

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting:	18 th December 2012
Subject:	Update Access to Leisure Facilities for Children Looked After and Young People who are Leaving Local Authority Care
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Mitzi Green, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	N/A
Enclosures:	No

1.0 Summary and Recommendations

- This report seeks to provide an update from the previous report presented on 3rd April 2012 in respect of supporting children looked after and young people leaving care with access to leisure facilities in Harrow.
- Panel members are invited to consider recommendations contained in section 6.0 and give guidance on subsequent Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decision making arrangements.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 A previous report to this Corporate Parenting panel was presented to the panel on 3rd April 2012 regarding Children Looked After, Access to Leisure..

2.2 This report laid out proposals to ensure 'Children looked after (CLA) and young people who are leaving care (care leavers) are supported by Harrow Council, in their capacity as Corporate Parents to support them to lead a healthy lifestyle and enable them to participate in local leisure activities'

2.3 In order to support leisure activities and prioritise the needs of CLA and young people leaving care, direct communication and partnership network has been established with Community Services, leisure facilities. The Chair of the CLA Life Chances Forum (who is also an officer advising the Corporate Parenting Panel) has been able to develop a positive relationship with colleagues in leisure services to support the role of the Council as Corporate Parents. The intention has been to promote and support CLA and young people leaving care to participate and enjoy engagement with local leisure activities in Harrow.

2.4 The terms of reference for the CLA Life Chances Forum focus on improving the life chances and outcomes for CLA. The forum is to scrutinise current processes, maximise the benefit of local partnerships and address specific issues to improve access to leisure facilities and support healthy lifestyles for CLA and careleavers. An integral aspect of this work will be to ascertain the views, wishes and feelings of CLA and care leavers. The forum established a sub group in respect of facilitating CLA access to leisure .

2.5 Representatives of the CLA Access to Leisure sub group and partnership with Leisure Services are:

- CLA Service Manager
- Children's Placement Service Manager
- Virtual Head Teacher
- UASC & Leaving Care Team Manager
- CLA Team Manager
- CLA Nurse practitioner
- Harrow Foster Carer's Association
- "Beyond Limits" Child in Care Council
- GLL Harrow Leisure Manager
- Library Service Manager
- Watford FC

3.0 Issues

3.1 Previous recommendations of the report in April 2012:

- a) To support all CLA and young people leaving care to have access to Council leisure facilities and be supported with community integration and healthy living lifestyles

- b) To provide a view about the financial assistance that should be provided by the Council to enable young people to access leisure facilities
- c) To develop and establish leisure partnership arrangements for all Harrow Council looked after children and young people leaving care placed outside of borough
- d) Recommend that a survey is undertaken to estimate how many young people will want to take up the opportunity to regularly attend the leisure centre
- e) To support the collective endeavours of the CLA Life Chances Forum and task them with the responsibility for developing clear operational systems and processes for monitoring and reviewing how the access to leisure project and partnership with Community Services for CLA and young people leaving care will be addressed by the Council

3.2 The CLA Access to Leisure group had discussed initiatives and options to enable support to CLA and Careleavers.

3.3 Partnership arrangements have been established with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) providers of Harrow Leisure Centre, Harrow Library Service and Watford FC in partnership with Harrow Council and Cedars Youth Centre. The sub group had met every 2 months since April 2012.

3.4 The sub group established a registration session at Harrow Leisure Centre for all CLA and Careleavers who live in or near to the borough in order to ascertain expression of interest to join the leisure centre. 72 CLA and 86 Careleavers were written to individually, their social workers would discuss this initiative as well as their foster carers and independent Reviewing Officers being aware. The registration session took place during half term, over 5 days in the week of 29th October and a social care worker was present to assist Harrow Leisure centre staff. During this registration week, 36 young people expressed an interest to join.

3.5 A letter was then sent to the children and young people who had expressed an interest to join, with the joining arrangements and memberships as from 1st December 2012. Harrow Leisure Centre have provided a 30% membership discount to CLA and Careleavers. The monthly membership of CLA living with foster carers will be provided by their foster carers, using the leisure allowance already available to foster carers. Careleavers and young people living in semi independent provision will be funded by the Care Matters grant.

3.6 All young people will be monitored over the next 3 months, to establish use of their membership. If the membership is not being used, this will be cancelled and offered to another young person. Aside from CLA, it is expected that 40 young people at any one time will be funded by the Care Matters grant. This is being monitored and reviewed by the CLA Access to leisure sub group and the CLA Life Chances Forum.

