

## CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

5 OCTOBER 2009

Chairman: \* Councillor Janet Mote

Councillors: \* Husain Akhtar \* Mitzi Green  
 \* Miss Christine Bednell \* Julia Merison (2)  
 † Mrs Margaret Davine

\* Denotes Member present

(2) Denotes category of Reserve Member

**PART I - RECOMMENDATIONS - NIL****PART II - MINUTES**88. **Attendance by Reserve Members:****RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-Ordinary MemberReserve Member

Councillor Mrs Myra Michael

Councillor Julia Merison

89. **Declarations of Interest:****RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members in relation to the business to be transacted at this meeting.90. **Minutes:****RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 July 2009 be taken as read and signed as a correct record.91. **Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations:****RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions, petitions or deputations were received at this meeting under the provisions of Advisory Panel and Consultative Forum Procedure Rules 16, 14 and 15 respectively (Part 4E of the Constitution).92. **INFORMATION REPORT - Activity & Performance:**

The Panel received an information report of the Corporate Director of Children's Services that set out the data relating to Children Looked After (CLA) and Children with Child Protection Plans (CPP), including key performance indicators for the end of August 2009. An officer advised that following a request at the July 2009 meeting of the Panel, the report also included a breakdown as at 31 August 2009 of the number of CLA aged between 10-15 years and a summary analysis of the Department for Children, Schools and Families Children in Need (CIN) Census from October 2008 to 31 March 2009.

The officer outlined the following key points:

- core assessment performance, which was one of the priority indicators in the Local Area Agreement (LAA), had fallen below target. Initial assessment performance was steadily improving, but remained below target. To address this issue, robust management action, including early warning reports had been taken to improve the situation and ensure that officers met year end targets;
- the target for CLA who had missed at least 25 days of school in each academic year was exceeded for 2008-9. Whilst finalising the position for the previous academic year, officers had identified that children with health needs and asylum seeking CLA who did not have a school place at the start of the academic year had contributed to this indicator. A dedicated Education Welfare Officer for CLA, was in post and had been monitoring and acting on absence in the 2009-10 academic year. Every relevant CLA was being individually monitored and supported to effect transition back to education as soon as possible;

- a report on 10-15 year old Children Looked After, who make up 44% of the total was presented. A high proportion of children in this cohort were often challenging placements or had complex presenting needs;
- in the Children in Need census it was not possible to provide complete information about the ethnicity of children referred to the service or requiring social care. Officers would seek to improve efforts in this area;

In response to questions raised by the Panel, officers advised that:

- the number of children placed out of the borough had increased significantly but most are in neighbouring boroughs. This increase was due to placement availability;
- Harrow had an improved performance level of CLA and CPP outcomes when compared to other London boroughs;
- it was often difficult to place teenagers with specific needs or challenging behaviour in foster care. If a child's behaviour was disruptive to the foster care environment, placing a child in residential care did not necessarily change the outcome. An increase in foster carers employed and trained by Harrow Council would provide better value for money and address the challenge of placing an older child into Local Authority care. By using models of excellent practice from other local authorities, officers were developing a wraparound service that sought to provide adequate support to carers and the child placed in their care and avoid a move into residential care;
- there had been a significant increase in referral rates. In addition there had been a 40% increase in the number of referrals proceeding to Child Protection Conferences;
- teams of social workers were almost fully staffed by permanent employees. Managers had been working with limited resources but had, nevertheless expressed an interest in the Children's Workforce and Development Council recruitment programme in order to increase the number of social workers employed by the Service.

The Panel having requested that a number of reports be presented to the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the report be noted;

(2) comparative information on CLA and CPP outcomes be provided at the next meeting;

(3) officers would provide an update on the support provided to foster carers and the service provided to teenagers at the next Panel meeting on 12 January 2010;

(4) figures on the GCSE results of CLA by Harrow would be provided at the next meeting.

93. **Chairman's Announcements:**

Participation in the Pledge and the Role of Children in Care Council

The Chairman asked for an update on the progress of the London Pledge and the Children in Care Council reported at the last Panel meeting. An officer reported:

- a postal survey of Children Looked After (CLA) placed outside of the borough had been conducted and that officers had received six responses;
- a consultation event commissioned by the Care Matters Partnership had been attended by a variety of children who were being or had been cared for by Harrow Council;
- following the launch of Participation and Voices by the Care Matters Partnership in January 2009, CLA would meet with Members in November or

early December 2009 with a view to allowing Members to ascertain the needs of CLA and establish terms of reference of further meetings and to implement the London pledge.

Following comments by the Panel, officers agreed to present proposals for Care Matters at the next meeting, in addition to a report on the partnership with Coram following the National Initiative Conference.

**RESOLVED:** That (1) the report be noted;

(2) reports on the proposals for care matters, and the Council's partnership with Coram be presented to the 12 January 2009 meeting of the Panel.

(Note: The meeting having commenced at 6.04 pm, closed at 7.05 pm)

(Signed) COUNCILLOR JANET MOTE  
Chairman

**APPENDIX 1****Officers in  
attendance:**

Adeline Abraham

Youth Participation Officer

Gail Hancock

Head of Service -  
Safeguarding & Family  
Support

David Harrington

Service Manager –  
Performance Management

Andreas Kyriakou

Senior Coordinator, Practice  
and Performance - Children  
Looked After