

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 28 JUNE 2011**

Councillors Allison, Brabazon, Reece, Reith (Chair), Stennett and Watson

Apologies Councillor Solomon

Also Present: Councillor Beacham, Debbie Haith, Chris Chalmers, Wendy Tomlinson, Sandjea Green, Shanti Jacob, John Allen,

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
CPAC1	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Solomon and Cllr Beacham attended in her place.</p>	
CPAC2	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>None</p>	
CPAC3	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>None</p>	
CPAC4	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 19th April were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	
CPAC5	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members discussed their requirements for a report on occupancy levels at Children’s Homes. It was proposed that this be a quarterly update and include information on: how the places at the Homes have been filled, the timetable for filling the places at the Home and the running costs of unfilled places. It would also be useful for the committee to understand how the council were different or similar to other boroughs in this area or to other Children’s Homes run by private organisations. When considering this future report the committee were advised that it was likely to be exempt as the number of children that would signalled in the report could eventually, through the discussion of them by the committee, make them identifiable. It was agreed that in the short term the committee would consider this report in the closed part of the meeting and would review the content of discussions after two or three meetings to decide whether this report should remain in the closed part of the meeting. • Developmental work on Isolation was to be considered at the 22 	<p>DH</p> <p>CC</p>

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	September meeting.	
CPAC6	<p>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</p> <p>The committee received an update on the Children in Care national indicators and other key performance information for the end of April 2011. This was a relatively concise report as the team were compiling the end of year performance report which would be available for the committee to consider at their next meeting in September. It was advised that there had been a spike in the number of children becoming looked after during February, March and April. There had been a separate necessary police authority exercise which had seen an increase in the number of children coming into care during this period. However the service had seen a reduction in figures for May. The committee learned that there had been a concerted effort by the Children and Families service to review children that were the subject of a Child Protection Plan to ensure that intervention was making a difference.</p> <p>The Committee noted that the service were confident that the number of children now ceasing to become the subject of a child protection plans was appropriate. The services were examining the current movements of children in care and considering: the children that were 18 and about to leave care, those in a pre adoptive procedure, the numbers of children with permanency plans (which was a good number). The latter analysis had enabled the service to recognise that there was a need to make additional resources available to support the permanency process. The Head of Children in Care was positive about the good number of young people that through rehabilitation, could be deemed able to return to their family home. This would of course be following an assessment and the section 20 agreement of the Deputy Director of Children and Families. The committee were interested in the next performance report containing some further information about the benefits of the services continued permanency work with children in care.</p> <p>The Committee particularly expressed a need to continue with understanding what the trends were behind the performance data , this would be important in understanding whether the borough was experiencing different or similar challenges to other comparable boroughs. For example examining the situations of young people leaving care at 18, the number of unaccompanied minors, considering the age ranges of children coming into care and leaving care, family groupings of children in care and sibling groups. The Chair requested that any further suggestions from committee members on the statistical information they wanted to be included in the end of year performance report could be emailed to her.</p> <p>There was discussion about the rate of children in care in Haringey compared to the national average and other comparable boroughs and whether also following personal case experiences there was reason to think that this number as too high. It was noted that Ofsted had reported, in their recent inspection, that the children placed in care by the borough</p>	<p>DH</p> <p>All to note</p>

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was correct. Expanded comparisons with other comparable local authorities would be available in the next performance report to the committee as the full year data would be available and would provide more background to the data.

It was noted that the service was working with the assistance of Independent Review Officers with children that had been in long term care on rehabilitation. When considering rehabilitation of older children into the family home it was important to keep in mind that some older children would want to go back to their family home as there maybe changed family situations and different dialogues developed between the young people and their families from when they were originally placed in care. In some cases, the same issues that may have led the young person to be placed in care as a younger child may not be as significantly relevant to them now with their developed independence. The committee noted that these young people could already be visiting the family home with or with out Council's permission. The committee were assured that in situations where the local authority felt that the young person absconding was unsafe they would continue to seek the relevant court orders and legal representation to keep the young person away from the family home and safe. The Committee were assured that the service were continually examining and reviewing the situations of children in long term care and any children that were likely to benefit from rehabilitation exercises would be efficiently identified.

In further looking at the number of children in care in comparator boroughs it was remarked that Hackney had a different approach and system for safeguarding. Advice was sought on whether it is worthwhile for the committee to receive information on their approach and way of working. The chair advised that the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee, the sister Cabinet advisory committee, had previously been recommended to receive a presentation from Hackney Council on this as they were the appropriate committee assigned to safeguarding children before they came into care. They were also due to consider a briefing on the Munroe report which could be circulated to interested members when published and members could attend the meeting with the permission of the chair when this item was considered on the 28.07.2011.

