

## Scrutiny Action Log

Name of Committee: **Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee**

Municipal Year: **2022-23**

Reference	Action	Assigned to	Scrutiny Lead	Due Date	Response
Insert date	Insert agenda item title and the action requested by the committee	Insert name of director	Insert scrutiny lead	Insert Date	Response provided by the service/ witness
14.07.22					
13.10.22	<p><b>1. Youth Justice: The Youth Justice Service Performance with a specific focus on drugs, grooming of young people and county lines</b></p> <p>The committee requested a response about the new responsibilities around education and attendance.</p>	<p>James Thomas</p> <p>Corporate Director for Children &amp; Culture</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</p> <p>CESSC Chair</p>	20.10.22	Response provided on 19.10.22. See Appendix 1 for response.
	<p><b>2. Youth Justice: To understand the findings from the inspection report and review the plan for improvement</b></p> <p>The committee raised concerns about the rising number of children from Tower Hamlets entering the criminal justice system and wanted to know why.</p>	<p>James Thomas</p> <p>Corporate Director for Children &amp; Culture</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</p>	20.10.22	Response provided on 19.10.22. See Appendix 2 for response.
21.11.2022	<p>Challenge Session: Increasing women and girls access to sports provision</p>	<p>James Thomas</p> <p>Corporate Director for</p>	<p>Cllr Bodrul Choudhury</p>	20.12.22	See Appendix 3 response received on 12 <sup>th</sup> January 2023

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	<p>The committee requested data/breakdown of female participation in sports in Tower Hamlets, with a specific focus on ethnicity.</p> <p>The committee requested a response on whether the 'first come' policy has been reviewed.</p> <p>The committee requested a response on any actions or plans being taken to redesign existing sporting facilities in Tower Hamlets to make them more accommodating to women and girls.</p>	Children & Culture			
08.12.22					
09.02.23					
04.05.23					

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Insert attachments as appendices where applicable

## Appendix 1:

### The new responsibilities and attendance

#### **The role of the Virtual School supporting the YJS and the *educational engagement\** of children on orders.**

\*Please note that educational engagement is the term used by the Department of Justice that means attendance but also has a wider meaning re: enabling attendance for children with no ETE offer. i.e. Taking a child presenting as NEET to ETE.

The Virtual School for Children in Our Care (CIOC) works alongside the YJS to support all children who are on an order, to improve or create engagement with education. Put simply, this is attendance with or sourcing of an educational offer.

There is an element of cross over with the most difficult to reach cases in care also coming under the YJS so the Virtual School jointly funded an education officer with the service.

The Education Officer is a qualified teacher (QTS) who works between the Virtual School and YJS.

The Virtual School also works across Education and the Social Care provision of the authority to get the best outcomes for children in its remit. This is a very powerful synergy, providing comprehensive insight and support for professionals and the children. At inspection this was seen as strength.

The Education Officer is part of a team of education professionals in the Virtual School, receiving constant educational continuous professional development (CPD) essential due to the fast-paced movement of curriculum change in KS4, KS5 and vocational education that our children access. The post holder provides strategic support to all YJS staff across the entire cohort whether in care or not. This support includes navigating school and college offers to make sure all children have an ETE offer. For example at the start of the academic year advocating for young people, often in place of their parents, to make informed decisions about education offers. This advocacy is essential due to the challenging nature of the cohort, which has high levels of SEND, EAL and histories of underachievement, exclusion and disruption to learning.

The Education Officer and Headteacher of the Virtual School are the visible face of the service for our schools and other establishments, reassuring, supporting and challenging teachers and leaders to promote the educational engagement of our children. It is essential that our children and their needs are visible. This representation extends to the Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Service (THESS) which is also under the remit of the Virtual School Headteacher. This linkage provides regular insight

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into the Designated Safeguarding Lead network (DSLs) of all our schools. This allows the service to clearly communicate policy and expectations for education in the YJS across the LA.

Education placement and via this attendance, is further supported by the Education Officer being a sitting member of the Fair Access Panel (FAP) which makes sure that school age children with issues arising are placed in the most suitable provision. This linkage means that 100% of our school age children have a school to attend.

It is essential that the needs of our learners are advocated for with internal and external agencies who can offer support to improve engagement. When needs are met, attendance improves.

The education officer links with the wide variety of education, vocational and careers areas that the LA offers. For example, the SEND department has a Youth Justice Champion who assists advocating for needs assessments and health requirements to be reflected into comprehensive Educational Health Care Plans (EHCPs) sometimes created from scratch because the need has previously been missed.

The THESS also has oversight of Children Missing in Education and any child Electively Home Educated (EHE). In other authorities' children known to the YJS can fall into these categories in particularly EHE. Our joined-up services mean we are alerted to any child in these categories instantly. We do not have any electively educated child out of school on an order nor would it be allowed.

**Attendance work in place** - A key responsibility of the Education Officer is to promote engagement with education. This means good and regular attendance to set ETE hours and for statistical purposes, this is measured as "on the last week of the order." This is that we aim to improve attendance, or in many cases, gain education offers for children so their engagement is better by the time their order is complete, than when they joined the service.

