

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 6TH FEBRUARY, 2017, 19:30**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Patrick Berryman, Jennifer Mann, Felicia Opoku, Anne Stennett and Elin Weston (Chair)**

### **448. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

The Chair referred those present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting and asked that those present reviewed and noted the information contained therein.

### **449. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Morris.

Apologies were also received from Annie Walker, Kim Holt and Lynn Carrington.

### **450. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

### **451. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING WITH ASPIRE**

NOTED: The actions listed in the notes of the meeting with Aspire.

### **452. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

### **453. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2016 were AGREED.

### **454. MATTERS ARISING**

The Committee NOTED the Corporate Parenting Agenda Plan 2016/17

### **455. PERFORMANCE REPORT**

RECEIVED the report on Performance for the Year to the end of November 2016. Report included in the agenda pack (pages 15 to 20).

NOTED in response to discussion:

- An overall improving trajectory in relation to the majority of performance indicators.
- 438 children were in care on the last day of November 2016 or 74 per 10,000 population including 39 unaccompanied asylum seeker children. There had been a gradual increase in the level of children in care in comparison to the position at the end of March 2016 - 31 more children in care. However a reduction in Haringey's rate of looked after children in 2015/16 placed Haringey within the inter-quartile range of our statistical neighbours (a rate of 69 per 10,000 population), although the current rate remained above the London (51) and national average (60) rates.
- At the end of November, 91% of looked after children had an up to date Care Plan. Performance in this area had consistently remained above target since February 2016 as a result of activity tracking in weekly meetings held by the Head of Service for Children in Care.
- At the end of November, 84% of looked after children aged 16-17 had up to date Pathway Plans. Performance in this area improved slightly since the reported position in August 2016 (82%) and was closing the gap with the 90% target.
- A similar improvement trend on Personal Education Plans was reported although current performance had declined since the August school holidays. 81% of school age looked after children had an up to date PEP as at the end of November. This area continued to be a priority for performance tracking.
- At the end of March 2016, there were 35 pupils in Year 11 who were looked after continuously for 12 months or more. Of these, 13 (37%) attained 5 GCSEs A\*-C incl. English & Maths – a significant increase compared to 28% in 2015.
- Indicators around stability of placements for looked after children remain in line with statistical neighbours and targets. In the year to November 2016, 9% of children had three or more placement moves, below the statistical neighbour average (10%). 75% of children under 16 who had been in care for at least 2.5 years had been in the same placement for at least 2 years, slightly above our statistical neighbour average (67%).
- At the end of November, 95% of children in care for over a month had an up to date health assessment, above target and continuing the positive trend.
- Data for the period July to September 2016 confirmed that the average duration of care proceedings for concluded cases was 32.5 weeks, an improvement from the 37 weeks in Q1 and better than the 2015/16 average (34 weeks). Q2

data for 2016-17 showed 44% were concluded under the 26 week statutory timescale.

- The outcomes for 36% of care proceeding cases issued between July and September 2016 was for children to remain with or reunify with their parents compared to 54% of children in 2015/16. In a further 27% of cases issued, children remained in their family of origin under SGOs and in 36% of cases children were placed on care/placement orders, an increasing trend compared to 2015/16.
- In the year to December 2016, only 20 permanency orders had been achieved (11 adoptions and 9 special guardianship orders (SGOs) – 11 fewer than the same period last year and the lowest recorded for many years. There seemed to be a trend towards placement with families- kinship or connected persons as opposed to adoption or SGOs. National quarterly data suggested that this was a trend being observed elsewhere.
- Of the children that have ceased to be looked after this year 9.3% have been adopted which compares with 15% nationally and 8% in London but this is lower than the 11% achieved in 2015/16. Special guardianship referrals continue to be low and it is likely that no more than 12 will be achieved by the end of the financial year. If SGOs were included, almost 16% of those who ceased to be looked after achieved legal permanency this year.
- Haringey's latest 3 year rolling average position as published in the Adoption Scorecard in March 2016 was 691 days for the period 2012-15, higher than the national threshold and England position of 593 days but close to statistical neighbour average of 696 days.
- The 2015/16 trend towards the reduction in the number of care proceeding applications has shifted towards an increasing trend in Q1 2016/17. This trend had continued in Q2 and reveals a significant increase in applications in respect of children under 1.
- Performance on care leavers in suitable accommodation and in education, employment and training (EET) for 2016-17 is comparatively poor and below average levels reported for England and London. Approximately 30% of *all* former relevant care leavers aged 17-21 are recorded as in EET down from 47% of 19-21 year olds and 57% of 17-18 year olds in 2015/16. This was lower than the national and London average comparator data (49% & 54% for 19-21 yr olds and 61% and 62% for 17-18 year olds). Haringey also reported a higher proportion where the local authority did not have information about the care leavers activity (19% compared to 12% average for London and 11% nationally) in 2015/16.
- In 2016/17 around 50% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation down from 74% (for 19-21 year olds) and 71% (of 17-18 year olds) last year. Again this performance was comparatively low as nationally 83% of care leavers aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation and 88% of 17-18 year olds.

