

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, 4 DECEMBER 2012**

Councillors Allison, Dogus, Reece, Solomon, Stennett and Waters (Chair)

Apologies Councillor Brabazon

Also Present: Libby Blake, Marion Wheeler, Attracta Craig, Wendy Tomlinson, Chris Chalmers, Emma Cummergen, Phil Di leo

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
CPAC194	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</p> <p>Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Brabazon.</p>	
CPAC195	<p>URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business put forward.</p>	
CPAC196	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</p> <p>There were no declarations of interest put forward.</p>	
CPAC197	<p>TO AGREE THE ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING WITH ASPIRE</p> <p>The Committee agreed that the notes and actions arising from the informal meeting with Aspire between 6.30-7.30pm be compiled and distributed to Members of the Committee and Aspire. It was agreed that the actions be added to the formal minutes to allow the Committee to monitor and progress the agreed actions. (These are attached as Appendix A to the minutes).</p>	
CPAC198	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 08th October were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p> <p>(CPAC189)In relation to the services to boroughs offered by the 18 Project, there was a need to add in Enfield borough as a recipient.</p> <p>(CPAC188)In reference to the new framework agreement on foster care recruitment, this was being worked on with the North London Strategic Alliance and not the North London Fostering Consortium as put in the minutes. It was agreed that the minutes be amended to reflect this.</p> <p>In relation to a report on Housing Benefit reforms, an early report setting out the anticipated issues had been completed by Phil Harris and shared at the LSCB meeting.</p> <p>The minutes of the joint meeting with Safeguarding Policy and Practice</p>	<p>Clerk</p> <p>Clerk</p>

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	<p>Committee, held on the 29th October 2012, were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	Clerk
CPAC199	<p>MATTERS ARISING</p> <p>At the previous meeting, there had been a discussion about the disparate performance in foster care recruitment compared to other local authorities and the Chair continued to be concerned about this issue. It was noted that a bi annual report from the Fostering service on their progress and activities would be available in January 2013 and this could be distributed to Members of the Committee in advance of the next meeting to keep them informed of progress.</p>	WT
CPAC200	<p>PERMANENCY POLICY</p> <p>The Committee had previously considered an early version of the Permanency Policy at their September meeting. Following this meeting, research had been distributed to Committee Members on the permanency options of adoption, special guardianship and long term foster care placement. This was to assist Members in structuring lines of enquiry to form a view on the proposed permanency policy.</p> <p>Since consideration of the earlier draft, some legal context had also been added to the explanation of the permanency options of adoption, special guardianship and long term foster care which gave Members a better understanding of the council's legal responsibilities in their care of a child/young person.</p> <p>The assessment method for sibling groups was set out and this was according to the number of children in their sibling group and their age. This gave an idea to the Committee of the type of thinking involved in planning permanency options and how each child's need is considered.</p> <p>This policy would next go to Cabinet in March 2013 for agreement and it would need to contain the endorsement of the Corporate Parenting Committee about early permamancy planning. Adoption and Special Guardianship were the preferred options for permanency as they were most likely to provide a stable home and future for the child beyond the age of 18. The Committee were asked to provide their direction on the proposed approach to the adoption of sibling groups. Also to comment on the level of importance to be given to seeking ethnic matches for children where adoption was the best permanency option.</p> <p>In response to how much influence this Committee could have on the process of adoption, it was explained that ultimately the process of adoption was governed by a legal framework but Members could provide officers with the steer about the priority for adoption.</p> <p>In considering the approach set out, members sought an understanding on number of cases where the plans for adoption had changed or had</p>	

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	<p>been prolonged because of difficulties with finding an ethnically matched family or keeping a sibling group together. It was explained that the number was small. However, the Committee could help with endorsing and encouraging the examination of adoption as a permanency option at the outset from when a child/young person is identified as not being safe to stay at home (usually at the Core Assessment stage). This would enable adoption, as an option, to be explored from an early stage alongside other permanency options and increase the number of adoptions being made</p> <p>The Committee considered paragraph 7.5 of the report on planning for permanence and assessment of sibling groups. The Committee agreed with the wording of this and felt it could be emphasised that siblings who are looked after should be placed together whenever possible although it was recognised that in some cases this will not be appropriate.</p> <p>In relation to ethnically matching children to families, it was explained that the service were not holding out for exact ethnic's matches for children needing adoption. They were considering how the adopted child will feel as they get older and so trying to broadly ethnically match as far as possible without causing delays that will have a detrimental impact on a child 's present emotional wellbeing.</p> <p>The Chair reflected that the security of the adoptive child is an essential consideration as this will impact on and how the child feels in a family they are placed with. However, the policy needs to be clear that getting a family for the child is important and therefore should be a dual consideration. The Committee accepted that the Children's service continues to endeavour to meet the child's needs and that adoptions continue to be dealt with on a case by case basis ensuring that consideration is given to keeping the child in care for as short a time as possible. This is accordance with care planning, placement and review regulations as set out in paragraph 5.4.</p> <p>In looking at the placement options, the Chair queried how long young people were likely to remain in residential placements given that this was not a long term preferred option for care. The Director for Children's services reiterated that children should have a secure, stable, and loving family to support them through childhood and beyond. Residential care was not a long term option but sometimes this option could suit a young person who has had too many bad experiences in a family environment. However, it was still important for the young person to have left residential care after one year and the Children's service would monitor cases to ensure that this happened.</p>	
CPAC201	<p>CHILDREN IN CARE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT</p> <p>The Committee considered the progress made by the Children in Care service in relation to service development. Significant improvements had</p>	

