

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON MONDAY, 4TH JULY, 2016, 19:15

PRESENT:

Councillors Cllr Weston [Chair], Cllr Berryman, Cllr Mann, & Cllr Opoku

Also
attending

Jon Abbey (Interim Director of Children's Services), Neelam Bhardwaja (Assistant Director – Safeguarding and Social Care), Dominic Porter-Moore (Head of Children in Care & Placements), Annie Walker (Service Manager Children in Care), Lesley Kettles (Service Manager for Adoption and Fostering), Fiona Smith (Virtual School Head), Margaret Gallagher (Corporate Performance Manager), Philip Slawther (Clerk), Lyn Carrington (Nurse - Whittington Health NHS).

415. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred those present to agenda item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting and asked that those present reviewed and noted the information contained therein.

416. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Morris & Cllr Stennett.

417. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING WITH ASPIRE

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

The next Aspire meeting would be extended to 1 hour and the agenda would include reports on; the Aspire budget, housing issues and proposals for updating the Haringey Pledge.

418. URGENT BUSINESS

None

419. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

420. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2016 were AGREED.

An example of PEP's, Care Plan & Pathway Plan was circulated to the Committee.

In relation to the previous action around extending the one-to-one support with Drive Forward, which was currently offered to LAC third year university students around CV development; the AD Safeguarding confirmed that she had spoken to Emma Cumbergen and that the programme would be brought forward to offer support to students at an earlier stage in their studies but would also maintain the offer at year 3 as well.

421. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee NOTED the Corporate Parenting Agenda Plan 2016/17

422. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Committee NOTED the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee Terms of Reference for the 2016/17 municipal year and plans for future CPAC meeting set up.

The Chair advised that going forward she would like the meetings to consider a smaller number of agenda items in order to facilitate greater discussion and place an emphasis on looking forward as opposed to being reactive. The Chair proposed that a number of reports would be for noting and taken by exception, and then a significant part of the agenda would be devoted to discussions around key issues and that it was hoped that the Committee could help steer the policy agenda.

Clerk to note

The Committee was requested to review the handout tabled from the Centre for Public Scrutiny entitled: "10 questions to ask if you're scrutinising services for Looked After Children" along with the Committee's Terms of Reference, for discussion at the next meeting about which areas the Committee should focus its attention upon going forward. In particular the Chair drew the Committee's attention to aspects around Health which were not routinely discussed at present.

Action: Members

Lynn Carrington, Designated Nurse Children in Care enquired whether the Committee would like to receive the minutes from the operation group involving the ILO at future meetings as they were not currently reviewed by another body. The Committee AGREED that the future minutes of the operation group would be reviewed, on an exception basis.

Action Lynn Carrington

423. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

RECEIVED the report on Performance for the Year to the end of May 2016. 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.
- 431 children were in care on the last day of May 2016 or 73 per 10,000 population including 30 unaccompanied asylum seeker children. There had been a gradual increase in the level of children in care in comparison to the position at the end of March 2016, with 22 more children in care. However a reduction in Haringey's rate of looked after children in 2015/16 placed LBH within the inter-quartile range of our statistical neighbours (a rate of 69 per 10,000 population), although the current rate remained above the London (52) and national average (60) rates.
- A performance review system put in place by the Head of Service for Children in Care in October 2015 yielded some excellent performance improvements. Weekly meetings with Team Managers run by the Head of Service and facilitated by a representative from performance were continuing and focused on new improvement challenges.
- As of the end of June: 85% of school aged children had completed an up to date Personal Education Plans (PEP); 96% of looked after children aged 16-17 had up to date Pathway Plans; and 95% had completed an up to date Care Plan. Performance had improved dramatically in this area over the past 12 months.
- 94% of Children in Care had an up to date review at the end of May above the 90% target.
- At the end of May, 96% (382 out of 402) of children in care for over a month had an up to date health assessment, above target and continuing the positive trend. We are also now tracking 18 year olds leaving care that receive their health history and the position at the end of May was 78% for that indicator.
- 17 (7%) of looked after children (aged 10 and over) were convicted or subject to a final warning during the year 2015/16, a reduction and improvement on our 2014/15 position of 8.4% and significant improvement on the 11% for 2013/14. This remained higher than the latest published England average rate of 5% but was in line with our statistical neighbour average of 6.9%.
- Data for the period April 2015 to March 2016 revealed that the average duration of care proceedings for concluded cases was 34 weeks, the same duration as that recorded for 2014/15. 45% of cases were concluded in less than the 26 week statutory timescale, an improvement on the 34% achieved in 2014/15 with the shortest average case length of 29 weeks in quarter 4.

