

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES

12 APRIL 2016

Chair: * Councillor Mitzi Green

Councillors: * Christine Bednell * Janet Mote
* Simon Brown * Mrs Christine Robson (3)
* Jo Dooley

* Denotes Member present
(3) Denotes category of Reserve Member

84. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Kairul Kareema Marikar

Councillor Mrs Christine Robson

85. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 13 – Update from Health

Councillor Simon Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest in that his daughter was employed by the CNWL. He would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

Councillor Janet Mote declared a non-pecuniary interest in that her daughter was employed as a nurse at Northwick Park Hospital. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

86. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2016, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

87. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

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

RECOMMENDED ITEMS

88. Corporate Parent Strategy Update

The Panel received a report regarding progress made on the Corporate Parenting Strategy which had been submitted to Council and Cabinet in 2015. The report highlighted the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities and outcomes for Harrow's Children Looked After.

An officer provided an overview of progress on the priority actions for 2014-16 and attention was drawn to the following:

- the Member induction and workshops had been well attended; Further refresher sessions would be arranged. There was Member representation on the Virtual School Improvement Board;
- attendance by young people at the last quarterly Beyond Limits session had been disappointing. Information on the next session due to be held on 28 April 2016 would be circulated to Panel Members;
- progress had been made in regard to health assessments through partnership with the CNWL Children Looked After Team;
- the Key Performance Indicator (KPI) results reflected the dramatic improvement in placements through a range of foster carers providing stability and value for money, the doubling of the adoption scorecard, and consistently good time frames;
- the officer had met with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Families to discuss apprenticeships for Care Leavers;
- there had been positive feedback regarding the CLA Celebration event.

Members expressed appreciation on the positive progress of the Corporate Parent Strategy, in particular the success in the recruitment of an increased number of in-house foster carers, the improvement in placement stability, the improvement in the number of health assessments and reviews, and the positive feedback from the Children Looked After Celebration Event.

The officer undertook to provide an annual update on the Corporate Parent Strategy.

Resolved to RECOMMEND: (to Cabinet)

That the strategy update and progress made be noted.

Reason: All councillors are Corporate Parents and need to be aware of how these responsibilities are being carried out.

RESOLVED ITEMS

89. Feedback from Children Looked After (CLA) Achievement Event

An officer provided feedback on the CLA achievement event which was held on 17 February 2016. Members expressed their appreciation at the work involved in the organisation of the event and were pleased at the positive feedback. The use of The Hive was considered to be a popular venue. It was noted that the arrangements were reviewed annually by a small working group which took into account accessibility, parking, size and acoustics.

The following suggestions were made by the Panel:

- that feedback on future events include quotes from young people in attendance;
- that healthy eating options be available including savoury and food with less sugar;
- that the Social Workers advise which young people would be in attendance to receive their certificates.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

90. Information Report - Activity and Performance

The Panel received a report which set out activity for Children Looked After and Children with Child Protection Plans as at 29 February 2016 as well as the provisional performance position at the end of quarter three of 2015-16.

Attention was drawn to the following:

- There was still significant pressure on the service regarding Child Protection Plans which had resulted in a reduction in the timeliness of initial child protection conferences. However, the performance was still above that of statistical neighbours and nationally. The challenging target set for 2016/17 resulted in a positive approach.
- CNWL needed to be advised of information more quickly to ensure that all CLA received annual health checks in accordance with performance targets.

- Required absence rates for the academic year were slightly above average.
- There had been significant improvement in care leavers and accommodation.

A Member queried the role of the Panel in connection with Child Protection Plans for children. It was confirmed that performance in these areas was monitored by the Local Safeguarding Board. It was noted that only matters relating to Looked After Children should be reported to the Corporate Parenting Panel. It was agreed that the terms of reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel should be reviewed.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

91. Housing for Care Leavers - Update Report

An officer presented a report updating the Panel on the challenges and housing assistance available for care leavers.

It was reported that the Housing stock was under pressure due to homelessness and regeneration. The allocation for CLA had been reviewed and the high priority accorded to CLA had been maintained and the quota for social housing continued.

The Panel was informed that the offer of housing would be mainly studio flats as otherwise the CLA would struggle to meet the shortfall when the Welfare Reform changes were implemented in April 2016. The changes would not affect CLA under 21. Should the quota prove to be insufficient the officers could bring forward proposals to offer accommodation in shared housing. In response to questions, it was noted that the lead in time for shared accommodation would be about three months and that there were regular discussions by a housing sub group. A scheme for CLA who wished to share would be developed if required.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

92. High Costs Placements Monitoring

An officer presented a report on the progress made in monitoring high cost placements. The Panel was informed that the review of the 20 most expensive placements had arisen due to the Council's saving plans and was given an assurance that the care of the children involved would not be compromised.

Attention was drawn to the following:

- one efficiency considered in the review was to ensure that as the level of need reduced the package of care reduced correspondingly;

- with regard to placements with inbuilt education or therapeutic packages the officers would ensure that all available joint funding initiatives with health would be taken up;
- a review of agreed actions would take place in September. A review of the next 20 most expensive placements would then take place.

