

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2011**

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

Apologies Councillor Stennett, Debbie Haith

Also Present: Marion Wheeler, Attracta Craig, Wendy Tomlinson, Chris Chalmers

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
CPAC 116	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stennett and Debbie Haith.</p>	
CPAC 117	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>	
CPAC 118	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest put forward.</p>	
CPAC 119	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>On page 2 of the minutes, the section which set out the discussion on the regular performance report, it was explained to the Committee that a new format for the Performance report would be trialled and its continuance would be subject to Member comments.</p> <p>In relation to CPAC106, and the final paragraph which advised that a low number of LAC had been involved in the recent riots across London, it was clarified that this was an insufficient number to be considered a phenomenon.</p> <p>Following the above clarifications the minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	Clerk
CPAC 120	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>As part of the matters arising report, there was enclosed a response to Members concerns about the process and quality assurance arrangements in place for selecting third sector organisations to provide mentoring to care leavers. The Committee considered this information</p>	

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	<p>and there was a remark on the lack of information included on KIS, a sub group of CONEL. It was felt that officers should review the organisation's recent Ofsted report, and also check that the services provided by this group could cater for vulnerable groups of young people. Whilst there was an overview of the mentoring project and the organisations that would be involved in providing the mentoring services to care leavers, the Committee wanted to view background information on how the organisations were chosen. They wanted to understand the step by step process followed for checking and assessing organisations offering to deliver services to young care leavers. This was to enable a fuller understanding on why these organisations were deemed appropriate for delivering this mentoring service to young care leavers. The Head of Children in Care agreed that she would speak with the Head of the Youth services, who would have completed the quality checks on the organisations, and provide a fuller report back to the Committee at their next meeting in December.</p>	CC
<p>CPAC 121</p>	<p>OFSTED FOSTERING INSPECTION RESULTS</p> <p>It was previously envisaged that the Ofsted inspection of the Adoption service would accompany the Ofsted Fostering inspection report and allow the Committee to consider these two related subjects on the placement of Looked after Children together. However, Ofsted had exceeded their own deadlines in providing a report on the Adoption inspection. This was due to the unexpected illness of the Lead Inspector. The service had been promised a response to the inspection in a further 14 days time. Therefore, a report on the Ofsted inspection for Adoption would be ready for the next meeting of the Committee on the 13 December 2011.</p> <p>The Ofsted inspection of the Fostering service had been completed in August and the service had been deemed as 'satisfactory'. A team action plan accompanied the inspection report. It was stressed to the Committee that the action plan needed to be perceived as a 'team response' as the actions were not the sole responsibility of the Placement and Commissioning service. They relied upon a number of other stakeholder departments in the Children's and Families service to take forward the recommended areas for improvement arising from the inspection.</p> <p>The positive outcomes from the inspection were that children reported positive relationships with Haringey Foster carers. They felt their carers provided support: in their education, participation in leisure activities, and were able to advocate well for them. Children were well consulted about the service they received and benefited from a number of activities and groups set up by the Fostering service. The fostering panel and agency decision makers were found to make appropriate recommendations and decisions. Parents reported to inspectors that they valued the short breaks provided by the service.</p> <p>The Head of Commissioning and Placements then drew the Committee's attention to the Ofsted requirements arising from the</p>	WT

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inspection and the actions to be undertaken by the service to address these. A context and some reasons behind the requirements were provided to Members to aid understanding of their significance and how close the service was to achieving them. They were as follows:

Requirement 1 - Unannounced inspection of foster homes - The Committee noted that the requirement to have an unannounced visit was separate to the statutory 6 weekly visits. The Committee noted that the statutory requirement to visit a child in their foster placement was every 6 weeks and this was continuing. However, there were some foster carers not visited in the 6 weekly timescales and some visits not as thoroughly undertaken as required. There was an improvement plan assigned to requirement 1 which included a review of carers not visited in the timescales and unannounced visits for carers who had not received this type of visit in the last 6 months. As part of this, requirement 2, which was not a specific Ofsted requirement, the service recognised that there was a need for supervising Social Workers to add more information about their 6 weekly visits to the foster homes. This meant adding more details about their observations, other than how the basic care requirements were being kept to.

Requirement 3 - The policy on accepted methods of restraint and discipline on children placed with foster carers. This policy would be updated and consulted upon with the North London Fostering Consortium before reissue in October. This was following feedback from carers about the policy not being clear enough on the restraining actions that they were allowed to take. A summary to the policy would be added making this more accessible to carers.

