

# **CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL**

## **MINUTES**

### **8 JULY 2013**

**Chairman:** \* Councillor Christine Bednell

**Councillors:** \* James Bond \* Zarina Khalid  
\* Margaret Davine \* Janet Mote  
\* Mitzi Green

\* Denotes Member present

#### **126. Attendance by Reserve Members**

The Chairman reported that in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 1.5.4, Councillor Zarina Khalid had replaced Councillor Husain Akhtar as a Member of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no Reserve Members in attendance.

#### **127. Declarations of Interest**

**RESOLVED:** To note that the following interests were declared:

Agenda Item 9 – Report on Health Passports

Councillor Janet Mote declared a non-pecuniary interest in that her daughter was a nurse at Northwick Park Hospital. She would remain in the room whilst the matter was considered and voted upon.

#### **128. Appointment of Vice Chairman**

**RESOLVED:** To appoint Councillor Zarina Khalid as Vice-Chairman of the Corporate Parenting Panel for the 2013/2014 Municipal Year.

## **129. Minutes**

Members of the Panel commented that a Corporate Parenting Display had not been organised prior to the Full Council meeting on 4 July 2013. Officers would investigate why this did not occur and would look to re-organise the display for the next available Full Council meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 April 2013, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

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

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

## **RESOLVED ITEMS**

## **131. Information Report - Activity and Performance**

The Panel received a report which set out the latest performance position and an analysis of latest available performance data in relation to Children Looked After (CLA).

An officer introduced the report and made the following points:

- the timing of the meeting meant that data relating to Quarter 1 of 2013/14 data was not yet available;
- the first phase of the Children's Services Improvement Plan had been completed at the end of Quarter 3;
- as part of the Children's Services Improvement Plan, the Children and Families Service and its partners were moving into a new phase of development to drive improved practice and outcomes;
- from 2011/12 to 2012/13 there was an increase of 56% in the number of core assessments by social workers and a 51% increase in the number of Section 47 investigations;
- this activity had been seen to increase further in the early months of 2013/14 and had led to an increase in the number of Child Protection Plans (CPP) and the number of Looked After Children (CLA);
- there were two underlying reasons for this increase in activity. Firstly there was an increasing population in Harrow with a subsequent increase in pressure on schools. Secondly thresholds had been reviewed which enabled more needs being identified.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Panel raised a number of queries which officers responded to as follows:

- it was acknowledged that outcomes for care leavers had not been achieved in the past as well as the Council would have liked. However performance in this area was better than last year and an Action Plan had been developed to ensure that targets were achieved. Additionally a specific post had been recruited to, to focus on outcomes for care leavers. A Multi Agency Panel had also been established to scrutinise those who were not involved in activities to try and assist them and looking at providing training in skills for social workers to support relevant activities;
- an update report on outcomes for care leavers would be provided to the meeting of the Panel on 21 October 2013;
- the Council had seen a good improvement in the percentage of CLA in suitable accommodation to 80%. This was an update to the position which had been contained in the report to the Panel. An option suggested by representatives from Beyond Limits to investigate sharing housing was also being investigated;
- the proposed closure date for accommodation at Honey Pot Lane was 31 October 2013. Discussions had been taking place with Housing Services on identifying if the accommodation could be occupied by CLA or care leavers;
- whilst there had been an upward pressure in the increase for the number of core assessments and Section 47 investigations across London, this had not been to the extent as experienced in Harrow;
- the use of foster carers had increased and the number of children placed under special guardianship and placed more than 20 miles away had decreased, which was good news for the Council;
- Harrow was now on a par within its comparator boroughs in terms of its performance;
- the Council's partnership with CORUM had resulted in a wider choice, specialists and support in relation to foster carers. The Council were always actively looking to reach different parts of the communities to reach a wider variety of foster carers and work was going on in a number of strands to help achieve this.

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

### **132. Report on Health Passports**

A Council officer introduced a report which provided a description of the implementation of Health Passports in Harrow.

The officer reported that unfortunately colleagues from NHS Harrow had not been able to attend and sent their apologies. The officer reported the following:

- the concept of providing a Health Passport was discussed with NHS Harrow and health providers for Looked After Children (CLA) following the Care Quality Commission (CQC) inspection in May 2012;
- the Looked After Children Nurse, the Designated Nurse and the Youth Participation Officer from the Council led in developing the project. Young People were involved in the development of the Health Passports and the current draft before the Panel reflected these views together with good practice examples from across the country.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Panel raised a number of issues which were responded to by officers as follows:

- Care Leavers would hold the physical copy of their Health Passport as it was an important concept that they 'owned' this document. The Council would only hold an electronic copy;
- an update report on the progress of the Health Passports would be presented to the Panel in July 2014.

During the discussion on this item Members of the Panel made a number of comments as follows:

- the proposed Health Passports were useful for young people, carers and children coming up for adoption;
- the Health Passport was a good concept and to have relevant information collated in one document was very important.

