

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 3 OCTOBER 2013**

Councillors Brabazon, Reece, Solomon, Stennett and Waters (Chair)

Apologies Councillor Allison

Also Present: Marion Wheeler, Chris Chalmers, Tracy Hutchings, Paul McCarthy, Rachel Oakley, Varun Sitaram and Ebony Hughes from IMPOWER

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
TEX253.	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</b></p> <p>There were no apologies for absence put forward.</p>	
TEX254.	<p><b>URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There were no items of urgent business put forward.</p>	
TEX255.	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest put forward.</p>	
TEX256.	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>Reference was made to <b>CPAC244</b>, final paragraph, and it was agreed that the Health Team had put forward a business case for recruiting an additional nurse and not a doctor, as stated in the minutes. Agreed that the minutes be amended accordingly.</p>	Clerk
TEX257.	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>Agreed that the concerns put forward by Aspire regarding the quality of accommodation for care leavers and young parents be taken forward. It was agreed to invite Denise Gandy, Head of Housing Support and Options, to the next meeting with Aspire in December. The Head of Children in Care explained that she was aware of the issues being faced by care leavers and there was ongoing work with housing to procure a better quality standard of semi independent accommodation. Getting better quality housing for young care leavers that are parents was a priority and a meeting was booked with Legal services and Housing to look at how the issues for young parents can be addressed. The Committee were assured that there was a co-operative relationship with Housing. There was also report due to the next CPAC meeting on the 19<sup>th</sup> December on the Housing of care leavers which would provide information in response to Committee Member's concerns.</p>	<p>MW Clerk</p> <p>Chris Chalmers</p>
TEX258.	<p><b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</b></p>	

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	<p>The report set out performance data and trends for an agreed set of measures relating to looked after children for the period ending in July.</p> <p>The Committee noted the following highlights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The number of children in care was declining at a steady level. There were also a good number of children moving in with relatives rather than foster carers.</li><li>• A child that had been in long term foster care had been adopted by the foster parents .</li><li>• As of last week, there were no children missing from care.</li><li>• Good percentage of adoption and special guardianship orders.</li></ul> <p>Members asked if there could be more up to date performance information considered at future meetings as the performance figures considered were for the end of July.</p> <p>Members questioned the definition of suitable accommodation[Op147] as following the discussions with Aspire it was felt necessary to look more closely at this performance area and understand what is meant by 'safe', 'suitable' and 'secure' and make sure this correlates with the understanding that the young person has about their accommodation. Members noted that at seventeen and a half care leavers are invited to workshops to get a good understanding of their accommodation options and their responsibilities as tenants. It was clarified that care leavers do get priority in the housing bidding system and this had been made clear to the Head of Housing Support and Options. There was a requirement for the care leavers to attend the tenancy workshops and Members were advised that work was being completed on securing better semi independent accommodation. There was also a meeting between the interim Director for Children Services and the Housing Improvement manager to discuss private rented opportunities and whether the potential to procure large properties as accommodation to be shared by care leavers.</p> <p>Noted that there was a report due to the next Committee meeting in December about housing for care leavers and this should include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ update on the work to procure better accommodation,</li><li>➤ the work with RSLs ,</li><li>➤ support being given to young care leavers who are also parents</li></ul> <p>Aspire had offered to complete inspections of properties and this was being considered.</p>	<p>Margaret Gallagher/ Performance</p> <p><b>Chris Chalmers</b></p>
<p><b>TEX259.</b></p>	<p><b>UPDATE ON EDUCATIONAL AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TAKEN UP POST 16; WHERE OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CONTINUING THEIR EDUCATION IN SEPTEMBER</b> As below</p>	

