

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON Tuesday, 5th January, 2016

PRESENT:

Councillors: Cllr Waters [Chair], Cllr Berryman, Cllr Stennett, Cllr Morris, Cllr Gunes, Cllr Weston & Cllr Hare

385. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to Agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and the Committee noted this information.

386. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

None

387. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING WITH ASPIRE

NOTED: The actions listed in the notes of the meeting with Aspire.

The Director of Children's Services identified finding an additional resource to work with Anneke as a significant issue, given budgetary constraints. The Committee discussed that care leavers or graduate trainees could be possible solutions. The Committee also discussed whether someone from Children in Care could provide some leadership and vision to the group. The AD Safeguarding proposed outlining the role of Aspire clearly on the new leaflets being developed in order to clearly outline to prospective Aspire members what the organisation did and what its focus was.

388. URGENT BUSINESS

None

389. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

390. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2015 were AGREED.

In relation to the previous action around some disabled LAC travelling long distances to school, the Head of Integrated Service, Early Help and Prevention ADVISED that there was a small cohort of 22 LAC with a disability. Of the 22 individuals: 7 were in a residential special school which was more than 20 miles outside of Haringey; 15 were fostered outside of Haringey and attended a day special school that was located near

to their foster placement; and of the remaining children there were 3 who travelled a significant distance to maintain their previous school placements.

The Head of Integrated Service commented that over time the group which attended a residential special school would need to be looked at as this involved a cohort of young people who had complex care needs, potentially involving both the needs of the children and of their families. As a result, work was being undertaken to look at commissioning different services for them locally.

The Committee NOTED that a mystery shopper exercise had been undertaken in relation to NRS, involving a number of different scenarios and that the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The Children in Care Service Manager reported that on each occasion the shopper was met with interest, professional courtesy and that the person from NRS was able to talk in detail about the process.

The Children in Care Service Manager also advised that, in terms of the NRS contract, a working group been set up to look at three potential models for future delivery; including contract renewal, putting the contract out to tender or bringing the service back in-house. The Children in Care Service Manager REPORTED that one of the main issues with the current contract was that it was so vague that NRS recruited an overwhelmingly majority of foster carers for young children but failed to recruit enough placements for older children and teenagers. The Committee NOTED that the current contract was set up so that NRS were paid on a per assessment basis.

The Chair requested an update on the NRS contract be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: Dominic Porter-Moore

The AD Safeguarding REPORTED that significant progress had been made in relation to Missing Children; a protocol on Missing Children had been signed with the LSCB and agreed with all partner agencies. In addition, the Head of Service for Safeguarding has instigated monthly meeting panels to look at Missing Children at those at risk, in an integrated multi-agency way.

The AD Safeguarding also REPORTED that the Pan-London Adoption bid was a work in progress. The bid had been initially allocated £100k for the design and scoping work and the Committee was informed that this work was ongoing. In addition, there were also a number of meetings taking place with prospective adopters, young people, and council leaders to scope their views on how the service should be designed. The AD Safeguarding agreed to circulate the regionalisation adoption vision for London document and agreed to keep the Committee updated of on the progress of the bid.

Action: Neelam Bhardwaja

391. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee NOTED the Corporate Parenting Agenda Plan 2015/16

392. PERFORMANCE

RECEIVED the report on Performance for the Year to November 2015. Report included in the agenda pack (pages 15 to 21).

NOTED in response to discussion:

- An overall improving trajectory in relation to the majority of performance indicators.
- There were 434 Children in Care, which was 74 per 10,000 population including 38 unaccompanied asylum seeker children. Haringey's rate of LAC remained significantly above the London (52) and National average (60) although the gap had closed to the statistical neighbour rate of 69.
- A performance review system had been put in place by the Head of Service with team managers attending a weekly session to review plans and dates for their timely completion and update on the system as needed. As a result, performance on care plans, pathway plans and Personal Education Plans (PEPs) had improved. At the end of November, 84% of Looked After Children had an up to date Care Plan, a significant improvement from a low level of 49% at the end of May and only 6% away from the expected target.
- 62% of school aged children had completed an up to date Personal Education Plans at the end of November. This is a gradual improvement from the drop in performance in September (49% compared to a high of 71% in July), although it remains below the expected level. The Committee noted that this figure was 70% as of New Year's Eve.
- The Committee noted that after looking into the issue, holding e-PEP's was not practical due to the need to host them on an external system and the likely costs involved. The AD Safeguarding advised that part of the role of the PEP was to get all of the relevant people together in a room and create a two-way dialogue.
- In mid-December, 77% of Looked After Children aged 16-17 had up to date Pathway Plans. Performance in this area was at its highest and had increased significantly compared to the low level (20%) achieved in June. The Committee noted that this figure was 80% as of New Year's Eve.
- The Committee requested that examples of PEP, Care Plan & Pathway Plan were circulated to the Committee, in order to give them a better idea of what information was contained therein.

Action: Dominic Porter-Moore/Fiona Smith

- 83 Children or 19% were placed 20 miles or more from Haringey at the end of November 2015, slightly above than the 16% target but on an improving trajectory. Although higher than national levels this proportion was in line with the average for London and our Statistical Neighbours (18%).

