

**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE & CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PRACTICE COMMITTEE
MONDAY, 29 OCTOBER 2012**

Councillors Allison, Brabazon, Bull, Dogus, Reece, Scott, Solomon, Stennett, Stewart and Waters

Apologies Councillor Adamou

Also Present: Libby Blake, Marion Wheeler, Lisa Blundell, Wendy Tomlinson, Moira Lammond, Geoffrey Burach, Hilary Corrick.

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTON BY
JC01	APPOINTMENT OF THE CHAIR It was agreed that Cllr Stewart chair the Joint meeting of the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee.	
JC02	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE(IF ANY) Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Adamou.	
JC03	URGENT BUSINESS There were no items of urgent business put forward.	
JC04	DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST There were no declarations of Interest put forward.	
JC05	DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/QUESTIONS There were no deputations, petitions, or questions put forward.	
JC06	HALF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS ON SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN DATA The Committee considered performance data and trends for an agreed set of measures relating to contacts, referrals, assessments, child protection and children looked after. The agreed set of measures were grouped according to topic and enclosed at appendix 1, showing monthly data, performance against target, long term trends and benchmarking data where applicable. Both the Corporate Parenting Committee and Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee had considered performance information up to August 2012, in relation to their respective areas, at their recent meetings. With this in mind, the Chair asked the Assistant Director for Safeguarding to highlight any changes in performance since these	

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recent meetings.

The Assistant Director for Safeguarding provided the following key performance information:

- The downward trend for children becoming looked after continued. The Committee noted that it was critical for this indicator to continue in this manner for the service to move forward with their early help agenda.
- The upward pressure on children placed on child protection plans was being closely examined and monitored by the service as this was out of step with statistical neighbours.
- There was a slight upturn in the number of looked after children being placed in the borough. Although, it was accepted that the number of looked after children placed outside the borough was still high.
- The Children's service were aiming to ensure that all looked after children had a permanency plan and were continuing to examine how each department had a role in supporting these plans.

Following queries from the Committee about the performance statistics, the following information was provided:

- With regards to initial and core assessments not being completed within timescales, the Committee were assured that all families would have been seen by a social worker within a certain amount of time. The Committee were further pointed to the service comments, included with the performance data, which showed that there was an improvement from the previous month. The Committee were assured that this was a high priority for the Children's service and they were striving to bring this up to top quartile performance. The Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee had also asked their Independent Member, Hilary Corrick, to undertake a qualitative audit into initial assessments that were completed out of timescale to understand the reasons for this. This audit would be considered at their meeting on November 22nd 2012.
- Adoption scorecard - There were a number of key lines of enquiry which would require a response from different parts of the service. The Children's service was actively exploring how to better streamline the processes involving adoption. It was anticipated that a review of adoption processes should bring forward ideas for improvements together with the additional resources from the Children's Improvement Board would enable more adoptions to be made at a quicker pace. The Director of Children's service advised that there was a timescale chart being considered by the Children's Service Improvement board on a regular basis and this

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	<p>set out the different timescales the service were working to for adoption. It was agreed to circulate this chart to the Committee.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Independent Member of the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee advised that the key to improving adoption rates was for adoption to be considered as an early option when a child comes to care. In her experience, when children become older it was more difficult to find placements. • Although, there were a high number of contacts with the Children's service, through First Response, they were effectively able to sift through the contacts and make referrals which were likely to require an initial assessment and entry into social care. The director was exploring setting up a new team focussed on early help that will consider those contacts which do not meet the social care threshold but where early help through universal services will help a family not get to a stage where they need social care intervention. This would be discussed in the later agenda item. 	LB
JC07	<p>CHILDREN'S SOCIETY CHARTER FOR RUNAWAYS</p> <p>The Committee noted that one of the recommendations, of the Scrutiny Review of Children missing from care and from home, was that the council gave specific consideration to signing up to the Children's Society Runaways Charter. The Children's Society was calling on all local authorities to publicly sign up to the charter which contained a clear code for agencies with a duty to protect children who run away or go missing from home and care. The council already adhered to statutory guidance and Pan London Missing from Home and Care procedures for children missing from home and care placements.</p> <p>The council were working with Barnardos on the Miss U project with a practitioner funded to provide support to runaways and children at risk. Therefore, as an existing working relationship with Barnardos existed, the service would need to gauge whether there was a difference in the work required by the charter and the work that Barnardos did with missing children.</p> <p>The merits of signing up to the charter were outlined together with the caution that the charter could be used in assessments of the Children's service and therefore the directorate would need to allocate additional resources to collate evidence and monitor adherence to the charter. Taking into account, that the service already had in place existing processes and procedures to adhere to the statutory and Pan London guidance, this would be an additional detailed assignment for the service to resource.</p> <p>The Committee continued to given assurance about the level of priority</p>	

