

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee HELD ON Tuesday, 25th March, 2025, 7:00pm – 9:27pm.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Zena Brabazon, Elin Weston, Cressida Johnson and Ibrahim Ali

ALSO ATTENDING:

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies had been received from Councillor Lotte Collett and Councillor Isilar-Gosling.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. MINUTES

There were no declarations of interest.

6. INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT UPDATE.

Mr Nazim Hussain, Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), introduced the report. The meeting heard:

- The Council wished to try and reduce the need to utilise the dispute/resolution process. This would provide a clear ethos that the Council wanted to work in partnership to be able to achieve the best for young people. It would be useful to have a reduction in the number of uses of alerts and escalations for administrative tasks such as social worker reports and care plans not being available in time for child in care reviews. This could cause disruption for some of the children.

- There were a number of activities and services available through the Young Adult Services that helped promote pathways to education employment and training. Education, employment and training was a focus of all children in care reviews. Independent Reviewing Officers' involvement ended at the age of 18 when the children had left care. Young Adult Services were working towards promoting engagement in education, employment and training.

- Direct feedback had been taken from children on their experience. Children enjoyed participating in their reviews. It helped empower them and have a sense of control over the direction of the care planning and the conversations within their meetings. Some of the feedback questions could be adopted to ensure that where young people chaired or co-chaired their reviews, their direct experience could be documented. This would be reported on in a future meeting.

- The dynamics of young people chairing or co-chairing their reviews resulted in professionals taking a keen ear to show more responsibility in answering directly to the young person. The dynamics of the conversation started off with what was important to the young person. Often these consisted of everyday life issues. The IRO was there to support and ensure that a range of information that helped the conversation and understand whether the care plan was right or not and how it may be enhanced for the young person.

- In relation challenging other professionals, this was never personal and was about being able to achieve the best for the young person. It was not always possible to agree on resolutions, but it was important to make attempts to steer the work in the right direction. Working through partnership decreased any possible antagonism.

- Data was reviewed regularly to monitor progress. If a young person had been with their parent for 12 months and this was going well, the Council would advocate for consideration being given to discharging the care order.

- IROs continued to work with health colleagues to be able to improve young people's access to health. IROs worked closely with its virtual school and queries were often effectively addressed. IROs also responded when social workers, team managers and service managers reached out to them for queries.

- For the next annual report, particular examples of case studies would be brought to the Committee to demonstrate the progress of young people and how things worked in practice.

RESOLVED:

To note the outcomes of the annual report for 2023/24.

7. THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Ms Jane Edwards, Assistant Director Schools & Learning Service and Ms Eghele Eyiutoyo, Headteacher, Virtual Head of School, presented the report. Members welcomed the report.

The Committee heard:

- Mastery could be defined as interventions that were happening to ensure that a young person can master a skill or a particular area of what they were studying. This would be something that happened in a classroom whereas tuition would be identified as a one-to-one activity.

- In relation to attendance, meetings were held on a regular basis to discuss attendance figures. An intervention would then be planned for a young person. Attention had to be paid to attendance figures to read behind the workings of them. It may be that the school had given a young person unauthorised absence which should not be listed as an unauthorised absence because, for example, the appointment the child was out of school for had been planned. The meetings helped to understand how the figures ended up as they did. Consultations would be held with the school to provide advice and guidance. The structure of the virtual school was changing. There was an attendance and inclusion manager who would hold attendance forums to support the professionals and other people around the young person. There was a national issue with attendance. This tied into other work in terms of how a child needed to feel that they belonged in a school and working with schools to make sure that young people felt belonged. Work would also be done to mitigate issues that a young person may have in possibly preventing them from attending school.

- When a child was suspended, assurances were sought to make sure the school was not using suspensions as a behaviour management tool. This had happened in the past and what was really required were other tools to support the young person. Other solutions were actively sought and the Council, at times, acted as a negotiator to avoid the outcome of a permanent exclusion or that another arrangement was in place as an intervention so that the placement could be maintained.

- In relation to suspensions, during around 2018, exclusions and suspensions in Haringey were very high. During this time, schools would inform the Council what it could have done to prevent the issue after a child had been excluded. The Council now tried to get ahead of any such interventions. Every case was audited to make sure that best possible efforts could be made. There had always been national stories of a child who had progressed well in school only to then once come into school with a knife or leave one at the school gate. This created a blemish for the child's record that became an impossible hurdle to pass. In such cases in Haringey, discussions had been held regarding understanding why a child may have transgressed, and although teachers were not told they could not make certain decisions, they were engaged along with the families to understand what other actions could be taken and this had caused a cultural shift. The same approach had been taken towards suspensions. The Council's achievements had received attention and had also been mentioned in national reports.

- There was still a lot of work to do and the service plan and the improvement plan recognised that. One of the key priorities was improving attendance, but the Council was also aware that some cohorts had not reached their desired progress. Maintaining placements wherever possible was fundamental. Continuous school placement changes were disruptive to young people.

- The introduction of the statutory role would mean that funding would become more stable. Lewisham Council had a virtual school where the Council was trying to build

their own models of monitoring. Haringey had looked at the Year 11 cohorts who were underachieving. Data was being collected on the children each term to see where they were in relation to attainment. In terms of aspiration, this would rely on knowing where the child was in relation to their personal progress to understand what needed to happen. Regular meetings would be held to make sure that the child had the right intervention to meet their target grade.

- When the ILACS inspection took place in February 2023, it was made clear that the Education Improvement Consultants (EIC) should be following the child. The EIC needed to provide constant support and a Virtual School staff member needed to follow their journey. For the children, there had been the consistency of knowing that they had the same EIC.

- In relation to NEETs (Not In Education Employment or Training), services were being commissioned and a mentor had been contacted to set up a program. A program of support would be set up for young people who were NEET. The UK social fund, which was given to lots of different organisations around London, was something that the Council was trying to access. There was support available for young people which was provided through funds. On occasion, if a young person was a parent or had any mental health challenges, they would not be able to enter the workforce, but where a child was able to progress, as much support as possible would be given to them which they felt was useful to get them back into the job market.

RESOLVED:

To note the outcomes of the Haringey Virtual School Report for 2023/24.

8. AN OVERVIEW OF THE YOUNG ADULTS SERVICES

9. CARE LEAVER'S PROGRAMME

As item 8.

RESOLVED:

To note the proposals of the programme and endorse progressing with next steps of development and implementation.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair noted that Mr Keith Warren, Head of Children in Care & Placements, would be leaving Haringey. The Committee thanked Mr Warren for the hard work and commitment he had shown in his role.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date