

Corporate Parenting Strategy Update Appendix 1

Introduction

The Corporate Parenting Strategy Nov 2014 – Aug 2016 (attached as appendix) was recommended from Corporate Parenting Panel 17th March 2015 to Cabinet for 21st April 2015 and agreed at Full Council on 24th September 2015.

This report is an update on the progress made highlighting the Council's Corporate Parenting responsibilities and the outcomes for Harrow's Children Looked After. Though terms are defined within the report a glossary of acronyms is included for reference at the end of the report

Priority Actions ¹ for 2014-16	Progress
<p>4.1 All councillors hold a responsibility as corporate parents. Members' induction is mandatory with training offered or all councillors at least annually.</p>	<p>Paul Hewitt, Divisional Director Children and Young People Service and Peter Tolley, Head of Service Corporate Parenting gave a presentation to Labour Group on 9th September 2015 and to the Conservative Group on 16th November 2015. Both meetings were well attended and the presentations were well received. Councillors asked many questions and noted their Corporate Parenting responsibilities and the legal and statutory requirements. Further refresher sessions will be offered to all councillors during the coming year</p>
<p>6.1 Improve the education attainment and school attendance of looked after children; narrow the gap with other children Extract from VHT 2013-14 Annual Report, future development activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Pathway plans more outcome focused and specific: 95% up to date • Raise attainment outcomes – target for each child or young person to match national standards • Improve attendance % of all CLA and reduce exclusions • Increase liaison and support to reduce time students are not registered at school, especially where placed out of borough and 	<p>Education</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtual School: An experienced Virtual Head Teacher was appointed in July 2015. • The Virtual School is focusing on attainment and attendance and offering support to all Children Looked After through the Personal Education Plans (PEPs). These are termly meetings held with schools, social workers, foster carers and young people to ensure robust education plans are in place to improve outcomes. The Schools also have the use of Pupil Premium £ 500 per term to offer additional support to each Looked After young person. • A Virtual School Improvement Board with an Independent Chair has been set up to quality assure the performance of the Virtual School and to offer additional support and advice. Terms of reference have been completed and an action plan developed. • The Virtual school is reporting that performance in completed PEPS has improved to 74% and is rising each term. • DfE publish data on absence from school for those children looked after 1 year+ only, , Harrow's rate was 4.3 %, statistical neighbour average was 4.28% and England average was 3.9%. • There have been no permanent exclusions since the start of the academic year and the indicator is now High Green (Qtr 3 – TS18). • Since the start of the academic year, 6 CLA have had at least 1 fixed term exclusion, 5

¹ NOTE: Extracted from the Strategy. Duplicate actions not repeated.

<p>attending</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further raise awareness and understanding of all placement staff and allocated social workers regarding the significance of PEPS and Pathway plans • Evaluate and report the impact of the Pupil Premium for CLA. 	<p>of those CLA have been looked after for over a year. The overall percentage has increased to 10.3% but remains on target at High Green. (Qtr 3 - TS19).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The new Virtual Head teacher continues to work with partners to reduce absence for CLA. • Provisional educational attainment data for CLA 1 year plus indicates 50% of children attained level 4+ at Key Stage 2 in both English and Maths. None attained 5 A*-C including English and Maths at Key Stage 4. CLA educational achievement is a focus of the Virtual School and remains an area for improvement. [Qtr 3 reporting TS 24 & TS25] • Research has shown that the achievement of 5 A-C grades at GCSE sometimes took place post 16 years. Systems were set up to track the educational arrangements for post 16s and their potential achievements. All four children who sat GCSEs the previous year had achieved at least 5 GCSEs A-G grades (CPP 12.01.16). • As well as end of Key Stage performance, the Virtual School gathers data on the performance of CLA in each year group. There is considerable variation in numbers across year groups and this affects the validity of the percentage analysis for some year groups. A report tracking of 86 pupils at the end of Spring 2015 term was reported to CPP in October 2016. • Training continues to be provided promoting understanding and awareness of placement staff, social workers and schools. included: 171 social workers; 56 foster carers (Harrow VHT 2014-15 Report to CPP 20.10.15). • A briefing and training session with Leaving Care and Looked After social workers was delivered in October 2015 and has resulted in improvements in the completion and quality of pathway plans
<p>6.2 Improve the involvement and participation of young people in all services for children looked after and care leavers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To strengthen the Children in Care Council 'Beyond Limits' through increased participation of children looked after and care leavers • Ensure that the Corporate Parenting Panel receives regular feedback from children looked after and takes any necessary action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Beyond Limits group for Children Looked After meets with Councillors from the Corporate Parenting Panel on a quarterly basis. This has provided them the opportunity to feedback their experiences and discuss their wishes and aspirations. Issues discussed include access to computers and IT, how placements and foster carers are selected, ensuring good communication between foster carers and schools. • Since Nov 2014 an increased number of young people are engaged with Beyond Limits. More recently a programme of local trips has been initiated by the Participation Officer to explore a range different activities, to encourage confidence and engagement, while receiving hearing their views on services. • A successful Celebration Event for Children Looked After and Care leavers was held on 17th February 2016 at The Hive. Over 100 young people between ages of 0 and 25 attended with their foster carers and staff members. Several councillors also attended. There were Arts and Crafts and face painting activities, together with a range of entertainment including a couple of care leavers highlighting their musical talents.