All to
note

The indicators on the stability of placements reflected that there were good improvements to the management of placements for children in care with 80% of children now in foster care placements. The service were also countering the need to make sudden decisions on placing children in placements by examining, over a two week period, the children that were likely to come in to care . The preparatory work of the service was helping children to be placed in a suitable placement sooner.

In relation to paragraph 2.14 reporting on care leaver's Not in education, Employment or Training activity, it was clarified that there was just one care leaver in this predicament.

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	<p>The committee noted that the outcomes of the fostering week activities would be analysed and reported upon in the next performance report in September.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the report be noted. ii. That the forthcoming end of year performance report contains information on the: permanency work with children in care and that there be further interrogation of data to identify trends behind the performance data. Committee Members to put forward suggestions on the statistical information they want to consider in this report. The report should also contain the results of the fostering publicity undertaken in the first two weeks of June. 	DH
CPAC7	<p>CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY</p> <p>The committee considered the final version of the Corporate Parenting Strategy. The strategy had previously been distributed to Corporate Parenting Committee members for their earlier comments along with the Action Plan. The committee advised that the Action Plan would be the crucial document to take a forward the principles of the strategy and was therefore the document that they were most interested in. The Deputy Director for Children and Families advised that the Action Plan was planned for quarterly consideration by the committee starting from September 2011. There were a number of key actions identified in the Ofsted inspection which had milestones set for completion for the end of August. These would be appropriately reported to the September committee.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. That the Corporate Parenting strategy be agreed. ii. That an update on the Corporate Parenting Strategy Action Plan be considered at the September 22 meeting. 	DH
CPAC8	<p>NORTH LONDON ADOPTION AND FOSTERING CONSORTIUM</p> <p>The committee were asked to consider the annual report of the North London Adoption and Fostering consortium. This report communicated how the five boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Haringey and Islington along with associate members Norwood and the Post Adoption</p>	

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	<p>Centre had been working together over the past year on: new adoption initiatives, developing work in fostering, joint publicity, information exchange, adoption training developing the work of the consortium. It was important to note that fostering had only been added to the portfolio of the Consortium's work over the last year. Adoption had always been a compatible area for shared working as it was regulated and therefore Councils would follow similar processes. The five London boroughs had already been working together on adoption for around 10 years and now had agreements in place, among others, on how adopters were shared. The requirements around training for fostering and adoption were set in regulation and standards therefore it made financial sense to the 5 boroughs to access this as part of a group. Publicity around fostering and adoption was another area where funding from the five boroughs was grouped together to provide the maximum opportunity to issue a diverse range of material that would reach different audiences. Recently the consortium had organised a high profile adoption event where 15 potential adopters had been identified.</p> <p>The committee were pleased to note that Haringey had the highest number adoption orders compared to neighbouring boroughs and they were also working on increasing their special guardianship orders. The committee noted that the placement of a child/young person with family members in a fostering arrangement or through a special guardianship order was dependent upon the monitoring requirements for the child.</p> <p>The overarching issue of how much each consortium borough pays for foster care was part of a separate piece of work by the North London Strategic Alliance and would be reported upon in due course.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the report be noted.</p>	
<p>CPAC9</p>	<p>ATTENDANCE OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEW OFFICER</p> <p>The committee had, at a previous meeting, received a brief introduction on the roles and duties of an Independent Review Officer. They now invited two Independent Review Officers to attend the meeting to discuss their work with the Children's and Families service. They were also asked to talk about the difference their role made to the work of the Children's service. The Independent Review Officers reflected on a typical couple of weeks work in the Children's services. The committee learned that the Independent Review Officers assisted with the chairing of Child Protection Reviews and ensured that the meeting was child centred. This meant engaging with the child before and after the meeting. They aimed to keep the meetings as small as possible in the interests of the child and ensured that requirements such as translators or sign workers were on hand to attend the meetings. The IRO's also had responsibility for examining health and education requirements of the child as part of the review. When asked about their communication with children under 5, they advised that they would observe the child's</p>	

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behaviour in their placement and report their views to the meeting. The Independent Review Officers worked in consultation with the Social Workers to choose the appropriate people to be around the child at the meeting. Although they worked quite closely with Social Workers and were employed by the Council, their role was to be a critical friend and provide quality assurance. If they had serious concerns about, for example, if timescales were not being met for dealing with issues concerning a child they had the free role to escalate matters through the management structure as their duty was to act on behalf of the child at all times. This duty was mostly recognised by social workers when getting feedback from the IRO. In their free role they were able to pick up on general issues in social work activity and process. They had recently brought to the attention of senior management the issue of post 18 provisions and also raised similar issues as the committee on the need to look at the trends behind children in care and in turn a need for a strategy to deal with these trends. The Deputy Director for Children and Families advised that recently a group had been set up to look at the general issues identified by the IRO's and also consider where some required escalation to senior management for global focus.