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	<p>given to children missing from care with an illustration of the information shared in the weekly meetings between the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Director of the Children's service.</p> <p>A member of the Committee advised that children and young people missing from council children's homes had been a regular concern expressed at previous Scrutiny Panel meetings so the close weekly high level attention given to this issue was welcome. However, the low numbers of children/young people missing from placements was questioned as this was believed to have been higher in the past.</p> <p>In relation to signing up to the charter, the Committee agreed that the main consideration should be that children are kept safe. It was reassuring that the Children's service were following statutory procedures and was tracking the children and young people that were going missing. However, as a separate but connected issue, it was felt that further assurance was needed on the process and risk assessments in place for children in care taking unauthorised leave from their placements as the past experience of some members had been that these children's whereabouts were predicted, rather than known by the care homes. These absences were equally as concerning as children missing from care whose whereabouts was not known. The Committee agreed that a report come back to the December meeting of Corporate Parenting Committee advising on the process and risk assessments in place for children in care taking unauthorised leave from their placements and also for children missing from care. The report should also provide a sense of the figures, over the year, for children missing from care as the figures were lower than previously reported.</p> <p>The consensus among Committee Members was that the main priority should be keeping children safe and as statutory guidance and Pan London procedures were being followed in respect of children missing from care they were satisfied that adherence to a separate charter, that would require allocation of additional resources, was not needed.</p>	<p>MW</p> <p>LB</p>
<p>JC08</p>	<p>HARINGEY 54000 PROGRAMME</p> <p>The vision of the Haringey 54000 change programme was: Haringey a place where children and young people are known to thrive and achieve. The programme represented a changing relationship between the Children's service and families in the borough. The programme would balance services towards universal and good and outstanding early help that would sustain families, preventing the need for more costly services.</p> <p>To achieve the required outcomes, the service was aiming to release resources currently invested in higher numbers of looked after children for an earlier offer of help. This would mean shifting the budget from high cost interventions towards efficient and effective preventative</p>	

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services. The programme approach being taken to the changes, required in the service, had been developed in collaboration with practitioners running programmes in London Authorities.

An explanation was provided of early help and its priorities were set out as well as the policy guiding this work. It was noted that this was not limited to the age of the child and could occur at any point in a child's or young person's life. The Children's service was engaging with users to find out what early help means to them to properly inform the strategy.

The policy attached was in draft form and an updated version would be sent out to Committee members. The final policy was expected to be considered by Cabinet in March. It was important to note that, the Permanency Policy would work alongside Early Help Policy and would be about finding permanent families for looked after children so they spent a less time in care.

A member of the Committee highlighted the significant reductions made to children's centres in 2011 as this would need to be factored when taking forward the offer of early help. Comparisons were made between Islington council's offer of children's centre services and Haringey's offer. In response to this, it was pointed out Islington receive higher funding for early years than Haringey and are in a position spend more on children's centres. The Children's service had been required to make past reductions to the children's centres budget as there had not been the funding in place to continue with the size of the service. The Children's service was not excluded from making budget reductions in the coming financial years and it was also not yet known if there was flexibility in the DSG grant and EIG funding to spend more on children's centres but use of these funding streams would be explored.

Continuing the discussion on children's centres and their role in early help to families, the issues listed below were highlighted. The Director of Children's services agreed to provide a written response to the Committee as information relating to budgets and savings would need to be accessed.