AGREED to note the report.

The Committee requested that a report outlining the reasons for the decline in the number of permanency orders being secured be brought to the next meeting. **Action: Sarah Alexander.**

The Committee also requested that a short report be drafted for the next meeting, which set out comparative performance levels of LAC and educational achievement levels, in particular a breakdown of how well black/African Caribbean children were performing in relation to the rest of their peer group. **Action: Fiona Smith**

#### **456. HOUSING AND CARE LEAVERS**

The Committee NOTED the report of the Director of Housing Demand which was included in the agenda pack at pages 21-23.

The Director of Housing Demand advised the Committee that Housing Services and Children's Services had agreed that a quota of social housing lets would be set aside each year for care leavers. The quota level was based on a projection of the number of people that were due to leave care that year and a consideration of the range of needs. The current quota was 60 one bedroom properties and 6 two bed properties. Liaison was undertaken with the Young Adult Services for nominations to the quota and allocation of Band A status.

The Committee was advised that there were two training flats which were used as a supported living scheme to help young people who may need to develop some additional skills or experience before managing their own tenancy. The Director of Housing demand also advised that HfH were also looking to add some studio flats to this provision where the young person would be provided with floating support. In response to a question on the timing of the studio flats, the Director of Housing Demand commented that she could include the next suitable property into this provision but advised that the volunteer support needed to be in place from the YAS. The Director of Housing Demand agreed to discuss this with Emma Cummergen. **Action: Denise Gandy.**

The Director of Housing Demand advised that homelessness legislation supported the Leaving Care Act; 18 – 21 year olds who are care leavers had an automatic priority need and so the Council would owe them a homelessness duty if they were in housing need. It was noted that since the introduction of the social housing quota, most care leavers moved on to their settled accommodation without the need for temporary accommodation.

The Committee was advised that if a care leaver preferred to move into private rented accommodation, they could be supported to do this through an incentive payment to a private landlord. Care leavers were exempt from the shared room rate in the private sector until they were 22 and so would be able to rent a one bedroom flat rather than just a room.

The Director of Housing Demand suggested that consideration was being given to whether there was more that could be done to enhance the Council's offer as corporate parents. Options included: Working with contractors to offer a day course on

painting and decorating and basic home maintenance; an enhanced housing management offer and offering an apprenticeship to a care leaver. The Director of Housing Demand agreed to progress working with contractors to offer a course on painting and decorating. **Action: Denise Gandy**

The Committee expressed significant concerns with the experience of the Young People's Involvement Officer when she accompanied an Aspire Member on a housing visit. Concerns were raised that the visit was carried out in hurried manner with a number of other prospective tenants waiting outside and that an immediate decision on the property was requested. In response to a question from the Committee, officers clarified that if the young person turned down the property they wouldn't intentionally be made homeless; instead they would go back into the bidding process. Applicants in Band A, including care leavers, had their status reviewed every six months and provided they had been bidding they would be able to continue to bid for other properties.

The Director of Housing Demand acknowledged that she would feed back some of the issues raised to her colleagues; including the need to offer additional support at the viewing stage and the need to reconsider the speed of the process. **Action: Denise Gandy.**

The Chair reiterated that she would like to include a pledge around the Council's housing offer to Aspire. The Director of Housing Demand advised that the pledge would need to be developed jointly with the Council's Housing Strategy team and suggested including the Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning. The Chair requested meeting with the Director of Housing Demand, the Head of Housing Strategy & Commissioning and any other members of the Committee to discuss developing the Aspire housing pledge. **Action: Clerk/Denise Gandy.**

The DCS enquired whether care leavers were flagged up on the housing system and whether there was any way of ensuring there was a consistent approach taken to flag up care leavers at agreed stages in the process. The Director of Housing Demand agreed to look into this suggestion. **Action: Denise Gandy.**

The Interim Service Manager Fostering and Adoption enquired whether there was any specific protocol in place around rent arrears and evictions for care leavers. The Director of Housing Demand advised that a protocol between Children's Services HfH around a range of issues had recently been signed off, and agreed that she would go back and check if this included rent arrears. The Director of Housing demand suggested that this could be added to the protocol if it was not already included. **Action: Denise Gandy.**

#### **457. IRO ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16**

NOTED the IRO Annual Report 2015/16 introduced by the AD Safeguarding and Social Care was included in the agenda pack at pages 25-42. The Committee was advised that the Independent Review Officer performed a quality assurance role and oversaw the development of a child's care plan from the point that they came into care. The provision of IROs was a statutory responsibility for the council. The IRO would meet with the child within the first 20 days and would continue to meet with the child and their carer at least every 6 months with the aim of reviewing the care plan.

