

MINUTES OF THE MEETING Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee HELD ON Monday, 7th April, 2025, 7.00 - 9.27 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Zena Brabazon, Felicia Opoku, Elin Weston, Lotte Collett, Marsha Isilar-Gosling and Ibrahim Ali

ALSO ATTENDING:

Councillor Dunstall, Councillor Gunes, Councillor Abela, Councillor Groskopf.

11. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

12. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies had been received from Councillor Johnson.

13. URGENT BUSINESS

There were none.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

15. PERFORMANCE REPORT

Mr Richard Hutton, Performance, Data and Analytics Manager, introduced the report.

The meeting heard:

- Occasionally, there may be a situation where care proceedings may be in progress. In such a situation, a parent might be placed in a parent and child foster placement. In that scenario, the child may be then placed with parents, or perhaps at the end of proceedings, a child may go home with a parent in a community. It was at the conclusion of that process whereby an assessment could be undertaken and the assessment would be called a 'placement with parents' assessment.
- An annual report was produced on EHCPs that had been refused assessment or issue. This had been done for the last two years and was used to track and monitor progress and to make sure that decision making was robust. This had been validated in the SEND inspection so

the methodology being applied was likely correct. In the last 12 months, of all of the plans that had been refused issue or assessment, the main reasons included children having moved out of borough (the multi-agency panel felt that there was more that could be done to support children's needs through the ordinary offer of education), children (or young people) had moved into employment or training, or that there was not enough information. All of this analysis was shared with headteachers so that they were aware of the reasons and how it compared to statistical neighbours and benchmarking. If any issue or assessments were refused, a Next Steps meeting was offered. This could look at why the decision had been made, but also how they could be supported through the ordinary offer of education. This was generally done with the education provider and the person that had made the referral.

- There were two panels. One that focused on children in care and that would include some who had EHCP plans. There was also another panel which had SEND power on it and they received regular reports. Further information could be provided to members outside the meeting.
- Prior to the coronavirus crisis, the number of children in care used to be quite high. Before the crisis, a lot of young people would arrive into the country in various methods. Since the crisis, people used other means to come into the country - by the seas - and so this had changed the numbers that came through to Haringey. There was also a national transfer scheme. Prior to the crisis, London was a high recipient of young people who were unaccompanied asylum seekers and there was an equation that stated that local authorities should receive 0.7% of the number of children in care. They needed to be unaccompanied asylum seekers. This then changed to 0.1% of the child population, but the children or young people were distributed across the country. So many were going past London to other places.
- The point of the threshold was for Haringey to be able to show that it had taken on the fair amount of children in relation to its responsibilities as a borough. However, whenever Haringey was below the threshold and was asked by another borough to take on another child, then the Council would agree to it.
- The 73% who had up to date Asset + related to the cohort within the Youth Justice Service. Some of them were associated with care or support from social services. One third of the cohort was open to social care at the same time.
- In relation to the 22% of the youth justice system being children looked after, there was a cyclical issue. When a child was remanded in custody, they automatically became looked after. Currently, the Council had a few children in our looked after cohort remanded in custody, so they became looked after due to having committed an offence rather than having committed an offence after having become a looked after child. There had been a reduction of this from one third to one quarter in the last two years and compared with the borough's statistical neighbours.
- There used to be a time where, if a young person was remanded, or even entered the criminal justice system, then they were not considered to be in care and the impact of this was that the individual did not get the

support. In many ways, there were positive to the current system as the social worker would work to make sure that the child had their health and care in order and were being monitored. Now, when a young person was remanded, they become a child in care and this meant that regular reviews had to be held, the young person was getting their education and anything else that was necessary. If the institution was suspected of being inadequate, then the Council could speak to a relevant person and also check up on the individual. Should the individual come out of the criminal justice system before the age of 25, the Council would support them through resettlement. This helped with housing and other support stopping the individual from quickly going back into the system.

- It was very important to make sure that the young people saw dentists. It tended to be older young people who made the decision that they did not want to be going to the dentist. About 88% were seeing dentists. This was an improvement and the Council always tried to have it as close as 100% as possible. However, older young people were free to make their own choices.
- The 11% which referred to the reason a placement ended was due to standard of care concern often fluctuated. Some of it was due to of this was due to the rebranding of the semi-independent accommodation or supported accommodation.
- In relation to young people who were NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training), this was one of the key areas of focus for the coming months. The Council had a care leavers program which was designed in part to look at how the Council could have as many pathways for young people to have routes into education, employment and training and jobs in the family business. The Council was working hard in the area to address the issue because you people needed to have the best possible outcomes.

The Chair felt that the issue relating to NEETs was a topical issue and something that the Corporate Parenting Advisory Board may wish to focus on more due to such big changes being proposed nationally in relation to investment to help get people into employment. An update could be provided on progress in the area.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

16. WHAT DOES CARE MEAN?

Ms Sandy Bansil, Service Manager, Safeguarding & Social Care, introduced the report.

- In relation to reciprocal housing (where a reciprocal housing arrangement was not an option, a young person could be supported to find private rented accommodation), the duty remained with Haringey even if the accommodation was outside the borough. The person would have an allocated personal adviser from the young adult service that would support them up to the age of 25.

- In terms of assessing the risk to someone that was coming out of custody, there would always be joint working with the Youth Justice Service. This would look at any intelligence collected Police and Youth Justice colleagues to make sure that the right places were being looked at for a child to live.
- In relation to young people being released from prison having location and post code challenges, it was not generic post code challenges, but specifically to do with who they had associated with and who they were known to. This would be considered before placing a child out of remand.
- In relation to supporting care leavers at university, young people would be supported at degree level. However, if they chose to go on to further education it would be ensured that continuous support while allowing students access to key stage experts would be given. The approach aimed to provide stability while incorporating specialized knowledge at different educational stages.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

17. CARE LEAVING IN LONDON

Mr Matthew Raleigh, Programme Lead for London Innovation and Improvement Alliance introduced the report.

