

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 4TH JULY, 2017, 19:15

PRESENT:

Councillors: Patrick Berryman, Bob Hare, Felicia Opoku, Anne Stennett and Elin Weston (Chair).

17. 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.

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Morris.

Apologies were also received from Kim Holt and Lynn Carrington

19. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

21. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th April 2017 were AGREED.

The Head of Service Children in Care & Placements advised that he would give a verbal update on Item 12. The Chair suggested that a broader update on the Care Leavers work would incorporate some of this area and requested that Mark Kidson attend the next CPAC meeting. **(Action: Clerk)**

22. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING WITH ASPIRE

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

- Update on maintenance courses for care leavers at next meeting with Aspire.
- Update on 14+ Aspire group around their housing support needs at next meeting with Aspire.
- Report on safeguarding and semi-independent living providers at next CPAC meeting.

- Final version of pledge to be sent to Aspire and Committee Members. Pledge to go to Full Council in July.
- Aspire CSE film to be shown at future Aspire meeting.

23. PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR TO MAY 2017

RECEIVED the report on Performance for the Year to the end of May 2017. Report included in the agenda pack (pages 11 to 20).

NOTED in response to discussion:

- 434 children were in care at the end of the second week in June 2017 or 71 per 10,000 population including 38 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 but the rate had been fairly steady at around 70 in the last few months.
- Provisional data for indicators around stability of placements for looked after children remained broadly in line with statistical neighbours and targets albeit with a slightly increasing proportion with 3 or more placement moves. In the year to March 2017, 10% of children had three or more placement moves, just above the statistical neighbour average (7%) but in line with the latest published national position (10%). 77.5% of children under 16 who had been in care for at least 2.5 years had been in the same placement for at least 2 years, higher than the national average (68%).
- At the end of May, data showed 94% of children in care for over a month had an up to date health assessment, close to the target and continuing the positive trend.
- The number of care applications increased by 20% in 2016/17 which reversed the downward trend maintained since 2010/2011. The expected impact of the improvements from the use of the PLO process and introduction of the Signs of Safety model of social worker practice in January 2016 to maintain the decrease, had not occurred.
- In the 2017/18 financial year, there were 7 adoptions and 4 special guardianship orders to date. This was a big improvement compared with 2016/17 where there were only 11 adoptions for the whole year. A trend towards placement with families, kinship or connected persons as opposed to adoption or SGOs was evident.
- Timeliness of children placed for adoption in 2016/17 at an average 560 days remained higher than the national threshold (426-day average for 2013-16). In the financial year to June 2017, children waited an average of 402 days from becoming looked after to being placed for adoption. However, the statistical significance of these figures was based on only 7 adoption cases.

- 86 or 22.5% of Looked After Children at the end of March 2017 were placed 20 miles or more from Haringey compared to a 16% target and 19% at the end of March 2016. However fewer children were being placed over 20 miles away, with good reasons for those placements outside the borough many linked to complex care requirements or long term foster care arrangements.
- 72% of the current LAC cohort (age 2 and over and in care for over one month) had an up to date dental visit as at May 2017. There were 118 children without a recorded up to date dental check, 70% of those with outstanding visits were between the ages of 13 and 17 years old.
- Performance on Personal Education Plans (PEPs) declined in recent months with current data showing that 72% of PEPs for statutory school age children had an up to date PEP within the last term.
- In 2016/17, provisional data as at 31 March showed that 69% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation down from 74% (for 19-21 year olds) and 71% (of 17-18 year olds) in 2015/16. This performance was comparatively low as nationally 83% of care leavers aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation and 88% of 17-18 year olds (2015/16).
- In response to a clarification around the reasons behind a fall in PEP performance, officers advised that there had been a move to fill these in on a more regular basis and that this may have undermined the ability of respondents to meet the deadline.
- In response to a question, officers advised that payments for SGOs were means tested.
- Officers were asked to feedback to the Committee on what the exact definition was of a young person being 'in touch' with the Council. **(Action: Sarah Alexander)**.
- In response to a question around local authority ran children's care homes, the Committee was advised that the divestment of children's homes was very much the national picture and that those that still existed tended to be ran by the third sector.