<p>arising from that feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand participation engagement with CLA placed out of borough • Increase response rates through refreshed feedback options for CLA reviews and CP Conferences • Advocacy and Independent Visitor Services are used by children and young people to ensure their voices are heard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Mayor of Harrow Councillor Krishnan Suresh and the Portfolio Holder for Children and Families Councillor Simon Brown presented awards for School attendance, attitude and behaviour, volunteering, academic effort and achievement, music, sport and Independence skills. Awards were also given to 12 Care Leavers for their achievements in higher education and University. The event was well received with considerable positive feedback from young people. • A review of feedback options for CLA reviews and CP Conferences is in progress. • Independent Visitor service – Following a tendering process a new provider SOVA was commissioned from 1st November 2015. The Children Act (1989) places a duty on the local authority to appoint an Independent Visitor for any looked after child. They are there to ‘assist, befriend and advise’ and ensure wherever possible that the young person’s views are heard and taken into account. Independent Visitors are unpaid volunteers from the local community and generally engage young people for a few hours at a time. All volunteers must complete the accredited SOVA Independent Visitors training course and have references and a DBS check. Currently 31 Children Looked After in Harrow are receiving an Independent Visitors service. • The Participation Officer is visiting all children placed out of borough to ensure their views and wishes and feelings are captured. Many children placed out of borough attended the CLA event in February. The CLA event was specifically held in half term as the out of borough young people identified this as a time they were able to attend.
<p>6.3 Children looked after will be happy and healthy, safe and protected from harm and sexual exploitation: improve the physical, emotional and social health and wellbeing of children looked after and care leavers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure providers deliver 100% health assessments on time • Care leavers have health passports • CLA wellbeing improves 	<p>Safeguarding</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children Looked After and young people are safeguarded through professional staff trained in the multi-agency London Child Protection procedures and the local Safeguarding Board. • Children Looked After are particularly vulnerable to exploitation and risk. Harrow has employed a specialist worker for young people who go missing so all efforts are made to ensure they are safeguarded and protected from exploitation as a result of being missing. . This is a high profile area and weekly meetings are held with Heads of Service to identify any young person who is currently missing and to ensure there are robust plans in place. • Four young people became Looked After following concerns regarding Child Sexual Exploitation. Following risk assessments, they have been placed in safe residential placements outside of London for their own protection. They are being supported and cared for by skilled and experienced staff. <p>Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Since 1st June 2015, a new health provider CNWL has been in place which has led to improved performance improvements in Health Assessments with Review Health Assessments being at 100%. Additional funding has been provided to ensure adequate business support of these arrangements • Agreement has been made with the health providers regarding a streamlined consent form and work is being undertaken to develop health passports to all care leavers.