Requirement 4 – Risk assessments for children who are at risk of going missing are not in place – The inspectors had found strong evidence of practices for keeping children safe. However, what the service had not fully shown was the information they knew on how to locate a child/young person that went missing. Members enquired about why this required action had not been picked up by the service previously. In reply members noted that the work on risk assessment had been occurring but in an unstructured way and this would be rectified by the information being held in the appropriate sources.

Requirement 5 - Reports responding to allegations of abuse and neglect not fully concluded - Members were reassured that there were not any outstanding investigations into reports of neglect and abuse where the outcome was not known. The issue, at the time of the inspection, was the bringing up to date of a spread sheet with the outcomes to the allegations. At the time of the inspection this had not been fully completed due to staffing changes. This spreadsheet was now fully up to date and there was also a written procedure for investigating allegations with clear and manageable expectations about timescales.

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Members asked that the procedures for investigation also include time allocated for speaking with the child.

Requirement 7 – Fostering service recruits, assesses and supports a range of foster carers to meet the needs of children they provide for. The inspection noted that there were a large number of children in care from Haringey and not enough internal carers to meet placements need. This was continually recognised by the service. The Committee were due to receive feedback by the 20th October on the results of concerted publicity activities in July to recruit foster carers.

Requirement 8 – Careful selection of staff and fostering households and monitoring of such people. The inspectors found that one member of staff's HR file did not have a reference with a record of verbal verification attached. The Committee were informed that this was a minor anomaly and easily rectifiable as the reference was concerning the recruitment of the Head of Commissioning and Placements, a fairly recent appointment, where contact could still be made with the referee and evidence of this added to the file. Although it was a managerial task to ensure that references were checked and verbally verified, Members were assured that all other HR files of staff working in foster care and of foster carers had been checked by the Head of Commissioning and Placements. She felt confident to report that there was no missing information regarding their selection. Members were asked to note the changing priorities of the inspectors as in the previous two inspections there had not been any checks made on the verbal verification of references. This additional check was probably owing to the increased level of scrutiny which the Council now experienced in inspections. In relation to the second part of this requirement, monitoring of people in the fostering household helping to provide care, Social Workers were fully aware that they needed to get CRB checks on all new persons involved in the carers home. However the timely completion of the checks was also reliant upon external CRB timescales.

Requirement 9 - Ensure that there are clear and effective procedures for monitoring the activities of the service – This was in reference to systems for data collection. There have been meetings between the Fostering and Performance team on exploring ways to better collate information required by the annual fostering return data. An example of an issue experienced with data collection in the inspection was that the service were able to easily provide figures relating to children in Haringey foster care (this included children placed in the borough through external fostering agencies) but it was less easy to extrapolate the number of children in Haringey placed with council foster carers. This signified the need to make the office data systems more usable and work efficiently so that there was not undue officer time given to locating and extrapolating the required data when needed.

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	<p>Some disappointment was expressed at the overall assessment of the Fostering Service as 'satisfactory' when in a previous inspection, three years ago; the service had been assessed as 'good'. There was a feeling that, although the Ofsted scrutiny of the Council's Children's services had increased this should not mean that a satisfactory rating would be acceptable as a result. As a way forward the Chair asked the Head of Commissioning and Placements to compile an alternative action plan which would set out the actions aimed at getting the service to a 'good rating'. This could be completed in time for the January meeting of the Committee. To aid this work it was suggested that the Ofsted inspection results of fellow Consortium boroughs could be looked at. This was where they had received a judgement of 'good' as this could help with understanding the kind of actions being taken and if they could be workable here. It was agreed that these comparisons would be made. Members of the Committee were also asked to keep in mind that some of the boroughs in the consortium were not demographically similar to Haringey and would not have the similar issues to contend with. Also some of the consortium boroughs may not have listed outcomes arising from their fostering inspections.</p> <p>In relation to outcomes for children, understanding was sought on how these were recorded and if this information was easily accessible to all parts of the children service dealing with the child i.e. Children in Care and Commissioning and Placements. It was clarified that the Children in Care service along with the Commissioning and Placement service regularly monitored outcomes for children and also tried to quantify them. There was also a series of qualitative information which the service could easily call upon for checking the progress on outcomes for a child. This was through the daily logs of foster carers, summary reports from foster carers, statutory visits to the child, LAC reviews. When meeting with the children, as well as to check on their basic care, Social Workers asked about the activities they undertook, interests, hobbies and who they interacted with, which were all recorded. The Independent Review Officer was also required to meet with a LAC before a review meeting. Therefore Members were assured that there was a wealth of material to consider when ascertaining how good outcomes for the child were being worked to.</p>	<p>WT</p> <p>WT</p>
<p>CPAC 122</p>	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p>	
<p>CPAC 123</p>	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>None</p>	

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Cllr Lorna Reith

Chair