

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL MINUTES

7 APRIL 2010

Chairman: * Councillor Janet Mote

Councillors: * Husain Akhtar * Mrs Myra Michael
* Miss Christine Bednell * Raj Ray (2)
† Mrs Margaret Davine

* Denotes Member present
(2) Denotes category of Reserve Members
† Denotes apologies received

101. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Mitzi Green

Councillor Raj Ray

102. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that there were no declarations of interests made.

103. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2010 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

104. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were put, or petitions or deputations received at this meeting.

RESOLVED ITEMS

105. Information Report - Children Looked After Personal Education Plan (PEP) Co-ordinator

The Panel received a report that set out details of the remit for the Personal Education Plan (PEP) Coordinators role. An officer outlined aspects of the role that related to the education and achievement of Children Looked After (CLA). Key considerations included that:

- the PEP Coordinator role was established in April 2009 and was created in accordance with the "Care Matters" agenda. The Care Matters area based grant currently provided funding;
- key responsibilities of the PEP Coordinator included the standardisation of reports, processes and paperwork. It was felt that this would focus on the needs of school age CLA and improve their educational attainment;
- the PEP coordinator had chaired a number of initial PEP meetings. In order to have a detailed overview of how Personal Education Allowances (PEA) were spent on young people. In order to oversee the quality of the work done in relation to PEPs, there was an intention for him to chair more PEP meetings.

In response to questions raised, officers confirmed that:

- an educational psychologist attended meetings with young people that had been placed outside of the borough. Regularly meetings with the educational psychologist and PEP coordinator took place to keep him fully updated;
- a change in foster care arrangements could explain why some children of a statutory school age may not be on the school roll;
- a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) made provisions for additional resources to address that would meet the care and educational needs of a young person.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

106. Information Report - Activity and Performance

An officer presented a report that set out key data relating to Children Looked After (CLA) and Children with Child Protection Plans (CPP). He advised that as of 28 February 2010:

- the number of CLA placed with in-house foster carers had risen to 30% compared to 24% of agency foster carers. The reported figure was higher than neighbouring boroughs;
- there had been an increase in the number of family or kinship fostering placements;
- officers were keen to concentrate their efforts on recruiting foster carers for teenagers as this category of children cared for by Harrow were often placed in residential care;
- due to social influences, some teenagers benefited from being placed outside of the borough;
- the national target for the number of adoptions or special guardianship orders was 8%. Harrow was above this target, with a reported figure of 13%;
- since April 2008, the number of CLA and children with a Child Protection Plan (CPP) had been increasing. Officers would focus on the timeliness of initial assessments conducted by the Duty Assessment Team. In order to manage the capacity of work received, two temporary posts had been created and it was anticipated that the shift in the assessment timescale from 7 to 10 days would contribute to more efficiencies within the service;
- the number of care leavers in suitable accommodation, education, employment or training was reported as being below target. In response, a number of processes to improve results had been implemented by officers. An officer confirmed that an update on these figures would be provided at the next Panel meeting.

A Member thanked the officer for his hard work and contribution to all meetings.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

107. Information Report - Virtual Headteacher Report

The Panel received a report that set out the work of the three "Virtual Headteachers" (VHT) following their appointment in September 2010.

A VHT reported that:

- VHT often maintained a relationship with schools, agencies and officers of Children's Services in order to resolve matters arising within the school environment for CLA children;
- The support offered to vulnerable young people was closely monitored by OFSTED. It was felt that the support provided had a positive impact on the academic achievement of CLA;
- VHTs were in the process of establishing a means of communication with schools and other agencies in order to monitor the achievement of CLA placed outside of the borough;
- VHTs had to be mindful of the personal circumstances of CLA and the factors that may impact on their education. For example, a young person that had been placed with a long term carer would require support from all parties involved with their wellbeing when the young person had expressed a desire to meet their birth parents. This was often during a critical time in their education, such as Years 10 and 11, when academic achievement was particularly important;

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

108. Any Other Urgent Business

Vote of Thanks

As this was the last Panel meeting of the 2009/10 Municipal Year, the Chairman expressed her appreciation to Members of the Panel and officers for their hard work and commitment.

The Panel discussed items that they wish submitted to future meetings.

RESOLVED: That the following reports be presented:

- an update report on the progress of the Foster Carers training programme;
- a report on the Annual Independent Reviewing Officers report;
- an update on the work conducted by Virtual Headteachers, with an emphasis on evaluating the educational progress of children looked after made by the Local Authority and the impact of the Virtual Head Teachers role;

- a review report on the PEP Coordinators role with an emphasis on evaluating the educational progress of children looked after made by the Local Authority and the impact of the PEP process and PEP Coordinator.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 7.29 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JANET MOTE
Chairman

APPENDIX 1

**Officers in
attendance:**

Catherine Doran	Corporate Director, Children's Services
David Harrington	Senior Manager - Performance Management
Andreas Kyriakou	Senior Coordinator, Practice and Performance - Children Looked After
Peter Tolley	Service Manager – Family Placement Service
Paul Williams	Virtual Headteacher