

# CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

## MINUTES

### 10 JANUARY 2017

**Chair:** † Councillor Mitzi Green

**Councillors:**

* Michael Borio (2)	* Janet Mote (in the Chair)
* Simon Brown	* Mrs Christine Robson
* Kairul Kareema Marikar	* Lynda Seymour (1)

**Non-Voting  
Advisory Member:** † Valerie Griffin

\* Denotes Member present  
(1) and (2) Denote category of Reserve Members  
† Denotes apologies received

#### 123. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Councillor Mitzi Green  
Councillor Christine Bednell

Reserve Member

Councillor Michael Borio  
Councillor Lynda Seymour

#### 124. Chair

In the absence of the Chair and Vice-Chair, Councillor Janet Mote was elected to chair the meeting.

## 125. **Declarations of Interest**

No declarations were made.

## 126. **Minutes**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 October 2016 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

## 127. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations**

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

## 128. **INFORMATION REPORT - Harrow Children Looked After Health Service: Annual Report 2015-16**

Emma Hedley, Designated Nurse for Children Looked After (CLA), introduced this first annual report of the CLA health service. She highlighted the performance against key indicators which had all been met, though targets had been staggered to reflect the fact that this was a new service. 93.7% of reviews had been undertaken in the target timescale and the quality of health assessments had been good. Ms Hedley advised that a health needs audit had flagged immunisation and TB as issues to be addressed; a special referral process had been established so that CLA could be screened for TB as rates of those suffering from this condition were high in Harrow. NHS England had commended the monthly joint monitoring arrangements with the Council and Thanet Council had sought advice and information on Harrow's approach, including adopting similar leaflets and processes. In spite of the achievements of the service, Ms Hedley was aware of areas in which it could improve, such as continuing to work in partnership to improve the timeliness for completing initial health assessments.

On behalf of the CLAs, their carers, the Panel and the Council, the Chair commended the Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust (CNWL) for its achievements since taking over the service. Zoe Sargent, Head of Children's Services and Operations for CNWL and Ms Hedley underlined the importance of partnership working, particularly with relevant staff at the Council, in providing an effective health service for CLA.

The Corporate Director, People Services acknowledged that the recommissioning of the service had brought successes, but he wished to emphasise the need to improve the performance on initial health assessments; he understood that this was not solely due to CNWL, but rather an issue for better partnership working.

In response to Councillor Robson's question about supervision arrangements for the service's staff, Ms Hedley reported that, in addition to monthly supervisions with the line manager, there were also clinical supervisions every 6 to 8 weeks. Ms Sargent added that these supervisions were supplemented by action learning opportunities and an "open door" approach by managers which allowed for reflection and advice on individual cases on a daily basis;

these practices were as effective, if not more so, as the more formal supervisions.

In response to Councillor Seymour's query about the role of CAMHS in supporting the health of CLAs, Ms Sargent intended to meet with their Director to foster closer working between services, though they were both part of CNWL. She recognised the need for greater streamlining and coordination, particularly in respect of those children and young people who were difficult to engage; monitoring and joint assessment arrangements would be supported by a shared data system and the provision of specialist support and advice. Ms Hedley added that quarterly meetings were in place involving CAMHS staff and arrangements had been made for direct access to relevant senior managers to expedite particular cases.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

**129. INFORMATION REPORT - Quarterly Health Report for Children Looked After in Harrow**

Emma Hedley introduced the report, pointing to the high level of compliance with targets while acknowledging the need to address the position on initial health assessments.

In response to Councillor Robson's question about the use of text messages for contacting young people, Ms Hedley confirmed that these were used, though most contact were with foster carers and other methods were usually just as effective. Ms Sargent added that she was reviewing the use of IT more generally and consideration of new options would follow consultation. The Chair suggested that the "health passport" could record the preferences of children and young people on methods of contact.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

**130. INFORMATION REPORT - Corporate Parenting: Activity and Performance Report**

Dipika Patel, Business Intelligence Partner, introduced the report, pointing to the record number of CLAs now being supported.

In connection with the case of an exclusion from school in the last reporting period, it was noted that the relevant social worker should have been invited to attend the meeting of the governors' discipline committee. Peter Tolley advised that the Virtual School Headteacher was usually alerted to such cases, including in respect of out-Borough schools.

The Corporate Director, People Services referred to the information on Page 62 concerning the number of CLAs; while the numbers had increased in recent years, they were still modest by comparison with the national position and statistical neighbours.

In response to the Chair's question about unaccompanied asylum seekers, it was reported that there were 32 under the age of 18 among CLAs in the Council's care and 60 above that age.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

**131. INFORMATION REPORT - Independent Review Officers: Annual Report 2015-16**

Barbara Houston, the Quality Assurance Manager (Vulnerable Children), introduced the report, describing the role of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO), outlining the increasing demand arising from higher numbers of Children Looked After, and reviewing the outcomes achieved for the supported children.