The Independent Review Officers explained to the committee that they were going through a difficult transition period as 2 experienced officers had retired and one other officer was moving to a position in another borough. Their capacity would further be affected by the amalgamation of their roles with Child Protection Advisor role. There was anxiety expressed by the Independent Review Officers on taking on the extra responsibilities that this would involve as it would mean that, with less staff, they would be expected to now manage cases instead of managing care plans. The committee noted that the Children and Families Service was currently advertising to recruit to the 3 vacant IRO positions and these existing positions would be filled. Going forward, the Children and Families service would consider the management of the cases to ensure that there was a safe number for each IRO to deal with.

In response to a question on how the findings of the IRO officer had influenced practice, the allocation of children in care to certain teams could sometimes be disputed. Currently one IRO officer felt that children subject to care plans with disabilities should be placed with the Disabilities team instead of with the children in care team and this was being looked at by senior management.

It was noted that an annual IRO report, referenced in the report, would be produced and the Corporate Parenting Committee would consider this in April 2012. It was proposed that, before this date, a mid term report be considered by the committee at their meeting in October. The committee agreed that this should be a frank report led by the independent review officers themselves which would set out their concerns and challenges. An example of the type of issues that could be highlighted in the report was the changes to university tuition fees which could unduly impact on unaccompanied minors. They would be asked to pay higher overseas student fees if they have not been given indefinite

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	<p>leave to remain in the country. In the past this group of LAC, in particular, had took up the opportunity to access higher education.</p> <p>In response to the question on the number of issues taken forward with management, it was noted that, over the last year, there had been 5 issues escalated in relation to transport, location, suitability of placement, and sibling contact. All the issues had been resolved and the committee noted that it was only as a last resort that issues were taken outside the authority to CAFCASS.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. That a mid year Independent Review Officer Report be considered by the committee at their meeting on 27 October 2011. ii. That the independent review officers be added to the distribution list for Corporate Parenting Committee papers. iii. That the concerns expressed about post 18 provision and placement of children with disabilities that are subject to care plans with the children in care team be added to the committee's matters arising report. This was to enable the committee to follow how these concerns were being progressed. iv. Agreed that a report on looked after children with disabilities be considered at a future meeting of the committee. 	<p>IRO</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>
<p>CPAC 10</p>	<p>ADOPTION PROCESS</p> <p>The committee considered a briefing on adoption agencies as a prelude to the end of year report from the adoption and permanence panel. The briefing advised that the all local authorities had a duty to provide an adoption service but were not obliged to provide all the facilities of an adoption service itself, and could make use of the services provided by voluntary adoption agencies and adoption support agencies. The services provided by the adoption agency would include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding whether a child should be placed for adoption • Preparing , assessing and approving prospective adopters • Matching and proposing a placement • Adoption Support Services • Post Adoption services 	

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The committee noted that clear care planning with permanency was the key element to finding adoptive families for looked after children. In the interest of the child's welfare, timing was crucial and delays, following the agreement that the child should be adopted, were not acceptable. The key responsibilities of the local authority were set out in the report and the committee informed that adoption is rightly a highly regulated process for a highly sensitive process involving children, adopters and parents. There was also information on the membership of the adoption panel, its responsibilities and reporting lines. As previously noted the Haringey Adoption service worked with the North London Adoption Consortium by sharing information on prospective adopters and arranging training for applicants, adoptive families and staff as well as other activities previously outlined in CPAC8.

In response to the question on the benefits of exchanging adopters within the consortium, the committee were advised that there was no profit or loss associated with the exchange of adopters as the boroughs recruited similar numbers each year. However, what was beneficial to the five boroughs sharing their adopters was greater choice available to match children with the most appropriate family.

In response to the use of the adoption process for older children, it was noted that this may not always be the best option as there will be issues with them bonding to a new environment.

The committee discussed the valuable and dedicated work of the adoption panel. They were informed that adoption panel meetings would often last a full day with the reading of the reports also a full day task. The committee commented on the potential need to examine the volume of work assigned to the panel and whether there was a need to assign a second councillor to this panel to share the workload. The committee noted that an inspection of the adoption service was due, following which there would be recommendations for the committee to consider.

It was important for the committee to note that there was an equally high volume of work associated with arranging and agreeing long term foster carers. The committee learned that if the child/young person settled well in the long term placement there would be potential to offer the foster carer the option of a special guardianship order, again assisting the child gain stability in their life. This again highlighted the importance of the fostering panel decision making.

