

Corporate Parenting Panel

Minutes

27 March 2023

Present:

Chair: Councillor Hitesh Karia

Councillors: Simon Brown Chetna Halai
Matthew Goodwin-Freeman

**Non-voting
Advisory
Member:** Valerie Griffin Foster Carer

Absent: Councillor Aneka Shah-Levy

Officers (in attendance):

Joy Bell	Participation Officer
Jacinta Kane	Assistant Director – Corporate Parenting
Maria Luscombe	Head of Harrow Children’s Services, CNWL
Sarah Moriarty	Assistant Headteacher, Harrow Virtual School
Christine Nichols	Named Nurse for Children Looked After in Harrow
Peter Tolley	Director of Children Services
Joanna Tortipidis	Senior Education Officer
Mellina Williamson-Taylor	Head Teacher, Virtual School

Bridget Owen	Interim Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and LAC (Harrow)
Tina Swain	Service Director for CAMHS & Eating Disorders
Brian Bekoe	Housing Advice and Assessment Officer
Mahnoor Awan	Leaving Care Representative

36. Attendance by Reserve Members

RESOLVED: To note that there were no Reserve Members at the meeting.

37. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that during the course of the meeting the following interests were declared:

- Councillor Simon Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest in that his daughter had started working for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CNWL). He remained in the meeting while the items were being discussed.
- Councillor Hitesh Karia declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he worked for an organisation that provided care services. He remained in the meeting while the items were being discussed.

38. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 31 January 2023 be taken as a read and signed correct record.

39. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

40. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received.

41. Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that deputations were received.

Resolved Items

42. Update from the Participation Service and from a care experienced young people about their experiences

The Panel heard a presentation from the participation officer who confirmed that children aged 4-17 had the opportunity to provide independent yearly feedback. The responses included many positive responses regarding the social workers. It was noted that overall young people were satisfied with their placement and could identify a safe, trusted adult who they could discuss their worries. However, they also sensed that their social worker was lacking time and was overburdened. Some young people also felt uncertainty about the role of their Independent Reviewing Officer. The Panel then heard a presentation from the Participation Officer who highlighted a number of service developments:

- A virtual feedback form had been rolled out
- Free National Gym Membership – for all Children Looked After no matter where they are in the country. Partnership was formed with Everyone Active offering gym memberships to young people. It was confirmed that 14 young people have taken up the offer.
- In-person Children in Care Council meetings were in place.
- Planned activities for Children Looked After were in place (e.g. 20 young people going to Thorpe Park next week).
- Care Experienced Art Exhibition at Harrow Arts Centre was planned between 29th May 2023 to 4th June 2023. Panel Members were invited to attend this event.
- Activities and programmes were planned after consultation with Young People and they were encouraged to attend and take part.

The Panel acknowledged the positive feedback from young people about their placements and noted the improvements that had been made in the service and noted engagement of care experienced young people in contract monitoring and procurement as a positive step forward.

The Participation Officer advised that work was underway towards putting together a booklet or information for children first coming into care, including roles of social workers and IROs. The Chair suggested that an electronic copy should also be made available.

The Service Director for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) & Eating Disorders, provided an update in relation to CAMHS's response to the feedback shared by a young person at the January Corporate Parenting Panel meeting. The Service Director for CAMHS & Eating Disorders acknowledged the young person's journey had been difficult and there had been additional investment into mental health and significant improvements. She acknowledged that there was room for improvement and

that a robust urgent care and out of hours service was now in place. The Panel also heard that the 'Threat, Harm, Risk, Investigation, Vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) model was being used to work with children at the earliest opportunity, to be driven by need rather than diagnosis.

The Panel thanked the Participation Officer and young person for their contributions and requested that an invite be extended to the Service Director for CAMHS & Eating Disorders to future meetings of the Panel.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

43. Update and Performance for Corporate Parenting Service

The Panel received a presentation from the Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting which covered a number of areas such as performance scorecard, policy and Ofsted updates, commissioning updates and plans for Quarter 1 2023.