- The downward trajectory of the average amount of time taken for children being placed for adoption was noted (431 days – YTD October). The Committee noted significant improvement in performance for this indicator compared to last year. This figure was above national average but was in line with statistical neighbours. In response to a question, the Committee considered that performance on this indicator was lower in London than elsewhere due to delays in court processes. The national target for the child to be processed was 26 weeks and the London average was 34 weeks.
- At the end of November, 95% (408 out of 429) of Children in Care for over a month had an up to date health assessment, a sustained improvement and comparing favourably with the London average.
- 91% of LAC children had an up to date dental visit as at 31 March 2015 but, as at November 2015, 81% of the current LAC cohort had up to date dental checks. Performance had been on a downward trajectory since April 2015 but current performance was an improvement on the position at the end of July (72.5%).
- In the year to November 2015 there had been 15 adoptions and 12 special guardianship orders (SGO). This equated to permanency being secured for 20% of children that ceased to be looked after but was six fewer legal orders achieved compared with the same period last year and behind track to achieve our combined (adoption and SGO) target of 54 for 2015-16.
- 83.4% of Children in Care visits were recorded as completed in the relevant timescales in this period. Performance in this area had improved considerably in recent months (88.5% at the end of October 2015) but decreased by the end of November. Current performance remained below levels achieved in previous years. The Children in Care Service Manager agreed to find out why performance levels were lower than last year and report back to the Committee.
Action: Dominic Porter Moore
- The AD Safeguarding advised the Committee that Children in Care visits were statutory visit undertaken by the social worker to the child and that visits had to occur a minimum number of times of year, dependant on the particular circumstances of that child.
- In November, 15 children were recorded as either missing from care or away from their placement. Six children were missing at any point in the month and nine children were away without authorisation. A more systematic way to capture data on missing children and return to care interviews was being progressed. A Haringey Runaway and Missing from Home and Care Protocol had been completed by all agencies and will be the basis for dealing with children who run away or go missing in the area. The Director of Children's Services agreed to produce a report for the next meeting which outlined some of the key factors involved and the multiple risks behind missing children.
Action: Jon Abbey

- The Committee noted that a key factor in relation to improving performance across the board was to recruit and retain a high level of permanent staff. The DCS advised that high performing Children's Services tended to have a high level of permanent staff. Feedback from officers was that children related better to the familiarity generated from having a consistency of social worker.

AGREED to note the report.

393. PAN-LONDON ADOPTION BID

NOTED the verbal update given earlier in the meetings by the AD Safeguarding on the Pan-London Adoption bid, as part of the previous minutes.

394. DRAFT CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY AND VISION

RECEIVED a report updating the Committee on the Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy & Vision, from the Director of Children's Services. The report and accompanying draft Corporate Parenting Strategy & action plan was included in the agenda pack (pages 23 to 42).

NOTED that

- The report was brought to the Committee following discussion at a previous meeting around developing a strategy document that set out how the Council and its partner agencies would act as responsible parents for children and young people who were either in care or where leaving care but entitled to support.
- The document was very much an early draft and was brought to the committee for discussion and comments.
- One key aspect of the strategy was to articulate what the Council's ambition was in terms of corporate parenting and what also outcomes the Council wanted to achieve in relation children and young people who were looked after by the Local Authority. The earlier discussion with Aspire had emphasised that the Council needed to be able to give clear direction of what its service offer was as part of the process of redeveloping Aspire.
- The next steps involved developing a concrete pledge of what the young people could expect from the Council as corporate parents This was considered to be a two way process and Aspire were expected to contribute to, and hold the Committee to account based on what this service offer/pledge was.
- The Committee commented that the draft strategy was a very detailed comprehensive document and raised concerns that it might be difficult to keep the action plan up to date. Officers responded that the document was an initial draft and that there would be some scope for developing a more high level action plan based on a number of key areas, possibly to sit beside the

comprehensive list. Cllr Berryman advised that having an explicit list of the different actions and outcomes was very useful in terms of understanding the remit of the Council's role as corporate parent as a whole.

- The Committee suggested that the action plan should reference what the targets or relevant regulations were for each of the provisions. The Committee also queried whether officer input and role should also be contained in the action plan. Officers acknowledged that many aspects of this would be covered in the responsibility and timescale sections of the action plan. The Chair advocated that wherever possible the document should remain children focused.
- The Committee considered who the target audience was for the strategy and also commented that the report seemed to have a number of pieces of jargon within it that might detract from its accessibility. The top of page 5 of the report was singled out as an example. The Director of Children's Services acknowledged that there would likely be different versions targeted to different audiences. The AD Safeguarding agreed and suggested that a young person's version of the strategy should be specifically developed.
- The Committee requested that some further thought be given to promulgating the role of Aspire in the report, and potentially listing examples of what had been achieved with Aspire.
- The Chair requested that information be brought back to the next Committee about the number of care leavers the Council was responsible for and what was done to support them. The Committee also requested that the report put this information in the context of what the Local Authority's responsibilities were in terms of providing support.

Action: Dominic Porter-Moore/Emma Cummergen

395. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

396. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting as the items below contained exempt information, as defined under Part 1, schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

397. NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS

None

398. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- The Committee requested inviting a few social workers to a future meeting to discuss the different elements of Looked After Children and Care Leavers from their perspective. The DCS agreed that this could be arranged.

Action: Jon Abbey

Future meetings

NOTED the following dates:

4 April 2016

Meetings are scheduled to start at 6.30pm.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date