

**Children, Adults, Health and Wellbeing Policy Development and Scrutiny Panel,
Tuesday, 14th September 2021, 10.00 am**

Lead Member PDS Report

- I am delighted to report that B&NES Council is working with the Home Office and offering refuge in B&NES for Afghan people under the **ALES (Afghan Locally Employed Scheme)** – a resettlement scheme for people and their families who had to flee Afghanistan because they had been working with the security forces.

We have now secured several (5) affordable, sustainable rental properties that we are offering to the Home Office for Afghan families in the first wave of resettlement. These families will be supported by the council's Connecting Families Team. The Home Office is in the process of matching families to the properties we are offering, and we expect the first families to arrive soon.

- **Refurbishment of the tennis courts** in Alice Park, Sydney Gardens and Keynsham Memorial is complete. Members of the public can now book a court on line and buy a family membership for £40 per year which gives unlimited access for 12 months. <http://www.tennisatthepark.org.uk/> Coaching programmes, sessions for schools and free tennis will be offered by our tennis operator Wesport over the coming months. This project represents an investment of over £600K in sustainable, community sports facilities.
- **Mental Health Support for Schools** - At the start of the new academic year schools are being offered a refreshed Whole School Approach to Mental Health and Wellbeing programme. This includes the updated mental health audit and revised suite of support resources and signposting on the Public Health pages of the Hub where schools can also find details regarding the B&NES Wellbeing for Education Recovery programme in B&NES
- **Schools Health and Wellbeing Survey** – Following the contract award to the Schools Health Education Unit to continue providing a well-established online survey tool to all state funded schools in B&NES, questions for the 2021/22 survey are being reviewed with plans to hold consultations with children and young people. Dates for briefing sessions have been set and secondary / primary schools will be recruited to their relevant roll out over the coming two terms.
- **Poverty Proofing Our School** - A project plan has been developed and progress is well underway for this pilot programme to run across the 2021/22 academic year. A draft audit is now in the final stages of consultation and six schools will be recruited to work with Public Health over the coming terms to test run the audit and develop strategies and solutions that can be shared via their learning in summer 2022 with all B&NES Schools. £1,000 per participating school has been agreed via COMF.

- **Family Support and Play Service** – Following a competitive tender process, an award has been made to Southside Family Project with Bath Area Play Project to deliver the Family Support and Play Service which forms part of the B&NES Early Help Targeted Support offer. The contract begins on 1st November 2021.
- **Sexual health training programme to be started in the Autumn.** All courses on the programme are free to anyone working with young people and/or parents and carers in the Bath and North East Somerset area. Places are provided on a first come, first served basis with limited spaces available so early booking is advised. To book a place on any of the courses, please visit the Eventbrite page at: <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/sexual-health-training-programme-202122-tickets-163886197027>
- **Freshers Fairs** at Bath College, Bath Spa Uni, and Bath Uni during September will be supported by the public health team with information, resources and details of local services, including sexual and reproductive health for young people
- **Training events** have been held and the community pharmacy PGDs (patient group directions) has been updated to ensure young women under the age of 25 can continue to access free emergency hormonal contraception through a range of community pharmacies in B&NES
- A process has been established to ensure allocation of the **Covid-19 Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF)** to tackle COVID-19, supporting public health initiatives to break the chain of transmission, protect the most vulnerable, and support the delivery of the Local Outbreak Management Plan.
- Children and young people have been **returning to school in B&NES**. The start of this term will look like normal, bubbles have been removed and Covid measures, such as wearing face masks in school, are currently not required.
- **Secondary schools** have completed the testing of pupils as they have returned to school and so far, identified positive cases remain low. Our education teams will support schools and families where needed and we will continue to monitor school attendance, which we expect to be as high as it usually is. Our Public health teams continue to issue advice to schools and they will react in line with the guidance to any outbreaks that may occur.
- **Our Education teams**, particularly in SEND, are very busy and are experiencing much higher than normal caseloads. We continue to monitor this situation and we have supplied additional resources from Covid funding to assist with the increased requests for service.
- I am pleased to say that during the summer holidays, the council provided each family entitled to **free school meals** with an additional £30 voucher for food. This allocation was higher than most authorities in the South West and demonstrates this council's commitment to combatting food poverty.
- As the term progresses, I have asked officers to keep myself and this panel updated with its partnership work with all schools to **improve educational outcomes** for

disadvantaged children. I am pleased to say that the **Primary Empowerment Project**, developed with and now led by St Johns Foundation, gets underway. I am excited to see how this project can improve progress, attainment and life chances for pupils attending the seven identified primary schools. Officers also continue to work alongside the St Johns Foundation to develop additional ideas to collaborate with schools to improve outcomes.

