

Corporate Parenting Panel

Minutes

7 October 2020

Chair:	* Councillor Angella Murphy-Strachan	
Councillors:	* Sue Anderson	* Lynda Seymour
	* Janet Mote	* Chloe Smith
	* Christine Robson	
In attendance: (Officers)	Paul Hewitt	Corporate Director People
	Peter Tolley	Divisional Director Children and Young People Service
	Jacinta Kane	Head of Corporate Parenting
	Mellina Williamson-Taylor	Head Teacher – Harrow Virtual School
	Sarah Moriarty	Assistant Head Teacher – Harrow Virtual School
	Kat Robinson	Post 16 Advisory Teacher – Harrow Virtual School
	Sara Dawson	Clinical Psychologist – Harrow Virtual School
	Deborah Price – Williams	Consultant CLA, CNWL
	Christine Nichols	Named Nurse CLA, CNWL
	Alison Braithwaite	Head of Children's Services (Outer London)

* Denotes Member present

81. Attendance by Reserve Members

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

82. Appointment of Vice-Chair

RESOLVED: To appoint Councillor Janet Mote as Vice-Chair of the Corporate Parenting Panel for the 2020/2021 Municipal Year.

83. Declarations of Interest

RESOLVED: To note that the Declarations of Interests published in advance of the meeting on the Council's website were taken as read.

84. Minutes

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2020 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

85. Public Questions

RESOLVED: To note that no public questions were received.

86. Petitions

RESOLVED: To note that no petitions were received.

87. Deputations

RESOLVED: To note that deputations were received.

Resolved Items

During consideration of the item on the Harrow Virtual School (minute item 90), the Chair lost connection due to technical issues. The Vice-Chair assumed the role of chair, until the Chair re-joined the meeting.

88. Corporate Parenting Update Report

The Panel received the Corporate Parenting Update Report, which provided an overview of the key developments within the Corporate Parenting Service during March to September 2020. In particular the report addressed: the

response to Covid-19; Black Lives Matter; and EU Settled Status and Nationality issues.

The report highlighted the following future challenges:

- meeting the Council's statutory responsibilities while minimising risk of the Covid-19 epidemic;
- having a much-reduced office space and increased use of virtual working while ensuring workers were supported, and were part of a team with the opportunity to learn and support each other;
- potential for further increases of children becoming looked after by Harrow, including a return to usual numbers of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC);
- additional costs and capacity pressures for the Local Authority if there was a significant increase in the number of children requiring care; and
- understanding and addressing inequality and disproportionality in relation to outcomes and opportunities for young people.

The Panel was joined by four young people and their Support Worker from Gayton House. They shared their experiences as beneficiaries of the Council's Corporate Parenting Services.

The Panel welcomed the young people's views, particularly noting their concerns during the Covid-19 lockdown between March and August 2020. One young person felt lockdown had a positive impact on his life, as he was able to rest and exercise more than before. Other young people felt anxious and isolated during the lockdown period, but were pleased to be able to attend college in person once more.

The young people were able to continue with their education online during lockdown as a result of laptops that were given to them by the Harrow Virtual School.

The Panel encouraged the young people to stay safe during the Covid-19 period, and to observe Government guidelines.

The Panel inquired whether there were any young people who had to self isolate.

It was advised that none of the students in attendance had to self-isolate. However, a couple of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), who had become looked-after by Harrow were placed in self-isolation on arrival. The Panel commended the Support Worker for helping the young people with their college enrolments and setting up their new laptops.

The Panel thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

89. Harrow Ofsted Inspection Outcome and Report

The Panel received the Harrow Ofsted Inspection Outcome Report, which provided results in Harrow Children's Services. The inspection took place from 10 to 14 February 2020. Ofsted judged Harrow as "Good" across all the inspection domains.

The following were highlighted in the report:

- the impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families;
- the experiences and progress of children who needed help and protection;
- the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers; and
- overall effectiveness.

The Panel was informed that the inspection outcome was an improvement from the 2017 Ofsted inspection. Ofsted found that: "when children come into care, they receive a very good service."

There were four identified areas for improvement which were set out by Ofsted. These would be addressed by an improvement plan across Children's Services. The four areas that needed to improve were:

- 1) the quality and impact of supervision so that children's needs and protection plans addressed the specific needs of individual children;
- 2) care leavers needed to have access to their health histories (emotional and physical) and pathway plans, which should be of consistently good quality;
- 3) quality assurance practice evaluation audits across all teams; and
- 4) meeting the needs of pupils with complex needs who were not in mainstream school and remained on reduced timetables for a long time.

