

Children and Adults, Public Health and Voluntary Sector Policy and Scrutiny Committee

Date:	July 2023
Portfolio:	Young People, Culture and Learning
The Report of:	Councillor Tim Roca, Cabinet Member for Young People, Culture and Learning
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1. Key decisions made in the preceding period since my last Policy & Scrutiny report dated June 2023

- To publish a statutory notice proposing to amalgamate St Stephen's and St Mary Magdalene's Church of England (CE) Primary Schools.

2. The following report includes my priorities and delivery progress to date of the administration

3. Children's Services

3.1 Update on Pressure on Children Social Care Services

As a result of increased complexity and need within our communities, there is heightened pressure on our frontline Children's services. This sustained pressure is an enduring challenge that we continue to monitor closely. The numbers of children who are on Child Protection plans continues to be higher than it was pre-pandemic (56 Child Protection plans in March 2020 compared to 70 at the end of May 2023).

Frontline practitioners are reporting that the children and families they are working with are struggling because of increased emotional wellbeing and mental health difficulties exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis and this is impacting upon family functioning and stress levels.

Whilst historically we have been effective in recruiting, retaining and upskilling our workforce, the sector is experiencing a national shortage of social workers. This can be largely attributed to social workers leaving the profession due to the stress of the job and post-covid lifestyle changes, such as leaving the capital. Locally we are competing with other inner London authorities as well as outer London boroughs. Team managers are now reporting recruitment challenges, in particular the recruitment of experienced social workers. This means we are taking on more newly qualified practitioners, who are unable to hold complex caseloads and this places further pressure on the service as a whole. Social work teams are managing higher levels of risk, with more management oversight required to ensure appropriate safeguarding.

Our strong systemic training and leadership offer continues to make us an attractive employer and we are fortunate to have a low reliance on temporary agency staff in comparison to other organisations. We continue to prioritise the development of our workforce and invest in their emotional well-being to ensure we can provide the best of services.

3.2 Attendance and Behavioural Issues in School

There has been a drop in school attendance from pre-covid levels in Westminster Primary and Secondary schools. There has been a fall in attendance for all Westminster primary schools; which is a position mirrored across inner London, which has seen a drop by approximately 2%, and the national figure has fallen by almost 3% compared to the previous year. The latest published data shows Westminster secondary schools' attendance (for Autumn and Spring terms combined) in 2021/22 was 92.8%, which was above National (91.4%) but below Inner London (93.2%).

Primary schools, are also reporting increasingly challenging behaviours post-pandemic. This is supported by the latest published suspensions data, which shows that Westminster primary schools had 78 suspensions in the academic year 2021/22 (autumn and spring terms only); this is a significant increase on the previous year (23 in 2020/21) although this was during Covid. The 2021/22 figure is above inner London but just below national averages.

We work closely with schools to reduce exclusions and suspensions and have a robust trauma-informed offer to improve behaviour in schools. Our Early Help's School Inclusion programme works intensively with pupils at risk of exclusion in primary and secondary schools and works to address the underlying reasons for challenging behaviours. The aim of the interventions is to bring about positive, sustainable, systemic change- both at home and in school to support inclusion and engagement in learning. The team also train staff in whole-school trauma- informed approaches to addressing challenging behaviours. So far, several schools have undertaken this whole school training and have embedded a systemic, trauma informed approach to behaviour management.

3.3 Serious Youth Violence and Knife Crime

Knife crime has not returned to pre-Covid levels but continues to be a real concern. Gang tensions continue, particularly in the north of the borough. Tragically, on 19th June, a 17-year-old boy was fatally stabbed in St Mary's Churchyard, churchyard walk – close to Westminster College. This came just days after a 16-year-old boy was stabbed in Queens Park.

The recent stabbing has created significant distress with local families, across schools and the community and with our staff. The IGXU continues to provide support and use specialist knowledge and experience to break down the influence of the gangs and to divert children away from this activity. A range of interventions across the VCS, police and the LA continue to be expanded and strengthened.

