

Committee:	Corporate Parenting Panel
Date:	14th April 2008
Subject:	Information Report – Education Champions for Children Looked After
Responsible Officer:	Paul Clark
Portfolio Holder:	Cllr Janet Mote
Exempt:	No
Enclosures:	None

Section 1 – Summary

FOR INFORMATION

- Report on a good practice scheme developed by L.B. Barnet whereby senior managers take on the role of champions for a cohort of children looked after to ensure that every effort is made to maximise their educational potential
- Report on plans to scope the potential for developing such or similar scheme in Harrow

Section 2 – Report

- The chances of a young person who is looked after passing one GCSE is approximately half that of a young person who is not looked after.

- In 2006-2007 9% of 16year old Children Looked After in Harrow achieved 5 A-C GCSEs. This compares with nearly 68% of children who are not looked after.
- The experience in Barnet was that the young people themselves did not have high expectations of themselves, nor did their carers, teachers and other professionals.
- It was in response to this and the general lack of an upward turn in the educational achievement of their children looked after that prompted Barnet to develop their programme of education champions.
- The role of the champion was to mirror that of a “pushy” parent- to do all that was possible behind the scenes to support their allocated child/young person looked after. This may include talking to Social Workers, other professionals, influencing housing and so on.
- The champion does not meet the child/young person. Barnet use the analogy of Magwitch, the Dickens’s character who was the secret benefactor to the hero, Pip.
- The Chief Executive and Director, together with 35 other top managers participated. The programmed then involved other key partners such as heads of schools.
- The scheme has evolved over time. The programmed is reserved for children/young people looked after for at least a year and who are facing key transitions – moving into secondary school, choosing GCSE options, the GCSE years and moving to further education
- The results have been very encouraging. From 2004, when the scheme was first introduced, to the end of 2006, the proportion of children looked after who sat at east one GCSE increased from 45% to 77%. The percentage who achieved 5 or more A-C rose from 6% to 23%
- The other benefits included a better understanding by senior managers and other partners of the difficulties faced by Social Workers and carers
- Social Workers work together and feel more confident about working with senior managers
- There is more of a shared commitment to the difficulties shared by children looked after
- The corporate parenting manager is willing to meet with Corporate Parenting

Section 3 – Further Information

- The Barnet champion programme is complemented by a fully staffed multi agency team, which works closely with social care and their partners. The upturn in performance is seen as a combination of both developments.
- Harrow is developing a virtual children looked after team which has been tasked by the Life Chances Forum to look at how we can improve the educational achievement of children looked after
- The Life Chances Forum will consider the benefits of the Barnet programme and will report back to the December Panel

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Andreas Kyriacou, Senior Coordinator, Children Looked After
0208 424 7642
andreas.kyriacou@harrow.gov.uk