- Once again, we will not have access to published **examination data**. However, I have asked Officers to work alongside academy leads and our School's Standards Board to gain a level of reassurance that all our children and young people in B&NES continue to achieve. Officers have also followed up the conversation with the RSC office to ask if a representative could attend our November panel to give panel members insight into how the **RSC** oversee MAT's and Trusts.
- Dave Francis, our Associate Advisor for **SACRE**, has also provided an update on SACRE, which I have included in the appendices of this report. There is also a formal request for input to approve the adoption of a new Syllabus.
- At a recent meeting of the B&NES Agreed Syllabus Conference, constituted under Schedule 31 of the Education Act 1996, a unanimous recommendation was made to adopt an updated Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The Agreed Syllabus Conference, which included Cllrs Kumar and Jackson, has requested that B&NES Council **affect the recommendation**.
- There are no changes to the current Syllabus from the one already adopted. A link to the current Syllabus is provided below. I can also provide a PDF copy of the new Syllabus at panel members request.
www.awarenessmysteryvalue.org/syllabus/
- PDS panel is invited to review the Syllabus and comment directly to me as Lead Member of Children's Services. I would like panel members to provide their approval, alongside my own, to adopt the Syllabus formally. I support the SACRE recommendation and thank its members for their time and input to this work.

Appendices - SACRE Update

Every local authority (LA) has to have a Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) by law. The law says that religious education (RE) must be taught in all schools and academies and a SACRE's role is to advise its LA on what needs to be done to improve RE and collective worship for schools in its area. This is because RE is not part of the National Curriculum; it is a local responsibility. Through the SACRE, local communities and teachers have the opportunity to influence and support what pupils learn in RE.

SACRE:

- can require the LA to review its agreed Syllabus for RE (This must happen at least every five years);
- must consider applications from a headteacher that the school be allowed to modify the 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Cristian character' requirement for collective worship (This is known as a 'determination');
- must publish an annual report of its work.

More broadly, SACREs support good RE and collective worship within its schools by:

- giving advice on ways of teaching agreed syllabus RE, including the choice of teaching materials;
- monitoring schools' provision for RE and collective worship as well as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
- advising the LA on the provision of training for teachers in RE;
- considering complaints about the provisions and delivery of RE or collective worship referred to it by the LA.

SACRE is made up of four committees:

Group A: The Christian denominations and other religions and their denominations, reflecting the principal religions of the area.

Group B: The Church of England

Group C: Teacher and headteacher associations

Group D: The Local Authority

Bath & North East Somerset SACRE is well represented in each of these groups and a full list of members can be provided as required.

Current work

SACRE currently reviews school websites as part of its remit for monitoring standards in RE and collective worship in local schools and regularly reminds schools and Multi-academy Trust leaders of the need for clarity about its curriculum arrangements on their website. There have been improvements in this regard in recent months, but many still do not have easily found information on how they meet legal requirements for RE and collective worship.

As well as its regular work in monitoring standards and promoting interfaith respect and understanding, B&NES SACRE has recently conducted its five-yearly review of the locally agreed Syllabus (LAS). We have done this in partnership with three other LA SACREs that all share the Syllabus. They are Bristol, North Somerset and the London Borough of Haringey.

Consultations with schools and SACREs has taken place and work undertaken by the representatives of the four SACREs to address issues raised in those consultations.

The Annual Report on SACRE's work for the school year 2020-21 is in production and will be made available to Panel members and all schools by the end of December 2021. This includes analysis of provision and standards in RE and collective worship in Bath & North East Somerset schools and work undertaken to improve achievement, including through the Diocese of Bath & Wells.

Associate Adviser and Clerk to SACRE Succession Arrangements

Dave Francis Education Ltd, which has provided advisory and clerical support services for the B&NES SACRE for the last six years, has given notice that it does not intend to bid for an extension to the contract when it comes round at the end of the current financial year.

With that in mind, Dave has been working with colleagues in Procurement and Commissioning and Education, Inclusion & Children's Safeguarding with a view to finding a

suitable replacement. Ideally, this would enable a handover of duties to take place in time for a new contractor to take up the duties on 1st April 2022.