The new substance misuse strategy was launched at Chelsea Football Club (Stamford Bridge) on 29th June, where Paul Canoville shared his experiences of racism, substance misuse and his path to recovery – through a creative black and blue program developed for primary school children. Four primary schools across the Bi-borough took part in the shaping of this program and joined Paul for the launch. It is anticipated that this program will now be rolled out to all primary schools and part of the prevention program addressing substance misuse and its links to serious youth violence.

3.4 Anticipation of OFSTED Inspections

An inspection of our Youth Offending Service is overdue, and we continue to expect notification from HMIP every Friday. Children's Services is also on alert to anticipate a full Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services ('ILACS') within the next 12 months. We are continually auditing the quality of services, including getting feedback from those using them to ensure there is continual improvement across all areas for judgement; children in need, child protection, looked after children and care leavers.

3.5 Half Term Holiday Activity and Food Programme Update

This May half term, 1250 children benefitted from Westminster's additional Holiday Activity and Food offer, enjoying over 4,100 meals. A diverse array of activities was on offer, ranging from sports (Football, Basketball, Table Tennis etc) and multi-sports camps, to music, arts and crafts, cooking, adventure play and gardening. A survey was carried out, with 114 responses from Parents/Carers and their children. The survey results were very positive, with 100% of respondents saying that they would return to the provision, and 95% of the children and young people who responded said that they learnt something new and made new friends.

The May Half Term Holiday provision offer was generously joint-funded by Grosvenor Estates. The Council is continuing to work in partnership with The Grosvenor to explore future support on joint priorities.

Preparation is currently underway for the summer HAF programme, with providers mobilising to offer places to children who are eligible for the Department for Education's funded offer (reception age through to age 16 and eligible for Free School Meals), as well as to offer places to children and young people from low-income families. It is set to be an exciting summer for children and young people in Westminster, with a huge range of different activities on offer for all ages.

3.6 Update on the Amalgamation of St Stephen's and St Mary Magdalene's Church of England (CoE) Primary Schools

The proposed amalgamation of St Stephen's and St Mary Magdalene's CoE Primary Schools has been formally approved and is now at the implementation stage. This follows a four-week consultation led by both governing bodies, and then a six-week representation period led by the Council following the publication of a Statutory Notice to amalgamate the schools on the St Mary Magdalene's school site.

The amalgamation of the two schools will see the discontinuation of St Stephen's Primary School with effect from 31st August 2023. Pupils at both schools have a guaranteed place at the new amalgamated school, to be named St Mary Magdalene and St Stephen's CoE Primary School. The trustees of St Stephen's Church are the landlords of the St Stephen's school site and will look at educational use options in the longer term. In the short-term the amalgamated school will continue to use the building for some educational activities, including after-school provision.

The decision to amalgamate the two schools is in response to falling rolls and will help reduce the increasing surplus capacity in Westminster primary schools and associated budget challenges and maintain high standards of education for our children.

3.7 Update on the 'We Got U, U Got This' Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Campaign (as requested by the Committee)

'We Got U, U got This' is an emotional wellbeing and mental health promotional campaign created by and for local young residents in Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea. The campaign went live in May, and aims to promote local services, particularly our early intervention offers and to empower our young residents to access support as appropriate.

This campaign aims to increase young people's (aged 14-24) awareness of the mental health services available to them via the Council's Family Information Service (FIS) or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) by 5% - roughly 1,000 young people in each borough. We have already reached 2,000 visitors to the website (our target for the entire campaign), and visitors to the page

on average have spent around three times the average time spent on a web page, and six times the average time spend on our council's web pages. This indicates higher engagement with the information about our mental health services and that the campaign has succeeded in reaching more people.