RESOLVED

- i. That the report be noted
- ii. In recognition of the dedication and commitment required by members of the adoption panel, the committee placed on record their thanks and appreciations to Councillor Solomon for her

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	continuing work on this panel.	
CPAC 11	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>The press and public were excluded from the meeting for consideration of the following item as it contained exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended by Section 12A of the Local Government Act 1985): paras 1 & 2: namely information relating to any individual, and information likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p>	
CPAC 12	<p>END OF YEAR REPORT TO THE ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE PANEL FOR THE YEAR APRIL 2010 - MARCH 2011</p> <p>The committee received an end of year report from the Adoption and Permanence panel which contained statistics for the work achieved by them in 2010/11 .It was noted that Haringey performed better than neighbouring boroughs on the number of children placed for adoption. However the borough had more children in care than other neighbouring boroughs. The committee noted that the adoption service would seek to place siblings together unless there were good reasons for the siblings to be separated. There would be recommendations from the service to the panel on how the siblings should be placed. The committee noted part of the panel's focus would be treating the children as individuals with needs and on some occasions it may not be in the best interest of the child to place them with all or some of their siblings.</p> <p>The committee asked how confident the Children and Families service were in meeting the updated target of placing a child with a prospective adopter within 6 months of the agency decision. The committee learned that this would be a difficult task but the service would respond to this by starting the parallel planning process which takes place when a child is identified for potential adoption earlier.</p> <p>RESOLVED</p> <p>That the report be noted</p>	
CPAC 13	<p>INDEPENDENT VISITOR REPORTS</p> <p>The committee noted the aim of the Commissioning and Placements service to make a concerted effort to improve of regulation 33 inspections with the primary aim of achieving an outstanding standard of service for looked after children in Haringey Park, and Coppets Road Children's Homes.</p> <p>The Chair asked committee members to comment on the format of the report following recent changes to it. It was noted that whilst the report format was good as it allowed understanding of the issues identified on</p>	

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each visit, there was a need for the report to differentiate between recommendations of management to resolve the issues and the management action that had been taken to address the issues identified. Further comments were made about having the actions listed in a tabular format so that, where actions had already been taken, they could be ticked off the list. It was agreed that the report needed to list the persons taking part in the visits. It was clarified that recently no young people had participated in the visits. The committee noted that there had been some young people identified and trained to take part in the visits but they had not come forward when the visits to the home had been arranged. The Head of Commissioning and placements agreed to revisit this pool of young people to find out if any further support was needed to enable their participation.

Concern was expressed at the time that it had taken to organise restraint training for workers at the children's home. The committee advised that most permanent staff would have received restraint training before starting work at a Children's Home. However, it was accepted that this training required updating on a regular basis. The Head of Commissioning and Placements explained that it was not possible to access a shared training contract with schools as part of the training should include learning skills in de-escalation and behaviour management. There were recently two providers identified to access the training from and there would soon be available training dates for the Children's Home workers to select and attend.

Further concern was communicated about the number of children not attending school at one of the Children Homes and the responsibility of the Home workers to ensure that children that accessed learning through the SAM codes had regular access to this learning website. In particular one young person was showing educational potential which could be supported with access to web learning through the SAM code. On a recent visit inspectors had found this code had not been filed appropriately and its significance not understood when questioned. Clarification was sought on the roles of the IRO in monitoring situations like this, and the responsibility of the Children's Home to get the young people to access learning. In response it was noted that the IRO could only act in this type of similar situation if they have been made aware of it. The committee noted that workers in the home should have the responsibility and skills for encouraging children at the home to go to school and should be aware of the significance of the SAM code and keeping this in an accessible location. It was important for the committee to understand that there maybe a number and range of issues concerning the young person's non attendance at school existing over a number of years. However it was reasonable for, committee members who participated in the regulation 33 visits, to see an improvement to the participation of young people at the home in learning activities. The Head of Commissioning and Placements agreed to respond to the information provided by committee member and would report back to her and the Chair discussions with the Children's Home on these issues and the actions to be taken.

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	In relation to the report on occupancy to be considered at the September meeting, as set out in CPAC5, the committee further agreed that there should in be information included on how many residents there were per night in the homes, those in education, information on how long the young person had been in residence there and if they had an Personal Education Plan.	DH
CPAC 14	VERBAL UPDATE ON RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES Issues discussed in the previous item.	
CPAC 15	CHILD SAFEGUARDING Agreed that this item be removed from the agenda front sheet as safeguarding was always at the forefront of the committee members approach to items on the agenda.	Clerk
CPAC 16	ANY OTHER BUSINESS Item for the next meeting: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Performance Report 2. Occupancy levels at Children's Homes 3. Corporate Parenting Action Plan 4. Regulation 33 Visits 5. Developmental work on Isolation 	

Cllr Lorna Reith

Chair