- There is a protocol in place regarding referrals to CAMHs so referrals can be made directly rather than going through GPs. Referrals will be supported by evidence gather in SDQs (Strength and Difficulty questionnaires)

6.4 Safe and stable placements: provide a choice of good quality placements that provide security, stability, safety and high standards of care

- Increase capacity and placement choice; increase numbers of in-house foster carers including specialist placements for the children with the most complex needs
- Further reduce the number of placement moves
- Reduce the length of time children wait for adoptive placement

Placement Sufficiency

- The Fostering Team have been successful in recruiting local foster carers and carers from all the communities in Harrow. This has seen a considerable decrease in the use of foster carers from Independent Fostering Agencies as noted in the following chart: which outlines the different placement types of our Looked After Children

Placement Type	Dec-14	Mar-15	Jun-15	Sep-15	Dec-15	Feb-16
Placed for Adoption	6	7	7	8	10	9
Foster placement with Relative or Friend	23	17	28	24	13	13
Foster Carer - Inhouse	70	55	56	53	67	71
Foster Carer - Agency	36	43	29	27	23	20
Secure Unit	0	0	0	0	0	0
Young Offenders Institution or Prison	1	2	1	1	3	3
Placed with Parents	0	0	2	3	4	4
Semi Independent / Independent Living	28	26	31	28	32	33
Residential Schools	7	5	5	5	4	6
Children's Homes	14	10	13	12	17	16
Grand Total	185	165	172	161	173	175

- This has not only assisted children to be placed locally but has also delivered considerable value for money, and allowed the Fostering Team to contribute to the MTFs savings plan.
- As we have increased the choice and range of placement sufficiency for Children Looked After we have seen an improvement in placement stability. Only 6.5% of CLA have had 2 moves or more in 2015/16 compared to 9.5% in 2014/15.
- In terms of long term placement stability 61.3% of CLA who have been looked after for more than 2.5 years have been in the same placement for 2 years or more. This compared to 37% in 2014/15.
- **Value for Money** Placements are reviewed and monitored regularly through Access to Resources Team and with Finance and Procurement colleagues. A challenge panel was held on 26th February to look at the 20 most expensive placements.
- A detailed action plan has been developed for each of these 20 placements and with robust monitoring and review costs will be reduced whilst maintaining quality and positive outcomes.

	<p>Adoption scorecards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Adoption Scorecard 1 – The average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family (for children who have been adopted) – the shorter the better Harrow: 339 days as the last 3 years’ average (still better than the national average of 593) ○ Adoption Scorecard 2 – The average time between placement order and match – the shorter the better – this is the measure most relevant to the adoption service. Harrow is quicker than the national average with 104 days – this has gone up from previous years and is partly due to dealing with children who moved to live with family members abroad. The national average is 223 days. ○ Adoption Scorecard 3 – The percentage of children who wait less than 16 months between entering care and placement – the higher the better. Harrow: 77% of children are placed within 16 months from entering care (three year average from 2012-2015) National average: 47% ○ Percentage of looked after children who ceased to be looked after who were adopted – The more adoptions the better. There were lower numbers in 2014-2015 but this increased again to 10% in 2015/16.
<p>6.5 Identity: looked after children know who they are and why they are looked after; feel valued and respected by others and their individual needs arising from gender, race, culture, disability, sexuality and religion are understood and met</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to recruit foster carers that reflect the diversity of the local community • Ensure all young people permanently fostered and adopted have lifestory books and later life letters • Young people develop a positive identity, emotional resilience and self esteem • The work force reflects the diversity of the local community 	<p>see 6.4 above</p> <p>Permanency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harrow entered a partnership arrangement with Coram, a voluntary adoption agency in 2006. We will be celebrating the tenth year in September 2016 and will be arranging an event in recognition. • The Harrow/Coram Adoption partnership was the first of its kind and has been seen as an example of good practice. It has paved the way for the current national discussions on the regionalisation of adoption. Staff from Harrow and Coram gave a presentation to the Adoption Leadership Board on 14th March 2016 as an example of good practice. • In 2015/16 Harrow has doubled its number of adoption orders and scores as second best in the country in terms of timeliness of moving children onto adoptive placements. • Coram has 3 members of staff collocated within Harrow Children’s Services and the partnership has ensured that the local authority is supported by their skills and expertise and has access to their approved adopters, specialist concurrent planning project and post adoption support. The range of approved adopters have allowed children to be placed quickly and with good quality and well matched placements. • The Concurrent Planning Project has allowed young babies to be placed in their permanent placements and avoid moves and instability. The post adoption support has ensured that all those affected by adoption have a range of support services, therapeutic and practical. • All young people who are permanently fostered or adopted have an allocated family finder and social worker who ensure they are thoroughly prepared and that life story work and later life letters