**School age** - In the Virtual School, we monitor attendance in real time for all children in care. To do this for the YJS, we work with the Behaviour Attendance Support Service – BASS – to monitor attendance daily with our schools. This monitoring has 100% coverage for children of school age and has proved very effective in spotting attendance tailing off or difficulties at school. Schooling provides many the supervision hours required by an order. Our work with the BASS means that 100% of our school age children have an educational offer and 70% of those children improved or maintained their attendance while on an order last year. 30% of those children had very good attendance at 85%+. This confirms that being on an order has a positive impact on a child's engagement with education. This makes sure a child is safe and gaining the skills and support to we hope not to reoffend.

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**Post-16** - Monitoring attendance for young people Post-16 is more problematic. This is due to the wide range of institutions involved, varying attendance requirements for College Courses and the co-operation of FE colleges in data collection. To counter these issues, the Virtual School pays for an Attendance and Welfare Officer from the BASS to phone institutions and develop relationships. The officer has now been in place for the last year, progressing attendance monitoring from just at New City College and LEAP in the LA to a wider range of both in and out of borough institutions. Coverage is not 100% and there are children in this cohort NEET. However, 54% of children in a provision monitored had improved or maintained their attendance while on an order last year.

The challenge at Post-16 remains the number of children NEET. Many come to notice out of the academic cycle, making it very difficult to gain a place on a course. Work and apprenticeship options are limited because the majority do not have L2 English and Maths – a requirement for these options.

We have put in place three solutions to this issue

- Halilbury Youth Centre offers access to Street League, which provides sports leadership qualifications and L2 Functional Skills English and Maths. This is often 1:1 support for the most challenging young people.
- Prevista at KitKat Terrace also offer Functional Skills L2 English and Maths. This is in a group setting and can be joined on a rolling basis as children come to notice. This also supports over 18's who need to gain L2 English and Maths.
- Finally, in the past two years, LEAP – our alternative provider – has extended its offer to children Post-16. At present, this is for children already studying at LEAP graduating from KS4. This is a sizable number of our cohort. This is a fantastic support for our children as it provides a continuous education offer with professionals they know and trust. Courses include Functional Skills in English and Maths as well as pathways into work via the West Ham Foundation and NHS. The offer at LEAP has been further improved for children known to YJS by winning funding for a Task Force from the Department of Justice to support children who could be drawn into crime.

**New responsibilities for the Virtual School and how these will support the YJS** - The Education Officer was put in place to give expert support to our children but also because horizon scanning by the Headteacher indicated a direction of travel from the DfE and central government re: Virtual Schools being asked to support a wider remit of children vulnerable.

You will notice the Virtual School Headteacher has the additional title: Executive Headteacher of the Corporate School for Children Vulnerable. The latest of these additional responsibilities is now formally in place: Children With A Social Worker (CSW) – See attachment.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1086931/Promoting\\_the\\_education\\_of\\_children\\_with\\_a\\_social\\_worker\\_-\\_virtual\\_school\\_head\\_role\\_extension\\_2022.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086931/Promoting_the_education_of_children_with_a_social_worker_-_virtual_school_head_role_extension_2022.pdf)

This new responsibility is strategic. It requires the Virtual School to move to monitor and give support to schools and agencies working with CWS, making the needs of these children visible. Underachievement of this group is higher for all metrics than Children in Care. Care in almost all cases sees a rise in attendance, outcomes and progress for

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CIOC. Our first step on meeting this challenge has been to appoint an Assistant Headteacher to be the visible advocate for CSW and champion initiatives to support key groups in the cohort. The YJS cohort is one of these groups – we will be researching what works and what are the common challenges for CSW on cohorts. This work will be supported by a DfE research partner, and we have further reached out to the National College of Education for academic support.

The new responsibility is formative, and the post holder must contribute to research re: what works for Children in Need (CIN), requiring Child protection (CP) or close to care. Every authority will be sharing their findings to agree national policy going forward.

**Appendix 2:**

**More children are in our criminal justice system.**

We are not able to compare the total number of children that we are working with in total to that of our neighbours. However, we can compare performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that all Youth Justice services are marked against.

**First Time Entrants:**

Our First Time Entrants are higher than Waltham Forest and Hackney. However, we have been able to reduce our numbers year on year by a similar extent to our neighbouring boroughs.

The HMIP report highlighted that we were not using our diversionary offer as well as we could have done. We have had a renewed focus on this and we have already been able to see this in our data of the last 6 months.

Tower Hamlets and City of London	Waltham Forest	Newham	Hackney
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25962

25962

**First Time Entrants**

**Apr 21 - Mar 22**

First Time Entrants

72	55	93	49
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Rate per 100,000

<b>236</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>278</b>	<b>192</b>
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**Apr 20 - Mar 21**

First Time Entrants

96	72	116	82
<b>313</b>	<b>279</b>	<b>345</b>	<b>321</b>

Rate per 100,000

**% difference**

**-25%**      **-23%**      **-19%**      **-40%**

**Use of Custody**

In relation to the custody KPI of the number of children that we have in custody, we have the lowest rates of children in custody and are doing significantly better than our neighbours for the last 2 years.