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<b>TEX260.</b>	<b>LAC ATTAINMENT</b> <p>The Committee considered the report on LAC attainment and the report on the post 16 support of LAC, together. As of September 2013, young people leaving Year 11 were required to remain in Education, Employment or Training (ETE) until the end of the academic year in which they are 17; in 2015 this will increase to 18. Members noted the education and employment pathway being followed by the 53 looked after children at year 12 and also considered the progress and results for Children in Care at the end of Reception, Key Stages1, and 2 and 4 . They were also provided with information on Haringey's Undergraduates/Graduates and new University entrants.</p> <p>The key points noted by the Committee were:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">The Virtual school were continuing to work with young people not achieving good results at key stage 4 and encouraging them to stay on in school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The criteria for attainment at key stage 4 had changed and a level 4 achievement was required in all areas. There was progress in achieving the required level 4 at Maths and English and the Virtual school would look at the progress being made in the previous year to understand the support that was needed.</li><li>• Young people in care were being supported at 16+ to stay in education and with some young people this meant encouraging re-engagement in education.</li><li>• There was a strong set of GCSE results for Sep 2013, building on the legacy of previous years. These young people had benefited from additional input during their time in secondary school and had engaged with study club, library meetings, learning events, made use of online revision help through use of SAM learning codes. Further examples of the one to one support were provided to reassure councillors of the quality of the contact being made by the Virtual school with pupils. It was noted that the Virtual school team will, on occasions and work load permitting, make visits to schools outside the borough being attended by LAC as well to understand the progress being made and speak with teachers if needed.</li></ul> <p>There was a question about whether children in care are at a disadvantage in the admission process and clarification was sought on the support given to get into a preferred choice of school. It was noted that children and young people in care will go through the admissions process in their placement borough and there will be support provided by the Virtual School, if there are problems with getting a place at their preferred school. In terms of Faith schools, they had their own admissions criteria. Sometimes it could be more difficult to place a young person in care at key stage 4 and, in this case, there would be</p>	
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	<p>further negotiation with schools but this was generally not thought to be a significant problem.</p> <p>The Pupil Premium Plus grant was explained to Members, and they noted that, as from April 2014, there will be £1,900 per looked after child for schools to spend money on. The Committee felt it would be useful to get a future report on how the LAC element of the Pupil Premium Grant is being spent. There were designated teachers in schools responsible for LAC and information on this spend could be ascertained from them</p> <p>The Virtual School were commended for their continual work and support to look after children.</p>	<p>Tracy Hutchings</p>
<p><b>TEX261.</b></p>	<p><b>INDEPENDENT ADVOCACY SERVICE - NYAS</b></p> <p>At the previous meeting, the Committee had requested an update on the new provider chosen to take forward Independent visits and the progress being made by them. The Committee noted that there were difficulties in attracting the right people to provide mentoring and advocacy support for young people in this, essentially, long term role. The new provider was working on compiling a diverse pool of volunteers. The Committee recommended encouraging people in the borough to volunteer. This could mean targeting staff, councillors and getting in touch with local community groups.</p>	<p>Rachel Oakley</p>
<p><b>TEX262.</b></p>	<p><b>DRAFT STAYING PUT POLICY</b></p> <p>The service had already been working on encouraging young people to stay put in their placements at 18 and Foster carers were being put forward some incentives to keep their placements beyond 18. There was now a need to create a policy and set out the council's preference which is to support young people to stay put in their foster care placements, if possible, as this will lead to better outcomes and provide the young person with stability. There would be financial implications to consider as this policy was developed and agreed.</p> <p>The Committee noted that Social workers would be supporting the young person in care and their foster carer reach to an agreement about living arrangements. It was noted that there were currently 4 young people participating in stay put arrangements.</p> <p>The YMCA project, that is funded by the council ,and aimed at supporting and housing 16 to 24 year olds who are on the verge of homelessness was mentioned. This had the similar theme of helping young people stay in a family environment. Agreed that the report on accommodation also provide an update on the placement of young people in this project. Although this project was about placement of young people, Members were asked to keep in mind that it was a mediation project and different to the work of the 'Staying Put' policy.</p>	<p>Chris Chalmers</p>

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	<p>Staying with the theme of support to young people in accommodation, it was further agreed, to include an update, in the report on care leavers and accommodation, on placement work with young people who are in the care of the council following the Southwark Judgement.</p>	<p>Chris Chalmers</p>
<p><b>TEX263.</b></p>	<p><b>FOSTERING SERVICE REVIEW</b></p> <p>The Committee welcomed Varun Sitaram and Ebony Hughes from iMPOWER to the meeting.</p> <p>Following an internal audit of Fostering Service at the beginning of 2013 there were found to be a high level of deficiencies in the service. This service had not been of a consistent high quality standard, in terms of its outcomes for children and young people, and iMPOWER were enlisted in May 2013 to carry out a further external review of the service.</p> <p>The review findings were put forward to Members along with recommendations on the way forward and an implementation plan for the service. These recommendations were compiled following consultation with key stakeholders, discussion with foster carers and staff. The main recommendation was to externalise the recruitment of foster carers to a separate organisation to effectively increase the number of foster carers in the borough and also cover the number of carers leaving the service through retirement.</p> <p>iMPOWER had examined values and motivation around becoming a foster carer and considered the profiles in Haringey in comparison to similar boroughs and there was an opportunity to increase the number of in house foster carers living in Haringey. The merits of externalising the recruitment and assessment part of the service would allow the process to be completed more expediently and enable the council to better focus on support to the foster carers, once recruited, which would remain with the council. The organisation that would be procured to undertake this recruitment role would have a detailed insight into foster caring and know the target areas for recruiting carers. It was envisaged that, if the recommendations were endorsed, the chosen organisation would start work in April 2014. Between now and April, there would need to be a strong contract compiled with a robust project plan accompanied by a strong sufficiency and placements strategy in place to enable the organisation to do their work effectively. The following key actions would also need to be completed in the coming 6 months: a mapping exercise to set out the implications of the externalisation, IT process change, governance system and a risk analysis system compiled and put in place.</p> <p>Committee Members were provided with an example comparator borough which had recruited a higher number of foster carers following the externalisation of the recruitment arm of the service.</p> <p>Members of the committee were keen for officers to progress quickly with the procurement process and enable the increase in foster carers to</p>	<p><b>All to note</b></p>