	<p>are undertaken. This is also tracked through six weekly permanency planning meetings.</p> <p>Workforce: Children’s Services workforce is monitored through the Council’s Equalities reporting. A significant investment in ‘growing our own’ is in place both through active engagement in STEP UP & Frontline national social work training routes and in provision of other student placements.</p>
<p>6.6 Smooth transition to adulthood and independence: ensure children looked after and care leavers receive focused support at key transition points in their lives</p> <p><i>NOTE: Duplicate actions NOT repeated.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve opportunities for care leavers to access education, employment or specially trained apprenticeships 	<p>see sections above</p> <p>Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On average Harrow receives three new arrivals a month. The Harrow Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) Team is responsible for supporting UASC who are referred from the Home Office or who arrive independently into Harrow. Once a young person is referred they are accommodated under section 20 of Children Act 1989 until the age of 18 and will then be supported under the Leaving Care legislation 2000. • Harrow currently has 95 UASC; 33 under 18 years old; 62 over 18. • Harrow also has a dedicated UASC Residential Unit which offers specialist accommodation and support to 30 UASC. This was visited by Councillors on 3rd March 2016 where they were shown the accommodation and support provided, including the services provided by LINAB (Language is not a Barrier). <p>Care Leavers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Leaving Care Team has ensured that they continue to provide a range of opportunities to support young people make the transition to adulthood. • The careers advisor based in the team has targeted specific care leavers who were not in Education, Employment and Training and has supported them to identify and engage in appropriate work or education. This has seen a significant improvement in performance in this area. • A detailed snapshot analysis of Care Leavers NEET data was reported to Corporate Parenting Panel 12.01.16. Of the 157 aged 16 – 21 years of age: 122 (77.8%) were in education, employment or training; 35 (22.2%) were Not in education, employment or training [NEET]. • Two In-house Projects are available to support young people into EET (Referrals are made by social workers and careers advisor): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ X16 employment and job readiness programme targeted at our most vulnerable 16 – 24 year olds who are NEET, with a strong focus on young people we have a corporate parent responsibility for. The programme helps young people build resilience, knowledge, skills and gain confidence to:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply for jobs, attend interview and begin work, or • Apply for further training and begin further or continued education, or • Apply for apprenticeships, attend interviews and begin apprenticeships ○ LINAB (<i>see above</i>) • The % of Care Leavers aged 19-21 who are NEET dropped from Q2 to 37.3% with 28 out of 75 care leavers being not in education, employment or training. (Qtr 3 Impr Brd TS11) • A one stop shop for young people 'Harrow Youth Stop' free careers service for 16-21yrs (up to 25 years if with special needs) with a variety of clinics being offered by training providers, health clinic and legal advice offered from this Centre. Referrals are made direct. • Pathway plans and reviews are now being chaired by the Team Manager or Deputy Managers, to ensure there is effective management input and oversight, to ensure the plans are multi-agency and of a high quality. • Several Care Leavers have become actively involved in youth mentoring. • There has also been considerable improvement in Care Leavers in suitable accommodation with over 90%. • There is a regular joint meeting with colleagues in housing to ensure plans are in place for care leavers moving onto independent housing.
--	--

Glossary of Terms

CLA	Children Looked After
LAC	Looked After Children
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children
LINAB	Language IS Not a Barrier
NEET	Not in Education, Employment and Training
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
SDQ	Strength and Difficulty Questionnaire