It was highlighted that:

- Drop in performance related to an independent review officer (IRO) on long term leave and delays in appointing an interim IRO. Reviews were covered and completed in no longer than 2 weeks to ensure that service continuity and prevent unnecessary deviations in the review of care planning.
- Majority of children who had 3 or more placements were now in matched, long-term placements, with family members, or in specialist residential homes which were meeting their needs.
- Most children placed 20+ miles from home were in long-term, settled placements which met their assessed needs. A small number of children were placed in short term or temporary placements, based on assessed needs and were living with their parents, in children's homes for safety reasons or in custody due to offences.
- Ofsted Inspectors were on-site this week for Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the multi-agency response to children and their families who needed help. It was highlighted that there was also a new inspection judgement for care leavers with a separate judgement and evaluation criteria on 'the experiences and progress of care leavers', for implementation from January 2023.
- Advocacy and Independent Visitor tendering process was expected to commence in Spring 2023
- Market capacity for 16+ provisions which met the new Ofsted regulations in terms of placement sufficiency was being reviewed.
- Recruitment and development of newly qualified social workers and permanent managers to improve manageable caseloads and worker

stability for children and young people was underway to address ongoing challenges due to a national shortage of social workers.

- An Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) life skills training and assessment for care leavers was being introduced.

The Panel welcomed the updates and discussed that there should be clarity around the duties of the social workers, and that feedback should be taken from the young person to improve the transparency of the service and encouragement of integrated services.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

44. Housing Needs Update

The Panel received a housing needs update from the Council's Housing Advice and Assessment Officer.

It was confirmed that:

- Since 1st April 2020, Harrow Council had housed 39 care leavers into secure tenancies and removed 13 care leavers from the housing register.
- There had been 17 allocations in 2022/2023 into secure tenancies compared to 8 from 2021/2022.

Members thanked the Officer and requested that more details on why people refused accommodation be provided at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the update be noted; and
- (2) detail regarding housing accommodation refusals be provided at the next Panel meeting.

45. Virtual School Performance Update

The Panel received a presentation from the Virtual School Head Teacher, which focused on Personal Education Plans and Looked After Children (CLA) with Special Educational Needs (SEN).

The Panel heard that:

- 26% (25/97) of children of statutory school age (SSA) had an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and 22% (16/73) of young people in Key Stage 5 had an EHCP.
- The national average for CLA with an EHCP was 28%, however not all children with SEN met the criteria for an EHCP. In addition to EHCPs,

approximately 30% of all our CLA require SEN support, which was in line with the national average for CLA.

- CLA with SEN were assessed by a range of professionals, which could include an educational psychologist. Assessments determined what support was required to meet their learning needs.
- Schools, social workers, and carers had accessed training on meeting the mental health needs of CLA. This intervention had supported over 30 school placements and 15 foster placements.
- Over the past 3 years the Virtual School had supported schools and social workers with EHCP referrals. The number of children with EHCPs had now doubled.
- It was highlighted that approximately 50% of children with an EHCP attended a Special School. 75% of students who attended Special Schools were outside of Harrow and one fifth of students were educated in mainstream provisions (80% of these students were educated in Harrow).

The Chair was pleased to hear that CLA presenting mental health needs were supported by the Clinical Psychologist and noted that over 40% of these students had timely interventions. These had made a positive effect on the Young People where they had the chance to raise their voice and it was child-centred.

Members thanked the Virtual School Headteacher for the detailed report.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

46. Update and Performance on Health for Children Looked After

The Panel received a presentation from the Named Nurse for Children Looked After in Harrow, who explained what the role of the Named Nurse included and outlined the key performance indicators for Harrow CLA, exception reporting, and further areas of assistance provided to the Council.

It was highlighted that:

- 100% of requests for Initial Health Assessment (IHA) were received outside timescales. Only 2 of the 8 late requests were seen within timescales.
- Factors contributing to completing Review Health Assessments (RHA) outside of timescale were Out of Borough LAC teams experiencing capacity issues, late requests and appointments declined or did not attend
- 41% of requests for RHA were received outside timescales, with 11 out of the 12 late requests were completed in timescales.

- Several improvements had been made such as meetings with local authority colleagues to improve late requests were in place; liaison with Senior Managers/Team Managers; offer of additional flexible appointments such as Saturday clinics and reminder telephone calls to carers/young people regarding appointment times.

The Named Nurse also informed the Panel of a positive case study where a Young Person received a major improvement following an officer review which resulted in the Young Person putting more effort into making healthy choices for his own as well as the sake of their siblings.

The Panel thanked the Named Nurse for their comprehensive presentation.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.01 pm, closed at 8.00 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Hitesh Karia
Chair