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	<p>happen as soon as possible. They were advised by iMPower representatives of the importance of compiling a robust governance process so that there was clarity on the actions that would be taken forward by the chosen organisation and the remaining responsibilities of the council. There was also a need to consider the capacity of the foster care support team and understand if there was enough to deal with the anticipated increase in the number of foster carers.</p> <p>Members were pointed to the implementation plan at page 70 of the report. iMPower had scoped out what is needed for children in Haringey and there was a need to ensure that this key analysis was factored in actions going forward and kept at the centre of what was trying to be achieved.</p> <p>The Committee were assured that the chosen provider would have to demonstrate their previous experience in foster care recruitment and have a good track record of providing this service. It was clarified that the foster carers would still need ultimate approval by the Foster Carers Panel which is made up of councillors and senior officers of the council.</p> <p>Committee Members made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As this was a likely to be a limited contract and subject to renewal, it would be important for the provider to be able to pass on knowledge and skills to council staff. There was also a need to establish a contract relationship between the council side of the service and the provider with clear lines of responsibility.</li> <li>• An independent social worker would be completing the day assessments and will have professional oversight of this process. There would be regular updates and reports provided from the chosen recruitment organisation.</li> <li>• A lot of learning will be gathered from the iMPower review for quality assurance purposes and there will be significant support from the Children's service to the Legal team to compile a contract.</li> </ul> <p>The Committee endorsed the report and decision to be made.</p>	<p>Paul McCarthy</p> <p>Paul McCarthy</p>
<p><b>TEX264.</b></p>	<p><b>UPDATE ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK</b></p> <p>The Committee noted that the framework had been launched following the collation of findings and research into the current quality assurance methods in place. The framework provided a clear simple structure for collating and sharing information about major areas of concern and good practice. The original framework consists of 11 key areas of quality</p>	

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	<p>assurance activity which combined are designed to support the organisation at all levels in understanding areas of concern and need for improvement as well as demonstrating the progress being made. Members noted that there has been a Quality Assurance Board in place since April and this is chaired by the Interim Director of Children's Services. This Board would look at the narratives and statistical information in place to ascertain if the services were below or meeting required standards.</p> <p>A list of planned audit areas was provided at appendix 1 and it was explained that there will be qualitative data checks completed each week to understand workings in the associated service areas. Members considered the planned audit areas and wanted to be given more assurance about how, as Members, they were able to know if the required actions were being taken forward and completed in good time. There were some Members that felt the quality assurance report, which is considered by the officer body, should also come forward to this Committee. The Chair asked Members to keep in mind the role and remit of the Committee which is responsibility for children and young people in care and care leavers and some of the audit actions were relating to safeguarding. Also there would be actions being taken forward that were operational and would be taken forward in business plans, service delivery plans and these were subject to management and performance monitoring.</p> <p>Members agreed that there would need to be assurance given to them that services were addressing the quality issues, arising from audits, which affected the welfare of children in care. As a starting point it was suggested considering the leaflet provided to councillors, a few years ago about their role as corporate parents. Members could consider this and provide comments on the areas they wanted feedback on in relation to the care and welfare of LAC and care leavers</p>	Clerk
<b>TEX265.</b>	<p><b>FRIENDS AND FAMILY POLICY</b></p> <p>The enclosed policy is designed to demonstrate the council's strong commitment to supporting relatives and family friends who step in to care for children when the child's parents are facing serious difficulties or challenges.</p> <p>The policy sets out the different situations within which family members and friends may be caring for children and provides information on the support available from the Children and Young People's Service.</p> <p>The draft policy was put forward for initial discussion and comment by Members. There would need to be funding made available for extended families taking on the care of a child, in accordance with the recent Tower Hamlets judgement. There was recognition, by the council, that they should make available training, ongoing development and a support network for family and friends taking on the responsibility of the care for a child.</p>	

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	<p>Legal comments were due to be added to the document and there would be explicit link to government guidance.</p> <p>Members initial comments on the policy included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The need to advocate the training aspect of the support to be provided as this will help with combating fears of isolation.</li> <li>• The friend and family caregiver role was different to the special guardianship role as this was subject to legal assessment.</li> </ul> <p>Members of the Committee were invited to put forward any further comments to the Deputy Director.</p>	All to note
<b>TEX266.</b>	<b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b>	
	None	
<b>TEX267.</b>	<b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b>	
	Not required	
<b>TEX268.</b>	<b>NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT BUSINESS</b>	
	None	
<b>TEX269.</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>	
	Next meeting on Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> December 2013 6.30pm	

Cllr Ann Waters

Chair