The Panel challenged officers regarding 4) above.

Officers confirmed that new terms of reference had been developed for a panel to consider and monitor the needs of children on reduced school timescales and there were individual action plans in place for each child. In

addition the Virtual School and the SEN team had met to ensure there was a robust strategy in place for this cohort of children.

The Panel was informed about ways of addressing the four areas needed for improvement. Due to the impact of Covid-19 on all aspects of Council business, some actions were delayed. Pathway plans were reviewed on a monthly basis via performance meetings. In addition, work was currently in progress to combine the Children Looked After (CLA) Team and the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children / Leaving Care Team (UASC/LCT) into a single service. The vision for the service was to: build and strengthen capacity within Corporate Parenting; minimise changes of workers for children and young people; develop consistent decision-making; and improve pathway planning for young people leaving care.

The work on developing “health passports” or health histories for care leavers was underway and a task and finish group involving Health and Children’s Services Team Managers would be developed into a model to be shared with Care Leavers in the Autumn/Winter. Further progress would be shared with the Corporate Parenting Panel in 2021.

The Panel observed that the Ofsted report reflected positive, and good outcomes for children across the whole of the child's journey. Maintaining standards would be challenging throughout the next year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Panel thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

90. Harrow Virtual School Reports - Headteacher End of Year and Clinical Psychology Service Summary

The Panel received the Harrow Virtual School Reports, comprising the Headteacher’s End of Year Report (2019-2020), and the Clinical Psychologist’s Report.

The Headteacher’s report set an overview of the performance and standards of Children Looked After (CLA) at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 4, as well as the development priorities for the Virtual School for 2020-2021.

The Headteacher showed a video that had been created by students of the Harrow Virtual School. A link to the video was shared with the Panel: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ITqOGyL2jpk>.

The Panel were impressed with the video and with the creativity of the students.

The Virtual School had appointed a Clinical Psychologist, who worked two days in a week. The role had proved rewarding to young people, who appreciated the services of the Clinical Psychologist.

The Clinical Psychology Service commenced in November 2018, aiming to provide further targeted mental health support for children looked after. Between November 2018 and February 2019, 50 young people were formally brought to the attention of the Clinical Psychology Service, and received either direct or indirect clinical psychology support.

Foster carers were also able to attend online training opportunities and communicate through “foster carer zoom groups”, which were found to be very beneficial.

The Panel commended the great partnership between the Harrow Virtual School and social care.

The Panel thanked officers for the reports.

RESOLVED: That the reports be noted.

91. Activity and Performance Q1 2020-21

The Panel received the Activity and Performance Report for First Quarter (Q1) 2020-2021. The report set out activity for children looked after and care leavers as well as provisional performance position at Q1 2020-21.

The Panel inquired about areas not performing well, and children going missing from care.

It was advised that dental and mental health check ups were challenging due to restrictions arising from the Covid-19 guidelines in the country. However, efforts were being made to prioritise CLA for those check ups.

Furthermore, only a handful of children went missing, usually for short periods of time. The Police helped to track and trace missing children, some of whom were used by gangs for criminal exploitation.

The Panel thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

92. Harrow Children Looked After Placement Sufficiency Strategy 2019-2024

The Panel received the 2019-2024 Sufficiency Strategy outlined the Council’s plan to meet the future needs of children on the edge of care, children who are looked after and young people who have recently left care.

For children looked after, the sufficiency strategy covers internal services such as foster care, and external services such as residential placements, independent fostering placements, adoption and other support services.

The Strategy was underpinned by legislation and statutory guidance.

The Panel asked officers about the resource levels needed to meet rising demand and complexity of need.

Officers acknowledged that this was very challenging. There were panels which oversaw placement costs. They also monitored and supervised budget forecasting and spend.

The Panel thanked officers for the Strategy.

RESOLVED: That the Strategy be noted.

93. Harrow CLA Corporate Parenting Health Report September 2020

The Panel received the Harrow Children Looked After (CLA) Health Report, which set out the delivery of health services to Harrow's Children Looked After (CLA) during April to August 2020 in line with the national guidance.

The report reviewed the service and included clinical work undertaken during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Panel thanked officers for the report.

The Panel thanked Dr Price-Williams, as this would be her last Corporate Parenting Panel.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 6.00 pm, closed at 8.26 pm).

(Signed) Councillor Angella Murphy-Strachan
Chair