The We Got U Campaign was designed as both an online and offline campaign, featuring in-person engagement sessions with local mental health providers such as MIND and Kooth. This aims to ensure that we are reaching young people in person, as well as via social media channels and through the signposting videos produced by our local film student, Tabby. We have also aimed to ensure all young people are included, despite not having a personal device, by using the messaging that young people can search 'Wegotu.info'. This domain is easy to remember and is a simple call to action, to encourage young people to remember the address and to search on a shared device when possible. This messaging was also particularly important for our schools' posters, which do not include any QR codes given that students are not meant to have digital devices in schools. The inclusion of all young people was considered throughout this campaign, however the focus on digital promotion was following feedback during our consultations with young people and in response to studies that social media is the most efficient way of reaching young people e.g. A 2023 survey ([Social media triggers children to dislike their own bodies, says study | Children | The Guardian](#)) found that 97% of children as young as 12 are now on social media.

4. Learning

4.1 WAES

4.11 End-of-Year Celebrations

Our end-of-year events have been taking place over the last few weeks. The Graduation Ceremony for our Diversity and Inclusion learners took place on 22 June, with the Lord Mayor honouring us with her presence. Our Creative Showcase was held on 28 June; it was a great evening with high attendance at our Lisson Grove Centre, opening our doors to showcase our learners' work in Art, Ceramics, Floristry, Fashion, and Hair & Makeup. A great evening was had by all with a full room for the fashion catwalk inspired by the diverse learner lived experience. This culminated in our Learner Awards, held on 5 July in the Lord Mayor's Parlour at City Hall, with over 120 learners nominated for awards. We welcomed many award winners and their families across the three ceremonies to celebrate well-deserved learner success. The citation of learner achievements highlighted the challenges, commitment and resilience of adult learners, juggling a range of complex issues, whilst studying to support their progression to work or further learning.

4.12 Award Winners

We are delighted that two of our learners won 1st and 2nd place at the Institute of Accounting and Bookkeeping National Awards in the Student of the Year category. This award goes to learners who have a high achievement in their qualification, have made an excellent degree of progress from the time of starting the course and have overcome adverse challenges overcome along the way. Additionally, the learner needs to have had a positive impact on their employing organisation and the student group. Both of our winning learners achieved a high score, juggling family and caring responsibilities, whilst working and studying. They have both been a great support to their peers, and one of them is now looking to undertake a teaching qualification, so that she can teach accounts. Given the shortage of accounting teachers, we are pleased to be supporting her to take this next step.

4.13 WAES Digital Academy

The WAES Digital Academy, which is part of the Mayor's Academies Programme, is growing from strength to strength, and the course offer has been expanded to include Web Application Development, Full Stack Digital, Software and Cybersecurity Programmes. Attached to the hub is a Digital Careers Coach who has been supporting learners to complete their programmes into work. To date, over 45 learners have progressed into good work in the Digital and Tech industries.

5. Leisure

Cabinet responsibilities for Leisure were reassigned on 29 June when Cllr Sanquest was appointed Cabinet Member for Resident Participation, Consultation Reform and Leisure. She has taken over responsibility for:

- Sports and leisure services including leisure centres, active communities' communities initiatives and Sayers Croft Field Centre

5.1 Leisure Centre pre-paid membership numbers

April 2023 reported the highest number of pre-paid members across the contract at 20,800. This is the highest recorded since March 2020.

Six centres reported increased membership between March and April 23. Following a decrease in March 23, Porchester reported consistent number of pre-paid members.

Little Venice pre-paid members continues to decrease with April reporting just 922 pre-paid members. This is the lowest number of pre-paid members recorded. However, it is unclear at this stage why this is as there have been no major changes to the service. The site team are increasing marketing efforts to support the growth.

A positive overall % change for pre-paid memberships was reported in April 23 at 101%/+1% membership compared to the same period in 2019/20.

Four centres averaged positive percentage change in pre-paid members for April 23: Paddington Recreation Ground (+42%), Porchester (+11%), Queen Mother (+4%) and Moberly (+9%) compared to 2019/20.

