

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 13 JULY, 2022, 7:00PM – 8:50PM

PRESENT:

Councillors: Zena Brabazon (Chair), Elin Weston, Lotte Collett and Cressida Johnson

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the filming of meetings and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies had been received from Councillors Mahbub and Opoku.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 January 2022 and 17 March 2022 be approved as a correct record.

6. PERFORMANCE FOR 2021/22

Mr Richard Hutton, Senior Performance Officer, presented the report.

Councillor Weston commented that it was pleasing to see the statistics for care leavers, particularly as it was quite consistent. In response to questions from Members, the Committee heard that:

- The pathway plans would reach statistical highs of 80% on most weeks.
- The issue with keeping care plans up to date was due to a combination of different factors. Some of it was due to a recording issue and some of it was due to the impact caused by the coronavirus crisis on the workforce .

- The target was to establish a 90-95% regular visiting pattern for children looked after. In the case of matched placements, visits would be conducted every three months or as the need dictated. Close attention was given to the issue. Recording targets allowed five working days.
- An update would be given to the committee with actions and targets regarding the issue and the cohort of the young people that were seen would be broken down in a report.
- In response to the question regarding Care Leavers who had excelled in their education becoming mentors – panel accepted that there was experienced and trained mentors that could support the education of children in care.
- In relation to 17 to 18-year-olds not being in education training or employment, there were various reasons why this was the case. Some of the individuals were having treatment for Mental health challenges, some in hospital and a few were in remand. This was why it was not possible for some individuals to concentrate on education. Others had started work but found it hard to sustain employment. Other individuals had become parents and were too busy to study. Each individual story was different but there was high aspiration for young people and support throughout the journey of education, training, and employment.
- Young people were supported by professionals through the Aspirational panel, consisting of a range of providers, coaching and mentoring schemes.
- Young people had reported how difficult it was to find work. Civil service internships where available.
- A success rate of 100% was the goal but it was important to acknowledge the issues that young people were experiencing relating to their social, emotional and mental health difficulties.
- It was important to start early and ensure that close work was done with the virtual school as well as maintaining opportunities for young people.
- A paragraph could be inserted into the report to also categorise the breakdown of young people who were not in education, employment or training.
- If a young person was subject to a full care order, then the parent or the corporate parent (social worker) would sign the consent to allow the individual to be immunised with the COVID-19 vaccine if this was right for that young person.
- Million people have declined the vaccine even though they were encouraged to have it during health assessments. It was not clear if children looked after had the COVID-19 vaccine. This was not in the national statistics.
- Generally, Council professionals had avoided any blanket influence for young people to get the vaccine if they had underlying vulnerabilities.
- Adjustments to the recording system had allowed efficiencies combining the care plans with the LAC review reports. Professionals were focused largely on ensuring that the young people were visited on a regular basis and were aware of their needs mobilising the LAC system to meet those needs.
- There would be new IT systems in place in 2023, Social workers would receive extensive training on the new system.

- There were higher number of babies in the LAC system.
- There was prevalence of mental health support needs in looked after children including post-traumatic stress disorder. Work with CAMHS was focused but the challenges continued.
- There was a strategy in place that allowed managers to redeploy experience to manage pressure points in the system. This has enabled plans to progress whilst staff members were off sick. This strategy also included engaging interim workers to enable the needs of children to be met.
- A separate note would be distributed regarding the proportion of looked after children who have been diagnosed with mental health issues. They had been an observed increase in spectrum disorders. It was recognised that nationally there had been long waits for individuals going through the health systems for assessments to be completed.
- There were some nationally recognised issues for care leavers who after leaving the containment provided by the LAC system developed emotional challenges not previously assessed – there was a workstream led by the Head of Corporate Parenting looking at the Mental Health support needs of CIC and Care leavers with the Mental Health delivery group.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

7. BRIEFING FROM THE CHILDREN IN CARE HEALTH TEAM

Ms Lynne Carrington, Designated Nurse, presented the report.

In response to questions from Members, Ms Carrington informed the Committee that:

- Whittington health reported many children being seen. A combination of COVID and health staff sickness resulted in delays in the submission of reports confirming the outcome of the LAC health assessments. This was compounded by the lack of administrators who had moved on from the health service during COVID impact some 90 reports being delayed. In future there would be greater levels of monitoring and adherence to deadlines.
- Lynne Carrington explained the detail of the pathways followed by the doctors and how supervision was applied by consultants.
- The London NCL had a delay in processing checks. This was because UASC who had attended Barnet, Islington and Camden NHS trusts caused some pressures.
- There was a discussion raised regarding the accessibility of health visitors and a reminder that Health visitors do have work mobile phones and this number can be shared.
- Sometimes parents were reluctant to fill in their parental health forms when a child comes into care and whilst this was necessary to aid the assessment of the child's health needs it was not mandatory for parents to complete the form unless the courts

directed them to do so. This called on the influence of professionals to explain the purpose and importance of parental co-operation.

- HPV vaccinations were low nationally for looked after children. HPV vaccinations also needed parental consent.

The Committee felt that aspire could do some of the work to promote and campaign for HPV vaccinations.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Ms Beverley Hendricks, Assistant Director for Safeguarding, delivered a presentation on Corporate Parenting Champions and elaborated on the role of councillors as a corporate parent.

The meeting also heard that:

- Councillors would be encouraged to submit a general outline of their background and experience in an expression of interest in September to become a CPAC Champion.
- A report would be submitted to a future meeting regarding virtual schooling.

The Committee acknowledged the conference and work on Transitional Safeguarding and thanked Beverley Hendricks for her contribution to this work.

CHAIR: Councillor Zena Brabazon

Signed by Chair

Date