<b>Tower Hamlets and City of London</b>	<b>Waltham Forest</b>	<b>Newham</b>	<b>Hackney</b>
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**Use of Custody**

**Jul 21 - Jun 22**

25674

Custodial disposals

2	4	8	11
<b>0.07</b>	<b>0.16</b>	<b>0.24</b>	<b>0.44</b>

**Rate per 1,000**

**Jul 20 - Jun 21**

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Custodial disposals

4	4	7	8
<b>0.13</b>	<b>0.15</b>	<b>0.21</b>	<b>0.31</b>

**Rate per 1,000**

**% difference**

**-6%**

**0%**

**3%**

**12%**

Appendix 3**1. Data/breakdown of female sports participation in Tower Hamlets, with a specific focus on ethnicity.**

Leisure Centre Female Participation Breakdown can be viewed in the table below and illustrates the current percentage of BAME female users across the borough. Usage figures were configured from Dec 22 Usage.

Centre	Pre-Paid Members		Usage	
	BAME %	Non-BAME %	BAME %	Non-BAME %
<b>John Orwell Sports Centre</b>	25.23	74.77	60.55	39.45
<b>Mile End Park Leisure Centre</b>	55.49	44.51	64.36	35.64
<b>Poplar Baths Leisure Centre</b>	60.78	39.22	60.91	39.09
<b>Tiller Leisure Centre</b>	51.36	48.64	51.73	48.27
<b>Whitechapel Sports Centre</b>	79.23	20.77	74.27	25.73
<b>York Hall Leisure Centre</b>	28.26	71.74	26.42	73.58
<b>Total</b>	<b>51.96</b>	<b>48.04</b>	<b>58.51</b>	<b>41.49</b>

Current BAME female participation has risen in Q3 but with a slight decrease in pre-paid members across the borough. It should be noted that GLL has declared that the statistics are representative of those who have listed their gender as female and does not incorporate data from pre-paid members that

did not disclose their gender or “preferred not to say”. For context it is a national trend that membership and participation reduce as the nights get longer, weather changes and we build to the end of the year.

The recognised way that sports participation, including that for women, is recorded is the Sport England Active Lives Survey. The Council is currently working with Sport England and London Sport to obtain the female participation data for Tower Hamlets, which will be used to set the baseline for our Women & Girls Sport Action Plan

### **2. A written response on the ‘first come’ policy (first refusal for bookings) being a barrier to women and girl’s sporting provisions in Tower Hamlets and how the council plan to address this.**

The first come first served priority booking system is an industry standard employed across the country, whereby an existing booker of a sports facility get priority booking in the next period if an application is submitted within the given time period. This provides continuity for the booker and its participants and consequently the ability to maintain participation. There have been no complaints regarding limited or less access for female sport and there is no indication that this policy has adversely impacted female sports participation in any way. Examples of where female participation is well represented (in female football, hockey and rugby) can be evidenced at both John Orwell and Mile End between 18.00 – 22.00.

### **3. A written response on any prospective plans for the commissioning/redesigning of existing sporting and leisure spaces to ensure the safety of women and girls, once sports and leisure services move in-house. Also, a written response on working on co-production with women and girls to bring sports into the community.**

All sports facilities are and will be designed in accordance with Sport England Technical guidance, which outlines best practice. Safety is a key consideration within the design guidance and the technical design guidance can be viewed on Sport England’s website [here](#).

A Women's & Girl's Sport Action group has been established initially with representation from various Council Departments with the intention to increase membership to include:

- Community / sport representatives and
- Regional and national organisations such as the Muslim Women's Sport Foundation, The Youth Sport Trust, London Sport etc

The Group is currently planning a programme of female sport starting with the tasks informed by the calls to action from the Overview and Scrutiny and the promotion of International Women's Day with a week of activity co-produced with the local community designed by women for women.

In preparation for the service coming in-house, the Council will undertake consultation and co-production with partners, users, staff and the community to inform and potential future investment and programming. It is proposed that the first workshop is held in first quarter 2023 to look at options for the future programming of the estate.

As set out above, the Council will seek to engage in April 2023 on how the Leisure Service will operate from May 2024. This consultation is being developed currently, and is expected to include the following themes, if not exclusively:

- Identify what actively deters women and girls from using leisure centres now, whether this is driven by the way facilities are designed, their condition, the cost of the service, the level of staff training, etc.
- Discover what activities women and girls would most want our leisure centres to offer, when, and in what format (e.g. mother & child swimming sessions on a Saturday morning, women only swimming for an hour every day, etc.)
- Find out what improvements would encourage more use of our leisure centres by women and girls, prioritised by the scale of impact, to identify any 'quick wins'
- Seek advice on what other, non-leisure, facilities and/or activities would encourage women and girls to enter our leisure centres, e.g. places to meet, family friendly spaces, refreshments, etc.
- How women and girls want to be engaged and find out about activity and opportunities.
- Opportunities to gain qualifications, volunteer or enter employment