The IROs also worked closely with the social work team to agree permanency outcomes. The Committee was advised that it was an annual requirement for CPAC to receive an annual report on the IRO Service and that the report is usually produced around October for the preceding year. The Clerk to add IRO report to the Forward Plan. **Action: Clerk.**

The Chair asked whether the introduction of Viewpoint had made a difference to how well Children's Services were able to capture the voice of the child. In response, the AD Safeguarding and Social Care advised that the improvements hoped for had not materialised so far and that technical problems had been encountered around both inputting and extracting information from the system. The Head of Service CIC advised that officers were reviewing the system's functionality and were considering whether to adopt an alternative system as the process of getting information on to Mosaic was quite labour intensive. The DCS reassured the Committee that the voice of the child was also considered during development of pathway plans and care plans.

In response to a question from the Committee, the AD Safeguarding and Social Care advised that the Service Manager for Quality Assurance was responsible for writing the annual report. The Committee was also advised that the government were considering reducing the level of statutory requirement for IROs to conduct a review of every care plan and that this was not well received by the IROs themselves. The AD Safeguarding and Social Care also advised the Committee that the reduction in two posts within the IRO team had so far been manageable and that there were some members of staff who undertook child protection reviews who could also undertake IRO reviews if required.

#### **458. VERBAL UPDATE ON PAN LONDON ADOPTION BID**

NOTED the verbal update given by the Director of Children's Services on the Pan-London Adoption bid. The Committee was advised that a paper went to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> December which set out the London wide arrangements and agreed to Haringey joining the London wide arrangements on a provisional basis. The preferred option for a pan-London adoption was a local authority trading company delivery model with a strategic VAA partnership operating in a hub and spoke model. The DCS reiterated that there was no 'do nothing' approach and that the Secretary of State had powers to force local authorities to enter into joint arrangements. The only realistic alternative to joining the London wide adoption scheme was entering into arrangements with Coram. The Committee was advised that most London local authorities had joined the pan-London scheme, with Bexley entering into a joint arrangement with Kent and Harrow joining Coram.

#### **459. VERBAL UPDATE ON FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT**

NOTED the verbal update given by the Head of Service, Children in Care and Placements on progress around the recruitment of a provider to undertake training and recruitment of in-house foster carers.

The Committee noted that an interim contract was being developed with NRS for the continued provision of foster care recruitment until a new contact was in place. The Committee was advised that a change to the procurement process had resulted in a

delay to the overall procurement timetable and that the deadline for receiving tenders was 6<sup>th</sup> March with an anticipated implementation date of April. The Chair advised that there had been no net loss of foster carers as a result of the delays to the procurement process.

The Committee noted that a bespoke television advert had been aired by Sky for customers in Haringey with the aim of promoting and recruiting foster carers. The advert was prepared by Communications and it was hoped that there could be significant financial benefits given the additional costs involved with having to recruit through an external agency. The Chair agreed to circulate a link to the adverts to the Committee. **Action: Chair.**

In response to a question, officers advised that the new contract would be 2 years in length with the potential for a further extension of 12 months, and reiterated that at present there was no in-house foster carer recruitment team. The Head of Service CIC advised that Commissioning had advised that there were four or possibly five agencies that were interested in the contract and that this was seen as a very positive response.

The Chair requested a written report to the Committee around the new fostering service contract at the next meeting, once the contract was in place. **Action: Dominic Porter-Moore/ Clerk.**

#### **460. PROFILE OF CHILDREN IN CARE**

RECEIVED and NOTED a presentation and report which provided an analysis of looked after children, and the reasons behind the challenging cohort within that group. The presentation and report were included in the agenda pack (pages 43 & 51 respectively).

In response to a question, the DCS acknowledged the overrepresentation of Black African & Black Caribbean young people within the LAC cohort and also commented that similar overrepresentations were present within the Youth Offending Service cohort and other demographics such as exclusions from secondary schools. The Committee considered how the statistics in the presentation could be used to shape policy. The Chair highlighted the BME attainment group as a good example of how to drive positive outcomes in this area. The Committee also noted that the Children's and Young People Scrutiny Panel had produced a report on disproportionality within the Youth Justice Service and would also be looking into youth transitioning. The Chair suggested that any future report could be brought to the Committee.

#### **461. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

#### **462. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Director of Children's Services advised the Committee that the lead Ofsted inspector from the last inspection visit in 2014 had been commissioned to come into Children's Services to review current progress. The Committee was advised that this

would include validating self evaluations, investigating the single point of access into the MASH, and reviewing the journey of the child through the system. This was due to start on 6<sup>th</sup> March.

Future meetings

NOTED the following date:  
3<sup>rd</sup> April 2017

Informal meetings with the Aspire group are scheduled to start at 6.30pm.  
Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee due to start on the rise of the Aspire meeting.

The meeting ended at 20:45 hours

CHAIR: Councillor Elin Weston

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....