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	<p>been made following an implementation of a permanent staffing structure which had made good impact on in terms of the progression on casework, stability and building relationships with service users. A brief description was provided of the teams which make up the Children in Care service, the services they are provide and the agencies that they work with. The Committee remarked on the good progress made by the teams with increasing the number of special guardianships and children returning home to families.</p>	
<p>CPAC202</p>	<p>TRANSITION AND LEAVING CARE</p> <p>The Committee noted that the Young Adults service were working with 327 young people who have left care, 70 of whom were former unaccompanied minors, 50 of whom were young parents. The Committee noted that work will begin on a pathway plan for a young person in care at 16 and continues until the young person has permanently left the care of the council. Reviews of the plan will take place every 6 months. There is currently a lot of endeavour to ensure that accommodation for the care leaver is suitable. Also, young people will be nominated to the Housing service for permanant placements once they reach the age of seventeen and a half and are living in the borough. The support needs of care leavers was discussed and how unaccompanied minors will face even more difficult options if their status in the country is unconfirmed. Also the gap in the provision for young people that have significant support needs but do not meet the thresholds for adult services was highlighted.</p> <p>The impact of the new welfare benefit reforms on care leavers was not widely understood by all local authorities as this had not yet been set out by central government. For example, they were not set as a vulnerable group and it was unknown whether payments for rents could still be made directly to the landlord for care leavers. The Head of the young Adults service would be meeting with Housing services to discuss further the benefit changes and the service will continue to work with young people on budgeting and give advice on the benefits that they can claim. The young adults service were also working with the local jobcentres to identify employment opportunities for care leavers.</p> <p>Members of the Committee also asked that care leavers are informed about the availability of their local ward councillor to speak to about issues such as help with finding employment or accessing benefits.</p> <p>Although, support to care leavers should stop at the age of 21, if the young person is not in education or training, some support continues as often young people will be unsure where to go in their local community to get support and will revert back to seeking help from the Leaving Care Service. This situation was challenging as support workers have increased case workloads. However, the service were trying to help young people become established in their local communities and seek support of local services. The Committee found it reassuring that these young people were not turned away by the service. Indeed, Edward Timpson MP had recently highlighted Haringey's Young Adults service</p>	

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	<p>as an example to follow. The Chair also illustrated the examples she had seen of the help the Young Adults service provides care leavers that are going to university which was reassuring and demonstrated the practical aspects of how the council undertakes its corporate parenting role.</p> <p>As discussed in the previous informal meeting, the views of Aspire and other representatives of children in care and care leavers would be sought on the care leaver's charter.</p>	
<p>CPAC203</p>	<p>CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT- PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR TO OCTOBER 2012</p> <p>The Committee considered performance information and trends for measures relating to looked after children. The Committee commented on the good progress made across all performance indicators since the last meeting in October.</p> <p>The number of children looked after was coming down and the aim was to get this figure in line with statistical neighbouring boroughs. To deliver this would mean investing in support to children and young people that were on the cusp of care. The Scrutiny Panel for Children and Young People were due to look at the savings profile for the service and would consider the strategy of brings down the numbers of children in care and re-investing the savings in early help to families.</p>	
<p>CPAC204</p>	<p>MISSING CHILDREN</p> <p>At the joint meeting between the Corporate Parenting Committee and Children's Safeguarding Committee, in October, Members had requested a report explaining the process and risk assessments in place for children in care taking unauthorised leave from their placements and going missing from care.</p> <p>The Committee commented that this was a very useful report which set out the various definitions of 'missing', actions for when children go missing, figures for missing episodes in the last calendar year and information about the research being undertaken to find out the factors for young people going missing from care.</p> <p>Clarification was sought on where evidence is sought to enable a social worker to complete a visit after the missing episode. In response, it was noted that there is a requirement to visit looked after children on a monthly basis and currently this performance stands at 99% of visits completed. The social worker will, as part of the visit, be aware of missing episodes and discuss and record the issues which would have triggered the missing episode. Members were further assured that there was a tight recording process in place for reporting children and young people missing from care and this information was also considered at a high level meeting between the Cabinet Member for Children and Director for Children's services on a weekly basis.</p>	

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CPAC205	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p> <p>The press and public were excluded from the meeting for consideration of items 13,14 and 15 as they contained exempt information as defined in Section 100a of the local Government Act 1985):paras 1,2 and 3 : namely information relating to any individual , and information relating to financial or business affairs of any particular person(including the authority holding that information)</p>	
CPAC206	<p>MINUTES</p> <p>The exempt minutes of the 8th October 2012 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.</p>	Clerk
CPAC207	<p>PROGRESS REPORT FOLLOWING AN OFSTED INSPECTION OF A COUNCIL CHILDREN'S HOME</p> <p>The issues highlighted in the OFSTED inspection had all been addressed and Members were pleased with the speedy progress made.</p>	
CPAC208	<p>UPDATE ON REGULATION 33 AND 34 VISITS</p> <p>The Committee endorsed the proposed new format for regulation 33 visits as set out in section 4 of the enclosed report.</p>	
CPAC209	<p>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no items of urgent business.</p>	

Cllr Ann Waters

Chair