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

### **133. Report of Mental Health Care for Children Looked After**

The Chair welcomed Melanie Woodcock representing the Child and Family Mental Health Services (CAMHS). In introducing the report she made the following points:

- CAMHS was a community based and universally targeted supporting specialist service;
- Harrow CAMHS operated a triage system which was led by General Practitioners (GPs). There was a quick turnover and access for referrals. The Triage system allowed CAMHS to see clients quickly;
- referrals to CAMHS had to be appropriate but GPs were good at ensuring that this occurred in practice;
- following a referral, the young person was seen within 10 days. This was then followed up with an assessment appointment which was done within 5½ weeks;

- the CAMHS team consisted of 17.74 Full Time Equivalent Staff (FTE). This included part time staff;
- the majority of referrals to CAMHS came from GPs. At present CAMHS had a caseload of 648 cases and only 20 of these involved Looked After Children (CLA);
- the main issues which CAMHS dealt with involved CLA were depression, anxiety and sexual incidents;
- specialist assessments were offered and care pathways were not rigid;
- a wide a range of support was offered by CAMHS including family therapy, clinical psychology, nursing support and play therapy;
- the key message that CAMHS delivered was focusing on the needs to the individual child.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Panel raised a number of issues which officers and the representative from CAMHS responded to as follows:

- there had been an issue which concerned the Council in relation to the way referrals were made to CAMHS. At present the Council were not allowed to make a direct referral to CAMHS and that this could only go through the health system;
- there was concern from the Council that CLA were not given a priority above all other children particularly in relation to waiting lists or generally as applicable to their circumstances. The representative from CAMHS responded that they were commissioned by the Clinical Commissioning Group who set the relevant thresholds for referrals. There was no specific CLA team within CAMHS and all referrals were treated equally in terms of their importance;
- CAMHS were investigating using more direct psychotherapy in their treatment of children.

At the conclusion of the debate Members of the Panel commented that they had concerns over the referral pathways to CAMHS. They were concerned that referrals could only be made via the health system and that the Council did not have an ability to also do this directly.

An officer commented that these concerns had been raised with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) previously, and they had commented that the decision to accept referrals was ultimately the responsibility of CAMHS.

The representative from CAMHS responded by saying that the final decision did not rest with them and that the CCG were their commissioners. CAMHS

were confident that they were not dealing with cases which were better dealt with under targeted and universal services.

A Member of the Panel suggested that a reference be made to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee and the Health and Well-being Board to investigate these issues further and to commence dialogue with the CCG on analysing and reviewing the referral pathways to CAMHS. This was agreed.

**RESOLVED:** That a reference be made to the Health and Social Care Scrutiny Sub-Committee and the Health and Well-being Board to investigate liaising with the Clinical Commissioning Group on analysing and reviewing the referral pathways to the Child and Family Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

#### **134. Update Access to Leisure facilities for Children Looked After and young people who are Leaving Care**

The Panel received a report which provided an update to the support to Looked After Children (CLA) and young people leaving care with access to leisure facilities.

An officer introduced the report and made the following points:

- the CLA Life Chances Forum has continued to support and review arrangements to provide CLA and young people leaving care which opportunities and options to engage with recreational activities and work responsively to young peoples views;
- the CLA Life Chances Forum had established a sub-group in respect of facilitating CLA access to Leisure. This included representatives from the Children and Families Service, Leisure Services and partner agencies;
- the Chair of the CLA Life Chances Forum had met with the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services at the time, to discuss progress and future opportunities to promote recreational activities;
- a summer fun day had been organised for 25 July 2013 for CLA and young people leaving care to have information and to be involved with a taster of activities, including those delivered at the Harrow Arts Centre;
- in partnership with Greenwich Leisure Ltd (GLL), the CLA Life Chances Forum had established registration and membership of all CLA who lived in or around the borough to the leisure facilities at Harrow Leisure Centre. There had been 2 periods of registration. However despite the 30% discount offered, there had been insufficient registration for this to be viable. A different strategy was therefore required.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Panel raised a number of issues which officers responded to as follows:

- as part of the Summer Fund Day, officers would be speaking to young people to try and determine why there was a low take up of registration for leisure facilities at Harrow Leisure Centre;
- it was important to highlight that other activities were available at the Harrow Arts Centre and Cedars Youth Centre. However public transport to Cedars Youth Centre was an issue;
- a good suggestion was for foster carers to be trained to encourage those who they cared for to utilise leisure facilities. Members of the Panel were also asked to encourage other Councillors to attend the Summer Fun Day.

**RESOLVED:** That for the purposes of any future Cabinet or Portfolio Holder decisions:

- (1) the Panel continue to support CLA and young people leaving care with discounted leisure membership funded by the Care Matters Grant;
- (2) the Panel supports Corporate Parents responsibility to raise awareness of recreational provision by partnership working with the Summer Fund Day, membership of the CLA Life Chances Forum and contribution to social work team meetings;
- (3) the Panel support the consideration of including 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 young people leaving care;
- (4) the Panel support the consideration of exploring recreational activities of interest to young people, engaging feedback from the Summer Fund Day, the Leaving Care Forum and Beyond Limits to inform about service user needs and for the development of a menu of services to be available.

### 135. Agenda Tracker

The Panel confirmed that the following reports were to be presented at future meetings:

- report on careleavers and the Action Plan at the meeting of the Panel on 21 October 2013;
- an update report on Health Passports would be presented to the Panel in July 2014;
- a report on the Corporate Parenting Display before the next Full Council meeting should be presented on 21 October 2013.

**RESOLVED:** That the work programme be updated in line with the Panel's comments.

### **136. Chairman's Announcement**

The Chair was advised that Nick Crick, Service Manager for Children Looked After, would be leaving the Council. On behalf of the Panel the Chair thanked Nick for all of his efforts and assistance to the Panel and wished him well for the future.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 8.59 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR CHRISTINE BEDNELL  
Chairman