

**REPORT FOR: CORPORATE
PARENTING PANEL**

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| Date of Meeting: | 12 October 2010 |
| Subject: | RECOMMENDATION REPORT - Children in Care Council |
| Key Decision: | No |
| Responsible Officer: | Catherine Doran, Corporate Director of Children's Services |
| Portfolio Holder: | Councillor Mitzi Green, Portfolio Holder Children's Services |
| Exempt: | No |
| Decision subject to Call-in: | Yes |
| Enclosures: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Draft Children in Care Council Terms of Reference• Draft Harrow Pledge |

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out to outline the progress in formalising the terms of reference of Harrow's Children in Care Council, which will henceforth be known as Beyond Limits and, in addition, the drafting of the Harrow Pledge.

Recommendation: that

- the draft terms of reference of Beyond Limits be noted and the Cabinet be requested to approve these in principle and, in particular, the interface proposals between Beyond Limits and Corporate Parenting.

- the Harrow Pledge as outlined by Beyond Limits be supported and Cabinet requested to agree its adoption.
- It be agreed that the opportunity to appoint 2 members of Beyond Limits as non-voting members of the Panel be taken up.

Reason: (For recommendation)

There is an expectation on Local Authorities from Care Matters-Time for Change, 2007 to set up Children in Care Councils as a way of ensuring that children who are looked after have a voice.

Local Authorities are also expected to produce a Pledge which describes how, what and the way children looked after will be treated.

There is also an expectation that local Children in Care Councils monitor the implementation of locally produced Pledges and in conjunction with Corporate Parenting Panels.

Section 2 – Report

Background

Care Matters – A time for Change, 2007, stated that every local authority should establish a Children in Care Council to ensure that every child has the opportunity to air their views and “to put their experiences of the care system directly to those responsible for corporate parenting including the Director of Children’s Services and Lead member”

The Children and Young Persons Act, 2008, placed a number of requirements upon Local Authorities and Elected Members. The legislation aims to improve outcomes for children in care and their families with corporate parenting, and listening to the voice of the child or young person being key elements.

In the context of Children in Care Councils and the Pledge there was an expectation by Care Matters that Local Authorities should put in place arrangements to ensure that:

- Children in Care Councils were established so that that there is dialogue between children looked after, Senior Officers and Elected Members around the needs of children looked after, as well as the planning, delivering and monitoring of services;
- Each child looked after should know what to expect from his or her corporate parents by way of a Pledge.

Corporate Parenting have been appraised of the progress made by the Participation Team in developing a “Children in Care Council” which would support the Corporate Parenting Panel in their deliberations, in line with the London Pledge.

In summary this has involved:

- Regular meetings with a number of young people
- Training the young people to lead on training of Members and officers
- Training of Members and Officers by the young people themselves, with the support of the Care Matters Partnership

Corporate Parenting Panel was provided with an update on 7th April 2009 on the progress made to develop a “Children in Care Council” which would support the Corporate Parenting Panel in their deliberations, in line with the London Pledge.

The members of Beyond Limits have drafted a Terms of Reference with input of other children looked after.

In relation to the Harrow Pledge:

- Corporate parenting have been appraised of the progress in the implementation of the London Pledge, and in particular the implications for Harrow Council
- Beyond Limits have canvassed a wide group of children looked after to produce a Harrow Pledge

The Harrow Pledge is consistent with the London Pledge, which has already been approved at Director and Lead Officer level. Corporate Parenting has been appraised. Overview and Scrutiny Committee were appraised on 21st April 2009

Options considered

None

Implications of the Recommendation

Approval of the recommendations would align Harrow with similar initiatives and good practice across other London Councils in respect of the role of Children in Care Councils and the implementation of locally drawn Pledges.

Further work is required:

- Beyond Limits will participate in the training and launching the Pledge to officers, staff, and members;
- The Participation Team will assist Beyond Limits in all specific tasks, as required, such as the selection of representatives and seeking the views of children looked after;
- Officers will develop the Pledge so each child looked after will be aware how the Council will deliver on each of the 7 points. This will be made public and placed on the Harrow Council web site;

- Each child looked after will have an individualised Pledge imbedded within their care plan and which will be scrutinised at his or her child care review.

Financial Implications

Beyond Limits will be assisted by the Participation Team and other officers to meet and provide training. 2k is required annually for refreshments, activities and travelling. This financial cost is being met by way of the Care Matters grant which is within the base budget held by the Divisional Director, Children's Services, Safeguarding, Family Placement & Support.

Risk Management Implications

Risk included on Directorate risk register? **No**

Separate risk register in place? **No**

Corporate Priorities

The corporate priority this report incorporates is:

- Improve support for vulnerable people

It will provide a further voice to Children Looked After and contribute to the monitoring and effectiveness of the Harrow Pledge

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

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| Name: Emma Stabler | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Chief Financial Officer |
| Date: 6 October 2010 | | |
| Name: Helen Ottino | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | on behalf of the Monitoring Officer |
| Date: 8 October 2010 | | |

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Andreas Kyriacou, Senior Professional, Safeguarding and Review, Children Looked After andreas.kyriacou@harrow.gov.uk

Background Papers: None