- 95 children or 24% were placed 20 miles or more from Haringey at the end of May 2016, an additional 19 children since the position at end of January 2016 although the number of looked after children also increased over the same period. Performance was worse than the 16% target and provisional March 2016 end of year position (23%). Although higher than national levels this proportion is only slightly above the average for London and our Statistical Neighbours (18%).
- Provisional data for the end of year looked after children government return shows that 82% or 254 children who were in care for over 12 months had their teeth checked by a dentist. This is a decline on the reported level of 91.5% in 2014/15 but close to our statistical neighbour position of 85.4%. Focussed effort to ensure all children in care for over 12 months with an outstanding dental check is on-going to see if we can capture any additional children who have had their teeth checked maybe as part of their health assessment.
- Performance on care leavers in suitable accommodation and in education, employment and training for 2015-16 was below levels achieved in 2014-15. However, like for like comparison cannot be made, as the SSDA903 OC3 cohort previously included former relevant care leavers whose 19th, 20th or 21st birthday fell in the reporting year. Provisional data currently showed 39% of *all* former relevant care leavers aged 17-21 were in EET (56% of those who were *in touch* with the local authority around their 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th or 21st birthday). 60% of all care leavers were in suitable accommodation or 87% of those who were *in touch*.
- Children missing numbers have been relatively stable in 2015/16 but more recently the children missing from care numbers have been showing an increasing trend. In May, 22 children were recorded as missing from care at any point during the month. 20 children were away from placement without authorisation.
- The SSDA903 data for 2015-16 also showed an increase of children missing from care (72 children in comparison to 45 in 2014-15). There were 237 missing/away from placement episodes compared to 90 in 2014/15. This figure was closer to our 2014-15 statistical neighbour average of 252 missing/away episodes. Some of this increase may be attributable to improved systems for recording data on missing children and real time tracking of children who went missing using a register.
- There has been a 30% reduction in Haringey's rate of looked after children since 2011 compared with a 10% reduction in London and a 3% increase nationally. The graphs below shows the 7 year trend to March 2016 in comparison with the number and rate of our statistical neighbours. Since the end of March there has been a net increase of 16 children coming into care (6%) but Haringey's rate of looked after children is not dissimilar to that of our statistical neighbours.

AGREED to note the report.

The Committee sought clarification on who were Haringey's statistical neighbours. In response officers advised that it was a group of around 7 or 8 London boroughs which had a similar make up and demographics to Haringey. The Corporate Performance Manager agreed to circulate the list of statistical neighbouring boroughs to the Committee.

Action: Margaret Gallagher

424. PAN-LONDON ADOPTION BID (VERBAL UPDATE)

NOTED the verbal update given by the AD Safeguarding on the Pan-London Adoption bid. The Committee was reminded that two options for the Pan-London Adoption model were: 1) A local authority trading company delivery model with a strategic VAA partnership operating in a hub and spoke, or 2) a local authority/voluntary adoption agency joint venture operating in a hub and spoke model. The Committee noted that following detailed assessment of the respective viability of the two options London Councils had, following the receipt of legal advice, expressed a preference for the first option. The reason that option 1 was preferred was as a result of the additional steps required to implement option two and the greater uncertainty for stakeholders, as well as the likely delay involved in setting up the model and the additional expense. Whereas, option 1 offered a quicker and more cost-effective model. The next steps involved further development of the preferred option to better understand what this would mean in practice

The original rationale for the regionalisation of adoption services was outlined as a consideration by central government that 33 London local authorities, each with their own separate adoption service was not an efficient or effective way to run adoption services. The focus was highlighted as being on adoptive recruitment and matching, with recognition that each of the London local authorities was essentially trying to recruit from one large catchment area and the negative consequences that this entailed, as well as the financial benefits that result from the economies of scale. The Chair highlighted to the Committee that the Secretary of State had powers to force local authorities to join a regionalised body and the general consensus was that it was better for authorities to voluntarily come together to determine what the best model was.