The Panel expressed the view that officers should ensure that the needs of the children should not be compromised due to costs.

In response to questions from Members it was noted that:

- six children from the same family had been taken into care, and put into independent fostering arrangements. This was unplanned and had had an effect on budgets. Short term emergency placements due to unexpected need for a high level of care were reviewed to ensure an efficient use of resources;
- an example of partnership working was out of borough placements which included protection from violence and to break links with gangs and exploitation. These varied in length of time and were necessary to break links with the local area. Harrow used foster carers from other boroughs as part of the West London Alliance and the commissioning framework.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a further review be undertaken in September 2016, and an update submitted to the Panel in October 2016.

93. Harrow Virtual School - Head Teacher Mid-Year Report

An officer presented a report which set out early predictions in terms of the performance and standards of Children Looked After by the end of each Key Stage and a summary of the key areas monitored by the Virtual School. It was noted that the mid-year report related to data for the spring term 2016.

Particular attention was drawn to the following:

- 14 students were attending university. At 10%, this was higher than the national average for care leavers attending university of 6%. The officer would look at best practice in this area;
- the next report would include performance across ethnicity;
- a request for exemption from SATs had been submitted to the examination Board for a pupil with an Education, Health and Care Plan. Care would be taken to ensure that this would be handled in a sensitive way, ensuring the pupil did not feel excluded from those taking the test;

- a lot of work has been put into KS4 for improvement. All year 11s had been offered an Easter revision programme but only one student had taken up the opportunity;
- the figures for fixed term exclusions had almost halved compared to the same period the previous year. The officer would investigate which practices had resulted in this good improvement;
- it was disappointing that only 49% of Personal Education Plans (PEP) were in place. Factors included schools not completing the educational aspects of the PEPs, issues around monitoring by the Virtual School and a shorter term. Further work needed to be done with schools.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Annual report on the Virtual School be submitted to the June meeting of the Panel.

94. Update from Health

The Panel received a report detailing the health services provided to Children Looked After, existing processes and views about health assessments.

It was noted that all targets had been met in January and February 2016. Monthly breach reports were produced should timescales not be met.

Attention was drawn to the following:

- a GP with special interest (GPwSI) started in March. The Designated Doctor and Medical Advisor for Hillingdon was covering the role for Harrow whilst the GPwSI was trained;
- a Handy Hints leaflet and interpreter tick sheet has been produced, and was currently being trialled;
- an innovative practice whereby three young people who had refused to engage with their health assessments had been asked to complete a written book about their health had been successful as one young person had completed the health assessment booklet;
- the service would be represented at a meeting with Harrow officers in March regarding health passports for care leavers;
- the results of a Client Satisfaction Audit would be submitted to the Panel;
- the officer undertook to provide information on the number of children referred to CAMHS.

In response to a question regarding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), the Panel was informed that it was discussed during health assessments and, referrals were made to GP or for counselling if appropriate. A Member referred to a film on FGM which was being trialled at Rooks Heath School and which could be of use to the Designated Nurse.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

95. Verbal Report from Members on their visit to Gayton Road

The Portfolio Holder for Children and Families and Councillor Christine Robson reported on a visit to the hostel for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers in Gayton Road on 3 March 2016.

The Members reported that they were impressed with the quality of provision with each of the 30 young people having their own room and having access to kitchen/dining facilities. The manager escorted members around the premises and provided an information pack which could be of interest to the Panel. The emphasis was for the young people to feel safe, comfortable, clean and able to have an education. The Members met young people who were confident and settled in this hostel.

In response to a question, it was reported that the residents were aged between 18 and 25 years old, and were from various countries in Africa, Eastern Europe and Afghanistan. A high priority was given to education and a large number attended Harrow College.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

96. Agenda Tracker

RESOLVED: That the agenda tracker be updated in line with Members' comments.

	Agenda
15 June 2016	<p>Update/progress on Leisure and Cultural activities for Looked After Children</p> <p>Six monthly report on Care Leavers Employment, Education and Training (EET) – General Update</p> <p>Six monthly report on School Attendance for Looked After Children</p> <p>Coram Partnership 10 Year Anniversary : draft of event and invitation</p>

25 October 2016	Full Report on Results and Annual Report on Virtual Schools High Costs Placements Monitoring: Review and Update
10 January 2017	
28 March 2017	Corporate Parenting Strategy
To be allocated	Annual report on Housing for LAC

97. Any Other Urgent Business

The officers advised the Panel of the following:

- an event was proposed for September to celebrate the 10 years of the partnership with Coram to which the Panel would be invited. Draft arrangements for the event would be reported to the June meeting of the Panel and suggestions were sought from the Panel;
- the next meeting of Beyond Limits was on 28 April. Leaflets would be produced;
- a copy of the CLA participating newsletter was available.

The Chair referred to the stall outside the entrance to the Council Chamber where young people displayed their work for Members to see in their capacity as Corporate Parents before they went into the Council meeting. This had previously taken place in July but the next meeting was September 2016. It was agreed that this would take place and that some of the young people be encouraged to be in attendance.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.11 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MITZI GREEN
Chair