

Corporate Parenting Panel

Minutes

7 June 2023

Present:

Chair: Councillor Hitesh Karia

Councillors: Govind Bharadia Chetna Halai
Simon Brown Aneka Shah-Levy

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

**Officers (in
attendance):** Joy Bell Participation Officer
Jacinta Kane Head of Service – Corporate
Parenting
Kate Head Designated Doctor for
Children Looked After
Maria Luscombe Head of Harrow Children’s
Services, CNWL
Sarah Moriarty Assistant Headteacher
Harrow Virtual School
Dionne Thomas
Peter Tolley Director of Children’s
Services
Mellina Williamson-Taylor Headteacher, Harrow Virtual
School

**Apologies
received:** Councillor Matthew
Goodwin-Freeman

47. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Matthew Goodwin-Freeman

Councillor Govind Bharadia

48. Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Simon Brown as Vice-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel for the 2023/2024 Municipal Year.

49. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that 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.

50. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 March 2023 be taken as a read and signed correct record.

51. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

52. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received.

53. Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that deputations were received.

Resolved Items

54. Update from Participation Service and 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. Majority of the feedback was positive and young people were satisfied with their placement and arrangements. However, it was noted that social workers were lacking returning calls when young people would request telephone call backs. Some young people also felt that their social worker should regularly check in on them. The presentation also highlighted a number of service developments since January 2023:

- Two young people requested a change of social worker, which was actioned within three months
- It was confirmed that 18 young people have taken up the free gym membership offer.
- The team begun hosting Children in Care Council meetings.
- 33 young people attended planned activities to Thorpe Park, Flip Out, Wembley Stadium and Wicked.
- The Team hosted a Care Experienced Art Exhibition showcasing 12 young artists.

The Participation Officer thanked the Chair for attending the Arts exhibition and confirmed that they are hoping for this to be a yearly event.

With reference to the concerns expressed from the young people feedback regarding social workers not returning calls, it was suggested that every phone call be acknowledged, and a realistic timeframe of call back be given. In response, the officer explained that this issue was not negligence, but it was due to workload and assured the Panel that the feedback would be passed on to the social workers.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

55. 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, Children Looked After (CLA) Demographics, Policy and Practice updates and Commissioning updates.

It was highlighted that:

- Drop in performance related to an independent review officer (IRO) on long term leave and delayed in appointing an interim IRO. Reviews were covered and completed in no longer than 2 weeks to ensure that children were being reviewed and that there was no drift in the review of care planning.
- Majority of children who had been in a placement for 2.5 years were now in matched, long-term placements, with family members, or in specialist residential homes which were meeting their needs. A small number of children had complex needs which are being met in children's home provisions, however, they are expected to move into foster homes before their 18th birthdays.
- Children of Asian ethnicity were significantly underrepresented in Harrow CLA population. All other ethnic groups were over-represented particularly children of mixed ethnicity, followed by black, other and

white ethnicities. Majority of children in Harrow's care were 10 years+ and boys were overrepresented in Harrow, these were similar to the statistical neighbours.

- The Ofsted Annual Engagement meeting was held on 9 May 2023, where it was confirmed that the department for Education is providing additional funding to the Local Authorities to support with the costs associated with implementing reforms to supported accommodation for 16&17 year olds.
- Advocacy and Independent Visitor tendering process went live and the moderation panel was expected to commence 2nd week in June 2023.
- Ofsted began registering providers from 28 April 2023, and these registrations are mandatory from 28 October 2023 where it is illegal for providers to carry on supported accommodation that is not registered with Ofsted, and local authorities will be prohibited from placing children with providers that are not registered. There were costs involved, which will need to be discussed and assessed.
- Worked alongside organisational development team and identified 5 apprenticeship places across the council for care leavers, this was also a recommendation from the Independent Review of Children's Social Care (May 2022). This placement included apprenticeship and work experience and would involve discussion with the young people to match jobs with personal preference. Councillor Levy-Shah offered a possible opportunity in the hospitality industry.

The Panel welcomed the updates and discussed that there should be clarity around the duties of the social workers, and that the feedback should be taken from the young person to improve the transparency of the service. The call backs should be acknowledged and actioned by the social workers.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted, subject to the Panel comments above.

56. Virtual School Performance Update

The Panel received a presentation from the Virtual School Head Teacher, which focused on Statistical First Release: Attendance, Attainment and Progress (2021-2022) and Broadening Educational Pathways-The Royal Springboard Programme.

The Panel heard that:

- The statistical release provided a range of outcome measures at national and local authority level for children looked after (CLA) by local authorities in England. The outcome measures covered a range of areas including; special educational needs, educational attainment (Key Stage 1,2 and 4) and progress (Key Stage 2 and 4) as well as

destinations, absence, suspensions and permanent exclusions from school.

- Harrow Virtual School had an attainment 8 score of 25.8 for secondary school, key stage 4. This was above the England score (20.3) and Statistical neighbours' (SN) averages (20).
- Harrow's Progress 8 score had improved over time and had performed better than the England's average and the statistical neighbours' (SN) averages.
- Harrow had a higher proportion of CLA with at least one suspension when compared to the England's average and SN. Suspension numbers had reduced by approximately 5%, however, it was slightly above the national average.
- In 2021-22 Harrow (20.3) had fewer missed sessions than statistical neighbours' averages (22.4) but higher than England's averages (19.1).

The Virtual School Head Teacher also informed the Panel that a Broadening Education Pathways (BEP) programme had been introduced. The programme was a part of a 2-year pilot which was joint-funded by the Independent Schools Team and Children's Social Care Team. It was based on the model developed by Royal Springboard on their successful placement of over 300 vulnerable children in 100 boarding schools.

The timeline would be 12-15 months undertaken in Year 7, 9 or 12. It was stated that a visit from the social worker and foster parents would be required to assess suitability and a discussion of the pupil's history as well as undertaking a risk assessment. The Chair was pleased to hear that 2 CLA were already enrolled into this programme with full bursary with no cost to the local authority. One pupil attended in year 7 and had given positive feedback and the second pupil would join the sixth form in September 2023.

Members thanked the Virtual School Headteacher for the detailed report and noted the positive outcomes.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

57. Update and Performance on Health for Children Looked After

The Panel received a presentation from the Named Nurse for Children Looked After in Harrow, which outlined the key performance indicators for Harrow CLA Initial Health Assessments (IHA) and improvement plans.

It was highlighted that:

- 11 IHAs were received for March and April 2023. Of that 7 were late requests and only 1 had not been completed within timescales.

- The main factor contributing to completing Review Health Assessments (RHA) outside of timescale were Out of Borough LAC teams experiencing capacity issues.
- 31% of requests for RHA were received outside timescales, however only 2 requests were completed outside of timescales.
- Improvements had been made to avoid late IHAs and RHAs requests, which included regular meetings with managers and colleagues as well as reminder telephone calls to carers/young people regarding appointment times.

The Panel heard a positive case study where a Young Person who had experienced trauma and abuse received a major improvement following an officer review. The CLA nurse had liaised with the young person's GP which helped to continue to correctly support the young person. This resulted in the Young Person receiving the correct help and guidance to rehabilitation and treatment.

The Panel thanked the Named Nurse for their comprehensive presentation.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.10 pm, closed at 7.35 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Hitesh Karia
Chair