Whilst Little Venice reported the lowest number of pre-paid members for April 23 (922), % change margins are smaller due to low numbers of pre-paid members pre-pandemic averaging (1,285 through the 2019/20 financial year)

Marshall Street remains the centre with the lowest recovery across the financial year in pre-paid members compared to 2019/20 at an average of -51%. Marshall street pre-paid members are over 1,000 lower for April 23 (2,029) compared to April 19 (3,273)

Total Usage

- There is a 22% decrease in total usage % change for April 2023 compared April 2019.
- When comparing April % change for 2022 and 2023 against pre-covid levels (April 2023), April 2023 averages a 27% decrease whilst April 2022 reported further decrease at 33%. This shows continued recovery improving from a 29% decrease for April 2023 and 2019.

Centre breakdown

- Paddington Recreation Ground reported an increase of 42% total usage for April compared to the same period in 2019.
- Little Venice reported a slightly increased total usage at 24% when compared to the average 22% recovery through the last financial year (22/23) compared to 2019/20.

ActiveWestminster Card

- Both the number of live ActiveWestminster cards (12,249) and card usage through April 23 (980) has continued decreasing since January 23

5.2 Seymour Leisure Centre

Seymour Leisure Centre development is currently in for planning permission with a decision expected in Summer 2023. Recommendations from the planning board will be considered on receipt. The centre is planned for closure in the first quarter of 2024 and planning has begun to demobilise the centre and relocate sessions and providers to other sites, with minimal disruption.

5.3 Jubilee Leisure Centre

Jubilee Community Leisure Centre has completed practical completion and is planned for opening in August 2023. Local people and community organisations will get priority access including 14 hours of free bookings provided to the community which Queens Park Community Council will manage.

5.4 Tresham Centre

T&B Contractors Ltd were recently appointed and the decision to appoint T&B has been submitted to CGRB today. The decision has already been approved by CRG and the contractors should start on site next month.

5.5 Queen Mother Sport's Centre

On 30 May the council opened a new accessible changing place, known as a Changing Place Toilet (CPT), at Queen Mothers Sports Centre in Pimlico. This follows the availability of these facilities at Paddington Recreation Ground and Church Street Community Leisure Centre as the Council strives to make buildings across Westminster more accessible to residents as part of its Fairer Westminster strategy. The council's property team successfully bid for government funding for more CPT provisions across the City and then worked with Muscular Dystrophy UK, identifying Westminster leisure centres as ideal for CPTs as well utilised by communities, key to physical health, open for long hours and staff fully aware and understanding of accessibility needs.

6. Culture

6.1 West End LIVE

It was one of the most popular West End LIVE events ever, with an estimated 65,000-70,000 people attending over the course of the weekend. The weekend was packed with 11 hours of performances from 48 top London shows, featuring over 500 performers. Across the weekend, videos of the performances posted to the Official London Theatre YouTube channel accumulated 657,000 views, with a viewing time of 30,000 minutes. Overall, the West End LIVE and Official London Theatre social channels had a reach of over 7.8 million.

- In the week following West End Live, attendances and revenue were up from the same point in 2022 – attendances increasing by 19% while revenue grew by 22%.
- This growth was driven by musicals, adding 20k attendees and £1 million in revenue on previous week.
- Total advances increased by £10 million from previous week and are now £35 million ahead of week 25 2022.

Also, TKTS saw an increase of 36% on tickets sold over the WEL weekend in comparison with the average over the 3 previous weekends.

This year's event coincided with Trooping the Colour which resulted in the 6-minute fly-past being seamlessly integrated into the schedule and appropriately introduced by King George from Hamilton.

6.2 Inside Out Festival

The comms campaign for Inside Out, the council's free and inclusive annual summer festival, is launching w/c 3 July to press with a new webpage of the full programme to be promoted widely via the marketing departments of our cultural and community partners. A rich variety of open-air arts activities will take place throughout the entire month of August to engage both residents and visitors. To encourage participation the council have supported projects by running a dedicated grants programme to ensure fairer and wider access.

The programme showcases live performances, cultural walking tours, outdoor exhibitions, family workshops, sculpture trails, installations and pop-up activities. In 2021, Inside Out brought the vibrant local cultural offer to accessible outdoor places across Westminster and won a national '[Hearts for the Arts](#)' Best Arts Project Award (National Campaign for the Arts/Local Government Association). While there is a spotlight again on the West End, this year we have also extended the festival further across the borough to reach more communities.