3.7 In addition to Harrow Leisure Centre, Cedars Youth Centre in partnership with Watford FC will also make available facilities with CLA and Careleavers, where there is a small gym. This cost will be supported by foster carers for CLA or the Care Matters grant for Careleavers.

3.8 The Virtual Head Teacher is also exploring arrangements with children and young people, to ensure they make use of leisure and gym facilities at their school..

3.9 Harrow Library Service is making available sessions for CLA and Careleavers and has an established arrangement with foster carers to make use of libraries. The Virtual Head Teacher will explore homework clubs in libraries, as well as Beyond Limits to make use of the libraries for meetings, promoting the use.

4.0 Social workers are required to evidence leisure engagement and participation with healthy living opportunities in care planning, pathways plans and assessments

4.1 There will be further promotional activities in 2013, to encourage use of green gyms in the parks, involving staff and CLA and Careleavers, as well as a football match at Cedars Youth Centre. visitor Officer. These activities will continue to promote health lifestyles.

4.2 The Children Looked After Nurse provides drop-in clinics to Honey Pot Lane semi independent unit and the Gayton Road semi independent unit, providing advice and support regarding health and development.

4.3 CLA and young people placed outside the borough will be supported with engagement to local facilities, where developing partnership opportunities with their leisure services in their area. This will be addressed with the placement service and considered in their care plan, where negotiation and support with local facilities will be supported by the social worker, independent reviewing officer and virtual head teacher.

5.0 Access to Leisure and healthy living

CLA and young people leaving care will be invited to join the Harrow Leisure centre, where they will have an initial membership for 3 months, to use swimming and gym facilities. The memberships will be reviewed and evaluated in 3 months time, to ensure that memberships are being used where the Care matters grant funds them and to ensure no more than 40 memberships are funded by this grant at any one time.

6.0 Proposed Recommendations

The Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to consider the following recommendations in order to address the Council's corporate parenting responsibilities for children looked after and care leavers as it relates to access to leisure facilities:

- a) The Corporate Parenting panel to note progress made
- b) Virtual head Teacher to further pursue opportunities to use leisure facilities at Schools
- b) To support all CLA and young people leaving care to have access to leisure facilities and be supported with community integration and healthy living lifestyles initiatives with Culture and Leisure services
- c) To continue to support the collective endeavours of the CLA Life Chances Forum and sub group with the responsibility for developing clear operational systems and processes for monitoring and reviewing how the access to leisure project and partnership with Community Services for CLA and young people leaving care is progressing

3.20 Environmental Impact

There is no specific environmental impact from the issues outlined in this report.

3.21 Financial Implications

GLL have agreed to offer a 30% discount to all Harrow CLA and Careleavers living in or around Harrow, to use the leisure facilities.

The standard charges for an 11– 15 year old is £42 for 3 months and 16+ is £63 for 3 months, for use of the gym (age appropriate and supervised) and swimming.

Membership costs for CLA living with foster carers will be funded by the foster carers allowances. Careleavers and young people living in semi independent provision, will be funded by the Care matters grant. This grant will be used for a maximum of 50 young people, costing £1,050 for 3 months or £4,200 per year.

3.22 Risk Management Implications

Related risks have been addressed by ensuring a maximum number of young people able to be members of the Harrow leisure Centre at any one time. There would be significant reputational risk from a poor inspection of social care, where support to children looked after and young people leaving care is not provided.

3.23 Equalities implications

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable child in need. The 2009 statutory guidance "The Roles & Responsibilities of the Lead Member for Children's Services and the Director of Children's Services" highlights the need for Local Authorities to work corporately to improve the well-being of looked after children and young people leaving care, to make their needs a priority and seek the same outcomes that any reasonable caring parent would want for their own children. CLA consistently fare worse than their peers across a range of indicators including health, education, training, employment, homelessness and offending.

3.24 Corporate Priorities

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable by virtue of the experiences that led them into Local Authority care and in respect of the poor outcomes that many CLA and care leavers experience when compared to their peers, The Council's corporate priorities include providing care and protection to those who are most in need and this includes CLA and care leavers.

4.0 Statutory Officer Clearance

Name: Emma Stabler Date: 5 th December 2012	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Name: Helen Ottino Date: 5 th December 2012	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Legal Services

5.0 Contact Details and Background Papers

Corporate Parenting Panel report CLA Access to Leisure
dated 3rd April 2012

Contact:

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**Call-In Waived by the
Chairman of Overview
and Scrutiny
Committee**

NOT APPLICABLE

*(for completion by Democratic
Services staff only)*