- In relation to the role of housing associations, the housing stakeholder group had a few key activities including to get better collaboration across the work of local authorities and housing associations including leveraging better offers from housing associations. Work would be done with them on a London wide scale. A pilot would be launched in Bromley to see what a best practice co-design approach between a local authority and a housing association would look like. This learning would be shared with other local authorities.
- The spending on per care leaver over different local authorities would vary. Some would make positive transitions into adulthood and need relatively little support, other may need complex placements and ongoing support which may be costly. There would be benchmarking data, but it would be easier to look at set-up within each council. There was an arrangement of personal advisors and social workers, but it was difficult to find a regular unit cost for the provision of services. It was possible that one local authority had more resources than another.
- Concerns were raised about the role of housing associations, particularly when individuals with nomination rights were placed with providers that were not local authorities. It was noted that such situations could become complicated due to a lack of understanding of residents' experiences and needs. The discussion highlighted the importance of engaging with major housing associations to address these issues.
- In response, it was acknowledged that while a perfect solution was not yet in place, efforts were underway to improve collaboration between

local authorities and housing associations. A housing stakeholder group was actively working to strengthen these connections and secure better support from housing providers. Clarion and MVTH were participating in the group, and a pilot project was being launched between Clarion and Bromley Council to develop a best-practice model for cooperation between local authorities and housing associations. The outcomes of this pilot would be shared with other councils and housing associations across London.

- Additionally, a question was raised regarding variations in care leaver budgets among different local authorities. While specific figures were not readily available, it was noted that costs could vary significantly depending on the level of support required. Some care leavers transitioned smoothly into adulthood with minimal intervention, while others required complex placements and ongoing assistance, leading to higher costs. Further insights into overall care leaver budgets were expected from relevant stakeholders within the Council.
- Lambeth was specifically cited, prompting questions about its relevance and the broader role of the London Innovation and Improvement Alliance (LEA). It was established as one of nine regional innovation and improvement alliances funded by the Department for Education (DfE). While the Care Leaver work began in 2021, the LEA itself had been formed earlier.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

18. PROGRESS REPORT ON OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN CARE SUPPORTED BY HARINGEY YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE

Mr Matthew Knights, Head of Service, Youth at Risk and Ms Jackie Difolco, Director of Early Help, Prevention & SEND introduced the report.

- It was frustrating when speaking with BCUs to fight for children in terms of ensuring that they were getting the respective services they needed. Despite the difficulties, a strong working relationship had been maintained with police colleagues, particularly the missing persons team. They had played a crucial role in challenging counterparts in other BCUs to ensure missing children were still reported appropriately. However, the matter remained an ongoing discussion and, at times, a struggle. Efforts were being made to collaborate with police officials to prevent similar situations from occurring in the future, although they had already happened multiple times.
- A discussion was held on the placement of children supported by the Youth Justice Service (YJS), noting that a small percentage remained within the borough. It was acknowledged that when children formerly in the Council's care were placed far from Haringey, responsibility was usually relinquished. However, if they were placed in neighbouring boroughs, the Council retained oversight.

- Efforts were made to ensure that children placed within London continued to receive home visits and regular assessments. The Council maintained oversight of their progress, working in partnership to guarantee appropriate support. Escalation procedures were in place for cases where other youth justice services failed to provide adequate assistance. This priority was embedded in the Council's strategic plan, with operational oversight conducted monthly to track all children outside the borough but still under local responsibility.
- Further discussion reflected on the complexity of the youth justice system and the significant resources allocated to support a small but high-need cohort. The importance of early intervention, including speech and language support, was emphasised. Concerns were expressed regarding systemic challenges and the difficulties in preventing vulnerable young people from falling through the cracks. Despite these challenges, recognition was given to the service for producing a strong report, with appreciation extended for the efforts made to improve outcomes for these young people.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

19. VERBAL UPDATE - OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT

- On the 11th of February, Ofsted made two calls to announce their intention to review different aspects of the service. One of these reviews was a focused visit, specifically examining the local authority's arrangements for identifying and responding to children's needs for permanence. This had been highlighted in the 2023 full children's inspection as an area requiring improvement, while other areas had been rated as good.
- During the visit, Ofsted primarily analyzed children's records and held discussions with social workers, opting for minimal interaction with managers. Their focus was on performance, quality assurance processes, and how effectiveness was monitored. Initial discussions took place with senior leaders to reinforce the assurance aspect.
- The findings indicated that Ofsted had been impressed with the service improvements since the 2023 inspection. They noted enhancements in tracking and quality assurance systems, which provided better oversight of practice and performance. Leadership was seen as strong, with a clear understanding of service impact on children and young people locally.
- Social workers received particularly positive feedback for the strong relationships they built with children, supported by dedicated frontline managers. The inspectors acknowledged that the authority had a deep understanding and recognized the importance of continuous improvement. Only one area for further development was identified—the need for consistency in supervision across all services.
- Despite this, inspectors observed that children were making good progress, with a strong focus on education and health needs. They had access to trusted relationships with social workers, comprehensive care plans, and outstanding life story work. Overall, the authority felt immense pride in how social workers

represented their work with children in care and care leavers. The effectiveness of permanency arrangements and planning processes reassured Ofsted during their visit.

RESOLVED:

To note the report.

20. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were none.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date