In response to a question, the AD Safeguarding advised that in terms of the implementation date, the bottom line was 2020, however there was significant political pressure to implement this as soon as was practicable. The DCS advised that he was expecting a pan-London briefing paper to come to Members in the autumn. The DCS further clarified that the bid related to just adoption bids and not Special Guardianship Orders.

In response to a further question, the AD Safeguarding advised that there was a National Adoption Board, chaired by Andrew Christie and there was also a London Adoption Board, which was working with advisory groups and stakeholders to develop the proposal on behalf of London local authorities. Officers also reassured Members that adoption services in Haringey would continue business as usual, whilst this process unfolded.

425. UPDATE ON FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT AND FUTURE MODELS OF PROVISION

NOTED the update given by the Head of Service, Children in Care and Placements on the progress on recruiting a provider to undertake training and recruitment of in-house foster carers. The report was included in the agenda pack (pages 23 to 26). The Committee noted that an options appraisal to consider the preferred delivery model proposed that the service continue to be commissioned externally and that a procurement exercise was undertaken to seek a provider to deliver this contract over the next period. No provider came forward to bid for this work.

The Committee noted that following a process of consultation with potential bidders to understand why they did not bid and what would be required for them to bid in future, a decision had been made to return to the market. It was noted that the timescales for this process were still to be determined through discussions between the Head of Service, Children in Care and Placements and AD Commissioning. The Committee were advised that if there was little further interest from that market then negotiations may recommence with NRS about them continuing to deliver the service but concerns remained over performance issues.

Head of Service CIC advised that alongside the above, the authority would be looking into a series of options in the medium to long term. These options included building collaborative relationships with neighbouring boroughs to develop a shared service model across borough boundaries for the provision of foster care. A further option was the development of proposals to use a micro-enterprise model to support people to become foster carers. The committee was advised that this approach would work at a community level but neither building collaborative relationships nor a micro-enterprise model would deliver a pipeline of potential carers in the short and medium term. The final option was noted as return to proposals to develop an in-house service. This was not the preferred option when the appraisal was carried out earlier this year, given capacity issues within the service and the fact that there are significant fixed costs in establishing a new team with no guarantee of foster care recruitment. Head of Service CIC advised that a key lesson was the need for the service to drive its own marketing and communications strategy in any future adoption contract.

AD Safeguarding advised that one of the main issues in the contract with NRS was a failure to specify the need for carers across the whole range of ages of foster children and not just babies and young children. The Chair requested a further update on the second bidding process to the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: Dominic Porter Moore

426. IMMIGRATION ISSUES FOR LAC

RECEIVED a report updating the Committee on the key implications for LAC without a settled immigration status. The report was included in the agenda pack (pages 27 to 35 to 23).

NOTED that There were three main categories of looked after children and young people and care leavers who may be subject to immigration control.

- i) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) how tended to get Leave to Remain until the age of 17 an a half.
- ii) Children and young people brought into the UK from outside the EU as visitors and who remain in the UK after their period of leave expires and have become looked after children. This excluded children who had been privately fostered and were known to Children's Services as they were not looked after children. Children from families without recourse to public funds (NRFP) were also not looked after.
- iii) Children from within the European Union. European Economic Area (EEA) nationals could access public funds but may be prevented from claiming public funds if they did not satisfy the eligibility criteria attached to a specific welfare benefit or council housing allocation. Eligibility related to the basis on which the EEA national was living in the UK. EEA nationals have a right to reside in the UK as long as they are exercising Treaty Rights in the UK; this meant working (including being a job seeker), studying, being self-sufficient or otherwise being incapacitated and therefore unable to work. A former looked after child, in education and being supported by the local authority, may not be able to access income support or social housing.

The Council had general duties towards looked after children which were set out in Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 and these apply irrespective of the child's Immigration status. The general duties were:

- To safeguard and promote a child's welfare; and
- to make such use of services available for children cared for by their own parents as appears to the authority reasonable in this case.

