary School	Primary	210	148	62.0	29.5%
St Mary's Bryanston Square CofE School	Primary	210	152	58.0	27.6%
St. Mary of the Angels Catholic Primary School	Primary	294	201	93.0	31.6%
St Matthew's School, Westminster	Primary	210	156	54.0	25.7%
St Peter's CofE School	Primary	210	198	12.0	5.7%
St Peter's Eaton Square CofE Primary School	Primary	340	285	55.0	16.2%
St Saviour's CofE Primary School	Primary	210	181	29.0	13.8%
St Stephen's CofE Primary School	Primary	210	103	107.0	51.0%
St Vincent's Catholic Primary School	Primary	210	202	8.0	3.8%
St Vincent De Paul Catholic Primary School	Primary	210	139	71.0	33.8%
Westminster Cathedral RC Primary School	Primary	210	144	66.0	31.4%
Christ Church Bentinck CofE Primary School	Primary	390	200	190.0	48.7%
Ark Atwood Primary Academy	Primary	420	403	17.0	4.0%
Wilberforce Primary	Primary	210	102	108.0	51.4%
Pimlico Primary	Primary	390	357	33.0	8.5%
Churchill Gardens Primary Academy	Primary	210	179	31.0	14.8%
Gateway Academy	Primary	630	561	69.0	11.0%
Millbank Academy	Primary	420	231	189.0	45.0%
St Augustine's Federated Schools: CE High School	Secondary	840	906	0.0	0.0%
Marylebone Boys' School	Secondary	630	608	22.0	3.5%
Sir Simon Milton Westminster University Technical College	Secondary	200	27	173.0	86.5%
Harris Academy St John's Wood	Secondary	1050	1035	15.0	1.4%

The Grey Coat Hospital	Secondary	755	829	0.0	0.0%
The St Marylebone CofE School	Secondary	822	839	0.0	0.0%
Westminster City School	Secondary	740	583	157.0	21.2%
St George's Catholic School	Secondary	870	868	2.0	0.2%
Paddington Academy	Secondary	900	910	0.0	0.0%
Westminster Academy	Secondary	900	997	0.0	0.0%
Pimlico Academy	Secondary	1050	1013	37.0	3.5%
<i>Ark King Solomon Academy (Primary Rec to Y6)</i>	<i>All-through</i>	<i>630</i>	<i>617</i>	<i>13.0</i>	<i>2.1%</i>
<i>Ark King Solomon Academy (Secondary Y7 to Y11)</i>	<i>All-through</i>	<i>360</i>	<i>443</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>0.0%</i>
Ark King Solomon Academy (All-through Rec to Y11)	All-through	990	1060	0.0	0.0%
Total		20450	17871	2579.0	12.6%
Primary (Rec to Y6)		11333	8813	2520	22.2%
Secondary (Y7 to Y11)		9117	9058	59.0	0.6%

* Primary spare capacity is 22.2%

** Secondary spare capacity is 0.6%