£128k of Culture Grants (Inside Out) funding has supported the following:

- National Gallery exhibition and activities in Trafalgar Square
- Latin and Afro-Cuban music performances and food stalls in Mayfair
- Gilbert and Sullivan costumed singing walking tours by English National Opera
- Outdoor cinema and community events in Queen's Park Gardens
- Dance workshops and performances in Somerset House courtyard
- Youth Dance and Carnival Community Festival in Maida Hill and Paddington
- Intergenerational mask making and acting by Dende Collective in Church Street
- Wallace and Gromit outdoor animation family workshops by the Cartoon Museum
- Climate Change talks and events in the Soho Photography Quarter
- Global Majority music and dance performances in St Martin's in the Field courtyard
- Artist-led storytelling events at Westminster Abbey
- John Nash character-led tours exploring Marble Arch
- Culture and history tours by Westminster Guide Lecturers
- Jermyn Street Theatre storytelling installation in St James's Church Piccadilly Gardens
- Women and Power walking tours of Parliament Square and Whitehall
- Art, poetry and photography street festival in Fitzrovia

A new web page for the festival has also been launched: <https://www.westminster.gov.uk/insideout>.

6.3 Arts and Social Prescribing events

Westminster Culture Network are running arts and social prescribing events in Westminster libraries to create new connections between the local cultural offer and social prescribing with the aim of improving health and wellbeing outcomes for Westminster's most vulnerable residents. Facilitated by arts and social prescribing renowned expert, Dan Hopewell, Director of Knowledge & Innovation at Bromley by Bow Centre, the events will also feature talks from One Westminster and Westminster Public Health

Each event will explore the ways cultural organisations can collaborate with both primary care providers and NHS link workers to ensure more people can improve their wellbeing through cultural engagement. They will take place on 11 July at Charing Cross Library and 13 July at Pimlico Library. These discussions will kickstart new hyper-local arts and health networks across our borough, supported by the role of libraries as community hubs that can play an important role in signposting to a range of cultural wellbeing activities.

6.4 Community Gallery Exhibition Programme

Following the current Windrush related sculpture and carnival exhibitions produced with Unison and the carnival arts organisation, Yaa Centre, City Lions are due to install an exhibition in August. This will include work by local schoolchildren on themes chosen by them as part of the Creative Collective project. The exhibitions are touring to four Westminster libraries and a final selection will be shown in the WCH mezzanine before moving on to the Saatchi Gallery later this year.

The Archives Centre are planning an exhibition on gardens and parks in Westminster from late August until mid- November that will weave in discussions on community gardening, biodiversity and sustainability. The subjects explored will be Monks, Monarchs, Nobles, Gardens for the Market, Botanists and Gardens for all. This will be followed by an Islamophobia exhibition in collaboration with the Faith Staff Network from November until January.

6.5 Donmar Warehouse theatre tour to schools

Donmar Warehouse Shakespeare's Henry V tour to secondary schools across Westminster has been successfully underway this July, following preparatory packs issued to teachers. The productions are taking place in school halls this July and will exceed targets (1,500) due to enthusiastic take up of the offer by schools so will engage over 2,100 key stage 3 students. Feedback has been very positive e.g. *"It was magical because it was like we were there"* (student); *"It was life changing for some of our students"* (teacher).

The Lord Mayor is attending a performance at St Marylebone on 10 July. The 8 schools involved include Westminster City, St Marylebone, Pimlico Academy, Greycoat Hospital, St George's, Paddington Academy, Marylebone Boy's School and St Augustine's CE High School. King Solomon Academy had to withdraw due to a teachers strike.

6.6 Artist's Garden

The latest art installation at the Artist's Garden on Temple Roof Terrace – Holly Hendry's Slackwater - is launching on the 6 July.

Cllr Toale has joined the Advisory Board for the space to discuss artist proposals, programme direction, community/stakeholder engagement and exchange ideas about how to improve.