

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 27TH FEBRUARY, 2024, 7:00PM – 8:45PM

PRESENT:

Councillors: Zena Brabazon, Felicia Opoku, Elin Weston, Lotte Collett, Cressida Johnson and Ibrahim Ali

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred to the filming of meetings and this information was noted.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies of absence were received by Beverly Hendricks, AD for Safeguarding & Social Care.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. STAYING PUT ARRANGEMENTS - THE GUIDANCE AND THE IMPACT IN HARINGEY

Emma Cummergen, Head of Young Adult Service, introduced the report as set out at pages 1- 6 of the agenda pack.

The report detailed that when young people living in foster care turned aged 18, they were no longer legally in 'Care' and therefore fostering arrangements no longer applied. Staying Put was an arrangement that enabled a young person over the age of 18 to remain living with their carer if this was what the young person and the carer both wanted.

The meeting heard that:

- When a child was placed in care, the long term arrangements would be discussed at the outset and this would include their Staying Put arrangement that would enable a young person over the age of 18 to remain living with their carer.
- It was noted that more children were wanting to remain in their Staying Put arrangements. This showed placement stability and commitment.

- The number of care leavers that went to university had been increasing and this was also a result of placement stability.
- Staying put would support care leavers into independence by guiding them through their responsibilities including money management and their financial arrangements and.
- There were currently 31 staying put arrangements in place for care leavers. This included unaccompanied minors, young people with additional needs and young people waiting to go off to university.
- Every foster carer's financial arrangements were different to one another and they were encouraged to seek their own financial advice.
- In terms of the size of the cohort for the Staying Put arrangements, the service was supporting over 400 18+ (18-25 years of age).
- In regard to foster carers who decide to opt out of staying put arrangements, there was a concern of possible trauma for the young person. It was noted that to navigate these instances there were other services available that would help provide further support. An example is First Steps who provided psychological health screening and assessment for all looked-after children and young people in Haringey. Foster carers would also have the opportunity to explain their positions and these discussions would take place at a very early stage so that children and young people would be able to understand and make sense of what their journey through care would be like.

RESOLVED:

The Committee to note the report.

6. STABILITY PANEL - VERBAL UPDATE

Keith Warren, Head of Children in Care & Placements provided a verbal update and the meeting heard that:

- The purpose of Placement Stability Panel was to ensure there was early intervention to prevent children from having to change foster placement, change carers or change schools.
- Some children experienced several placement moves which affected their ability to form relationships and or attachments with adults, it affected their peer relationships at school and their ability to perform well. It primarily affected their self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Ofsted in the last inspection identified key strengths with the placement stability panel which aimed to prevent placements breaking down, and for support services to be mobilised at an earlier stage.
- The role of the placement stability panel in Haringey was to review and monitor the stability of placements for children in the care system. The panel was responsible for assessing the frequency of moves, the length of placements, and the overall well-being of the children involved.

- From 1st of April 2023 the Placement Stability Panel had reviewed 53 children who had two or more placement moves. 81% of those children had remained in their respective home/placements with support and intervention from the panel.
- There were two types of placement stability that were measured - short term stability and long term stability. Short Term Placement Stability was improving in line with statistical neighbours
- The panel was effective. Early intervention and support were provided to children at risk of placement disruption or breakdown.
- When a placement was disrupted, this would also come to the attention of the panel.

RESOLVED:

The Committee to note the information.

7. PRIVATE FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT - 2022-23

Keith Warren, Head of Children in Care & Placements introduced the report as set out in the agenda pack.

The purpose of this report was to update Members on the private fostering notifications, assessments, and monitoring activity, and to provide a level of assurance that privately fostered children were being safeguarded well. The report covered the activity between September 2022 and September 2023.

The meeting heard that:

- The nature of private fostering meant that it was hard to have accurate data on the number of private fostering.
- In order to increase reporting, social workers were encouraged to go out into the community and different forums to develop relationships.
- Social workers would be encouraged to develop partnerships to ensure more referrals were taken in.
- The service had been working with partners to raise awareness of private fostering including developing links with the Haredi community in Haringey. It was noted that the lead social worker had built relationships with Rabbis and work had been carried out within the MASH team.
- Communications were also sent out and included private fostering flyers for schools, GP newsletters and the Haringey Fostering newsletter. In addition, private fostering champions were being identified across various partnerships.
- Most of the referrals were through educational institutions.

RESOLVED:

The Committee to note the report.

8. FOSTERING PANEL ANNUAL REPORT 2022-23

Shirley Walker introduced the report as set out at pages 7- 20 of the agenda pack.

This report covered the year from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023, providing details of the Fostering Panel activity and the range of assessments.

The Fostering Panel provided a quality assurance role that enabled it to challenge the quality of reports and feedback information on good practice, as well as that which falls short of the National Minimum Standards (NMS).

The meeting heard that:

- In terms of the feedback form children, the Committee noted that children had various options to give feedback including written feedback, voice notes and also receiving direct face to face feedback. Social workers also talked openly to the children to obtain further information and feedback.
- In terms of training for foster carers, this had been an ongoing challenge for Haringey. The way training was provided had evolved and now most training was done online virtually. This seemed to have worked really well, particularly for foster carers with children.
- Haringey has been considering a more bespoke form of training which included podcasts, information through BBC and private one to one discussions.
- In terms of feedback from a health perspective, it was noted that at the end of every clinic letter, there was a form with a QR code where feedback could be provided and it was usually always completed.
- The Committee recommended for a report on Health to be considered at a future Corporate Parenting Advisory Board.
- The Committee also recommended that this report be considered every 6 months as a review along with the annual full report.

RESOLVED:

The Committee to note the report.

9. FAMILY STRESS FACTORS WHICH LEAD TO PUBLIC LAW OUTLINE

RESOLVED:

The Committee agreed to defer this agenda item to the next meeting

10. CORPORATE PARENTING WEEK - VERBAL UPDATE

Keith Warren, Head of Children in Care & Placements provided a verbal on the corporate parenting week.

The meeting heard that:

- This was the very first corporate parenting week that Haringey had ever had and the service received positive feedback.
- For next year, the Council was planning to open up the event to wider communities and businesses with the intention of getting support for children within the borough.
- “Just giving” page collects funding for children in care and this would help contribute in them achieving their ambitions.
- The “Proud to be Me” initiative would help children of black and other minority backgrounds.

RESOLVED:

The Committee to note the information.

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Lynn Carrington, Designated Nurse, Children in Care provided a verbal update on dental checks for Haringey Children in care as requested at the last meeting.

The meeting heard that:

- The Healthy Smiles Looked After Children's Oral Health Pilot started on 15.11.2021 to support children to have the statutory oral health assessments and access to routine NHS dental care during the COVID pandemic.
- The service aimed to refer children if they were unable to get a dental appointment.
- Whittington Health dental services will see also see Children in Care.
- For children who were living outside of London and SW's or carers inform the nurse of difficulties in booking appointments, then the CIC health team would contact their counterparts in other areas requesting which dentists in their area were seeing Children in Care.
- Some foster carers had reported they had been unable to get appointments for children who had recently moved to them.
- Social workers are encouraged to ensure that dental checks are recorded on children's casefiles.

CHAIR: Cllr Zena Brabazon

Signed by Chair

Date