The Committee were advised that duties were discretionary and therefore were not mandatory, which left significant scope for Judicial Reviews being taken out against local authorities. The process of resolving a child's immigration status was considerably easier as an undertaking than it was once they reached adult hood. In considering a child's welfare the authority should also try to ascertain their wishes and feelings having regard to their age and understanding. In the event that the child's immigration status was not resolved before the age of 16, this should be considered as part of the planning for the child's transition to the leaving care service. In order to qualify for leaving care services a child must have been looked after for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 and for some time after their 16th birthday.

The Committee was advised that there were significant consequences for care leavers whose immigration status remains unresolved in the UK at the age of 18. They were unable to access state support with housing, education and benefits. An application to the Visa and Immigration Service (VIS) in the Home Office for a right to remain would also treated less favourably once they reached 18. If an application to VIS was made before age 18 one of the criteria is to have lived continuously in the UK for at least seven years. If the application to remain takes place when the care leaver is aged

between 18 years and 25, the bar is raised considerably as the criteria means they have to have spent at least half their life in the UK or at least 20 years resident in the UK.

The Immigration Act 2016 came into effect in May 2016. One of the drivers behind this Act was that the current Government did not consider that the Children Act 1989 was the appropriate mechanism for providing support to adult care leavers when the courts have determined that the care leaver has no lawful basis to remain in the UK and could return to their country of origin.

In response to a question from the Committee, officers advised that they had recently commissioned a policy writer to look at the authority's policies across the board in relation to the immigration status of LAC, how the policy evolved would be determined by expert legal advice. In response to a question around increased figures as a result of the refugee crisis in Syria, officers advised that the Government were also looking at a nation strategy for the dispersal of refugees from Syria to ensure that the spread across local authorities was equitable. The Chair requested a further update on the immigration issues for LAC to the next meeting of the Committee.

Action: Dominic Porter Moore

427. VIRTUAL SCHOOLS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RECEIVED a report which summarised the educational performance of Haringey's LAC and Young People for 2014-2015. The report highlighted the key achievements and areas for focus in 2016. The report was included in the agenda pack (pages 37 to 40).

NOTED that

- Overall, the educational performance of Haringey's LAC was above the national average and within the top quartile for London. The educational performance of Haringey's LAC at the end of KS4 was within 10% of the country.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, 50% of the group achieved both the 'expected' and 'good' level of development across the 17 measures.
- At KS1, where a quarter of the group had a statement of Special Educational Need, 55% reached at least level 2 in reading, writing and maths. This compared with 87% of non-LAC.
- At KS2, 65% of pupils attained level 4 or above in reading, writing and maths, 26% attaining a level 5 in reading.
- There were 286 school aged Children and young People looked after by Haringey, 78 (27%) attended schools in Haringey and 208 (73%) attended schools out of the authority. 90% of LAC attended a school rated as good or

outstanding an improvement from 81% in 2014. This compared with 93% of Haringey's non-looked after pupils.

- There were 56 looked after pupils with a statement of Special Educational Need or an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) which was 19.5% of the total cohort.
- The percentage of children attending school for over 95% of the time was 65%, the same as the previous year and increasing this figure would be an area of focus in 2015-16.
- Increasing the completion rate of Personal Education Plans (PEP) remained a key priority for social care and the Virtual School. Performance improved steadily from the start of the academic year from 51% to 70% but remained significantly lower than the target figure of 95%. The Head of Virtual Schools advised the Committee that her service were revisiting the introduction of an electronic PEP format.

In response to a question from the Committee, officers advised that that the usual standard was that all LAC would be placed in schools that were either rated as 'good' or 'outstanding', whether that was inside or outside the borough. Officers acknowledged that there would be circumstances where the child would be allowed to attend a school that was not rated as either 'good' or 'outstanding', on an exception basis, if for instance they were already attending that school before becoming part of the LAC.

The Chair commended the overall performance levels achieved and the committee noted their thanks to Virtual Schools for the improvements that had been made.

428. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

429. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Future meetings

NOTED the following dates:

3rd October 2016
12th January 2017
3rd April 2017

Aspire meetings are scheduled to start at 6.30pm. Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee are scheduled to start on the rise of the meeting with Aspire.

The meeting ended at 21:00 hours.

CHAIR:

Signed by Chair

Date