

REPORT FOR: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of Meeting:	8 July 2013
Subject:	Update Access to Leisure facilities for Children Looked After and young people who are Leaving Care
Key Decision:	No
Responsible Officer:	Catherine Doran, Corporate Director of Children and Families
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Zarina Khalid, Portfolio Holder for Children, Schools and Families
Exempt:	No
Decision subject to Call-in:	No
Enclosures:	Appendix 1 - Summer Fun day - leaflet

1.0 Summary and Recommendations

- This report seeks to provide an update from the previous report presented in December 2012 in respect of supporting children looked after and young people leaving care with access to leisure facilities in Harrow, following the initial report to the panel on 3rd April 2012 and previous report dated 18 December 2012.
- Panel members are invited to consider recommendations contained in section 4 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 18th December regarding an update with Access to Leisure facilities for Children Looked After (CLA) and young people leaving care.

2.2 The CLA Life Chances forum has continued to support and review arrangements to provide CLA and young people leaving care with opportunities and options to engage with recreational activities and work responsively to young peoples views.

2.3 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 .

2.4 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
- Service Manager – Libraries, Sport and Leisure
- Watford FC

2.5 The Chair of the CLA Life Chances Forum (who is also an officer advising the Corporate Parenting Panel) has established positive relationship with colleagues in leisure services to galvanise the role of the Council as Corporate Parents and work closely in partnership. 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.

2.6 On 7th March a meeting was held with the portfolio holder for Culture and Leisure Services, Councillor Perry to discuss progress and future opportunities to promote recreational activities. Culture and Leisure services agreed to host a conference to engage CLA and young people leaving care to promote the wide ranging opportunities in the summer.

2.7 The Harrow School Improvement Partnership are working to further develop the Virtual School in Harrow to improve educational attainment and improve outcomes for CLA. This virtual school will also help to address recreational activities and engagement with leisure.

3.0 Issues

3.1 Previous recommendations of the report in December 2012:

- a) The Corporate Parenting panel to note progress made
- b) Virtual School 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 and culture project and partnership with Community and Cultural Services for CLA and young people leaving care is progressing

3.2 Schools in Harrow support CLA who attend their school and engage with leisure and recreational activities. The development of the Virtual School will ensure improved links with Harrow Schools and in a virtual capacity ensure CLA are provided support with recreational and leisure opportunities. The Personal Education Plans and Pathway Plans are being reviewed to ensure a holistic approach is being undertaken to ensure leisure engagement and recreational activities are included. This work is being undertaken with the Virtual School, Personal Education Plan co-ordinator and social care teams by September.

3.3 Culture and Leisure Services are promoting a Summer Fun Day event on 25th July, appendix 1, for CLA and young people leaving care to have information and be involved with a taster of activities, including those delivered at Harrow Arts Centre.

3.4 In partnership with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL) who are the providers of leisure facilities at Harrow Leisure Centre, the CLA Life Chances Forum has established registration and membership for all CLA and Careleavers who live in or near to the borough. Sport and Leisure Management Limited (SLM) will be the new leisure providers from the 1st September and will continue this partnership.

3.5 There have been 2 periods of registering CLA and careleavers over the last 6 months. However, despite the 30% discount offered for CLA and careleavers, there has been insufficient registration of young people for this to be viable, so an alternate strategy is required to provide support to CLA and Careleavers to become members of the Harrow Leisure Centre.

3.6 Monthly membership of CLA living with foster carers is provided by their foster carers, using the leisure allowance already available to foster carers.

Careleavers and young people living in semi independent provision have been funded by the Care Matters grant.

3.7 All of the young people registered are monitored over 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 as it is more cost effective where young people are not using the membership. Social care staff must support young people more to make use of the membership, so it may be more cost effective to reimburse membership costs for the limited young people who actually using their memberships, instead of payment for these over a 3 month period, irrespective of use. The following shows how well this membership has been used previously;

January – March 2013	April – June 2013	Total usage
Aged 0 – 12: 6	0	0
Aged 13 – 18: 17	11	2
Aged 18+ 12	22	8
35 total registered	33 total registered	

3.8 Over 6 months, 68 CLA and careleavers have registered, however, only 10 of these have used their memberships. Individual discounts will be applied for CLA and careleavers in future.

3.9 In addition to Harrow Leisure Centre, Cedars Youth Centre in partnership with Watford FC will also make available facilities for 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. This has not been used as the location is not convenient for some young people.

3.10 CLA and young people placed outside the borough will be supported with engagement to local facilities, by 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.

3.11 Social workers are encouraged to ensure recreational activities are considered a priority with care planning, pathway plans and personal education plans. Team managers will ensure greater attention and focus in reviewing these documents and providing feedback to eth CLA Life Chances Forum.

4.0 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) Continue to support CLA and Careleavers with discounted leisure membership funded by the Care Matters Grant
- b) Support Corporate Parents responsibility to raise awareness of recreational provision by partnership working with the summer fun day, membership of the CLA Life Chances Forum and contribution to social work team meetings
- c) Consider to include in commissioning of the new providers (SLM) to offer access to leisure for CLA and careleavers at the Leisure Centre to provide more cost effective access to the leisure centre for CLA and Careleavers
- d) Continue to explore recreational activities of interest to young people, engaging feedback from the Summer Fun day, the Leaving Care Forum and Beyond Limits to inform service user needs and develop menu of services to be available

4.1 Environmental Impact

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

4.2 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. This doesn't include the 70% discount of these amounts i.e. £30 and £44 for 3 month period. As numbers of young people who have taken up the memberships have previously been minimal, as noted in 3.7, the costs are manageable.

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 on an individual basis.

4.3 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.

4.4 Equalities implications

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable children and young people 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.

4.5 Corporate Priorities

CLA and care leavers are additionally vulnerable by virtue of the experiences that led them into Local Authority care. This impacts on the outcomes that many CLA and care leavers experience as poor 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.

5.0 Statutory Officer Clearance

Patricia Harvey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer
Date: 28 th June 2013		
Sarah Wilson		on behalf of the Monitoring Officer
Name: Banaz Draey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Date: 27 th June 2013		

7.0 Contact Details and Background Papers

Corporate Parenting Panel report CLA Access to Leisure dated 3rd April 2012 and 18th December 2012

Contact:

Nick Crick, CLA Service Manager, Children’s Services

Tel: 0208 736 6976
nick.crick@harrow.gov.uk