In response to Councillor Brown's question about the IROs' role in reviewing Personal Education Plans (PEP), Ms Houston advised that they sometimes found that information had not been loaded onto the information-sharing databases in a timely fashion and they were therefore not able to progress this work as quickly as they wished. The Divisional Director of Children and Young People Services added that the up-to-date performance figure for PEPs, as distinct from the data in 2015-16 report before the Panel, was much improved; however, further improvement was required and staff would continue to address the issue of prompt electronic registration of PEP information so that IROs could perform their role effectively.

Councillor Robson agreed with the Chair's point that there was great variety in the performance of schools in progressing PEPs, and referred to the intention to streamline systems to facilitate prompt recording of data. The Divisional Director of Children and Young People Services confirmed that it would be important to move from requiring bureaucratic full write-ups and instead prioritise immediate recording of "action points" from the meetings with children. The Corporate Director, People Services encouraged the Panel to monitor this area of performance ; he suggested that an update be provided at the next meeting in March.

The Chair queried the caseloads for IROs and asked how decisions were made about allocating complex cases. Ms Houston reported that each of the IROs carried a caseload of up to 70 children, with cases having been allocated as equally as possible. Each IRO would have some more complex cases, though they were all experienced in the social work issues involved and tended to manage the cases themselves with some supervision and oversight from her. Again, efforts were being made to ensure that processes were as effective as possible with an emphasis on streamlining without losing any of the quality of the assessments and feedback.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

**132. INFORMATION REPORT - Missing Children**

Tanju Mustafa, Team Manager Violence Vulnerability and Exploitation outlined the key aspects of the report, briefing Members on the comparison of Harrow's performance with statistical neighbours, the efforts made to try to engage the children and young people and partnership work to improve intelligence on the destinations of missing children and young people. It was underlined that the appointment of a dedicated Runaways Worker had

significantly assisted in maintaining contact with children and young people, making it easier to protect them and secure their safe return to care.

In response to Members' queries, Mr Mustafa gave further information on partnership initiatives, including a mapping exercise which had followed a meeting of nearly 50 professionals from across partner agencies. This had generated crucial information on groups and addresses in the community which were often related to the destinations of missing children and young people. In one recent case, it had proved possible to apply a closure notice to a premises restricting the persons entitled to enter it.

Councillor Borio asked about the approach to risk assessment of prospective care placements and Mr Mustafa reported that staff were making rigorous enquiries to ensure the placements were secure and appropriate.

In response to the Chair's question about whether children's vulnerability could be reduced by care placements outside the Borough, it was explained that a balance often needed to be struck between, on the one hand, the value of space between the child and local connections which were unhelpful, and on the other, the importance of positive attachments in local schools and an established community.

The Chair asked about the role of schools in assisting this area of work. Mr Mustafa confirmed that there were strong working relationships with most schools and, where these links were not as well developed, efforts were made to improve joint working. This was important as children's vulnerability often increases when they moved schools.

The Chair queried the extent to which young people would go missing repeatedly and the nature of the difficulties in tracking their destinations. Mr Mustafa confirmed that repeat instances were not uncommon; the principle challenges related to cases where young people travelled outside the Borough, sometimes considerable distances. A weekly meeting was held with Heads of Services and the Divisional Director to review this high priority cases..

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### 133. Agenda Tracker

The Panel discussed items which had been suggested for consideration at future meetings, and agreed the following work programme:

Meeting	Item
28 March 2017	Ofsted Inspection Action Plan LGA Sector Challenge: Placement Costs Virtual School Mid-year Report ( <i>to include Personal Education Plans and Education Performance information</i> )
14 June 2017	Adoption and Fostering: Regional Initiative Housing for Children Looked After Corporate Parenting Strategy

31 October 2017	Care Leavers Participation ( <i>including Leisure Activities and Hobbies</i> ) Crime/YOT
9 January 2018	Independent Review Officers: Annual Report Health Needs of Children Looked After Safeguarding ( <i>to include updates regarding Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Young People</i> )

#### 134. Any Other Urgent Business

Start Times for Panel Meetings: It was suggested that the Panel meetings should start earlier than 7.30 pm. It was agreed that all Members of the Panel, including Reserve Members, would be consulted on the option of starting meetings at 7.00 pm.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.12 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JANET MOTE  
In the Chair

#### Officers present:

##### Harrow Council Officers:

- |                 |                                                                                     |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Chris Spencer   | - Corporate Director, People Services                                               |
| Paul Hewitt     | - Divisional Director of Children & Young People Services                           |
| Peter Tolley    | - Head of Service, Corporate Parenting, People Services                             |
| Dipika Patel    | - Business Intelligence Partner                                                     |
| Barbara Houston | - Quality Assurance Manager and Child Protection Conference Chair                   |
| Tanju Mustafa,  | - Violence Vulnerability Exploitation Team Manager & Child Sexual Exploitation Lead |
| Frankie Belloli | - Senior Democratic Services Officer                                                |

##### Health Authority Representatives:

- |             |                                                    |
|-------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Emma Hedley | - Designated Nurse for CLA, CNWL                   |
| Zoe Sargent | - Head of Children's Services and Operations, CNWL |