AGREED to note the report.

24. DENTAL CHECK AUDIT BY CHILDREN IN CARE NURSE

The Committee noted that this item was deferred to the next meeting.

25. HOUSING LEGISLATION AND WELFARE CHANGES THAT MAY AFFECT CARE LEAVERS

The Committee received an update from the Director of Housing Demand, HfH on recent legislation and welfare reform changes that may impact care leavers.

It was noted that Homelessness Reduction Act was due to be implemented from 1st April. The Act included a specific clause that stated that in addition to a local connection with the authority whose care the young person was in; they could also claim a local connection with the area which they had been placed provided that it was a continuous period of 2 years some of which was prior to their 16th birthday. The Committee also noted that local housing allowance caps were being brought in for the social rented sector from April 2019. It was anticipated that this change would have a particular impact on people aged under 35 whose housing benefit payment would be limited to the shared room rate (£90.64 in Haringey). These changes would only apply after their 22nd birthday.

The Chair enquired about what was known about Haringey's current cohort and sought assurances about what the Council was doing to prepare for these changes. Officers advised that a written report would be drafted for CPAC meeting in January 2018. The Chair requested that someone from the Benefits team also attend the January meeting. **(Action: Denise Gandy/Clerk).**

The Chair queried why the cut off for the introduction of the local housing cap was 22, given that the care leaver responsibility had been extended to 25. Officers agreed to raise the issue at the national care leavers forum in the first instance and then potentially write to the relevant Government minister. **(Action: Sarah Alexander).**

26. ADOPTION

NOTED the Adoption report introduced by the Assistant Director Safeguarding and Social Care, which was included in the agenda pack at pages 27-36. The Committee was advised that there was no update on the London regional adoption agency and that progress seemed to have stagnated.

Figures for the adoption scorecard were calculated over a three year rolling average and it was noted that the scores for 2016/17 were provisional. The average duration of adoption proceedings of 560 days compared favourably with statistical neighbours and whilst this exceeded the national target, data showed an improving trajectory. The Committee requested statistical comparison figures for consortium neighbours. Officers advised that the figures should be available once scorecards are published. **(Action: Yvonne Mendes).**

The current number of children with Placement Orders who waiting to be matched was 17. The Committee were advised that there were more children on Haringey's books than there were adopters available. This was largely due to children being older, from sibling groups, or had special needs, which didn't match the identified needs of the approved adopters. The number of adopters in Haringey had reduced from 11 to six in 2016/17. This was largely due to changes in court judgements and the success of placement activities. In response the Council was continuing to seek adopters outside of Haringey but other local authorities were facing the same issues.

The Committee sought assurances that officers were satisfied that everything possible was being done to improve performance around adoptions. Officers responded that a number of staffing changes had helped and that the key aspect was speeding up the process and management ensuring that key timescales were met.

In response to a question around adoption breakdowns, officers advised that the figures were only counted from the day the child was placed to the day the Adoption Order was issued and that therefore accurate figures for overdue adoption timescales were not available.

The AD Safeguarding and Social Care agreed to email the Chair details of the fostering and adoption panels, including the likely level of commitment required and any preferred criteria. The Chair agreed to circulate the details to Members. **(Action: Sarah Alexander/ Chair).**

27. SUPERVISION ORDERS

NOTED the verbal report of the Assistant Director of Safeguarding & Social Care on the use of Supervision Orders by the courts in preference to Care orders and the impact on safeguarding a child in these circumstances. In Haringey there were 13 Supervision Orders in place for children from 12 families which represented 3% of the total LAC.

28. FOSTERING

In light of pending changes to the fostering team, the report was deferred to the next meeting. **(Action: Clerk)**

29. EXPLORING WHY HIGHER PROPORTION OF CARE LEAVERS WHO NO LONGER REQUIRE SERVICES

The Committee agreed to defer this item to the next meeting. **(Action: Clerk).**

30. URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

31. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee expressed its thanks to the Director Children's Services and the Head of Service for Children in Care and Placements for their hard work and wished them well in their future endeavours.

CHAIR: Councillor Elin Weston

Signed by Chair

Date