- Had there been a review following the 50% reduction in funding to children's centres?
- The position on children's centres access to framework i.
- In the budget reductions to children's centres in 2011, there had been a significant budget allocation to external services and it would be useful to find out how this money was being spent and monitored.
- A significant proportion of Sure Start money had been top sliced for family support services and it would be important to find out the efficacy of the services being delivered as family support encompassed a number of different services working together.

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JC09	<p>MULTI SYSTEMIC TREATMENT PROGRAMME - EDGE OF CARE - PROGRESS REPORT</p> <p>Geoffrey Burach was asked by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding to attend the meeting to present information on Multi Systemic Treatment (MST) Programme, a DFE funded project. Moira Lamond was also introduced to the Committee; she was working directly with council on this initiative aimed at mainstreaming intervention for young people on the edge of care.</p> <p>MST was initially developed in the US as a treatment programme for young people displaying antisocial behaviour and aimed at reducing youth criminal activity. The outcomes of the programme are cost savings by decreasing the public cost from youth criminal activity such as imprisonment, and putting young people into care.</p> <p>The theoretical basis behind MST examines the factors leading to delinquent behaviour and involves a therapy team working with the families. The team target multidiscipline risks in a comprehensive yet individualised way. The caregiver's co-operation is paramount to the long term positive outcomes for the child. There will be daily activities for the parents to complete to change the system in the family and ensure the intervention successes are sustainable.</p> <p>There was a contractual relationship between with the council and the Brandon centre initially for a year for two therapists to work with 9 families. These families demonstrate extreme entrenched behaviour which statutory services have not been able to work with.</p> <p>Moira Lammond explained that in practical terms, MST is a home based therapy with the therapist visiting the household and keeping regular contact with family for a time limited intervention. The aim is to keep children and young people with extreme behaviours on the edge of care at home or out of custody. The intervention can last from 3-5 months and can range from 35-75 appointments with each family. Examples were given of the different issues and the types of families that the therapists dealt will deal with. The recent achievements of the project in Haringey included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 children in care coming out of care and returning to their families• Positive interventions at school• One child successful in not getting excluded from school• A pupil at the Octagon centre had progressed to college education• Schools participating in the therapy and working with the therapist on behavioural plans	

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The families spoke to the therapist about the different approaches each statutory agency had when working with them. Also how the necessary input of statutory services could also make the families feel less in control.

In response to questions, the Committee learnt that:

- Currently a therapist will work with between 4-5 for families and if the council wanted to increase the families getting this specific help they would need to procure additional therapists.
- The work with the families is conducted in the home and there is no clinic to attend. Although, there is variety of interventions, this is a pragmatic therapy based on the needs of the family.
- The project had been running for 6 months and the cost of the intervention was £9.5k per child. Most of the cost for the first year is funded externally with the remainder of the funding coming from both Haringey and Waltham Forest council's.
- The referrals to MST were decided by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding following consideration at an internal safeguarding board meeting where high risk, complex, and challenging behaviours being displayed by families are considered.
- There was linkage with the troubled families' project and principles in use were similar and involved intensive work with the families.
- The Council were fortunate in that the therapist team included a specialist in substance mis-use, one of only two teams in the country.
- The therapists were usually trained in clinical psychology or were Social Workers with a master's degree. However, in addition to their professional qualifications, they were trained using the MST model before working with families. Successful working with families was closely related to the MST model.
- The therapist will take over, from the statutory agencies working with the family but will regularly confer with the agencies about their work and gain information from them about the family.

The Assistant Director for Safeguarding commented that she had been impressed at the level of engagement the therapists had displayed and how quickly they had been able to engage with the chosen families and begin working in their homes. However, as this was a new project, it was too early to tell if the changes in behaviour, facilitated by the therapist, would be sustainable once they left and the family were transferred back to universal services. The Committee agreed that it

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	would be useful to get a report back in 6 months time on the work of this project.	
JC10	<p>YOUTH, COMMUNITY AND PARTICIPATION SERVICE OFFER TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE EDGE OF CARE /AT RISK</p> <p>The Committee considered a report on the work of the Youth Community and Participation service intervening and working with young people and children that were on the edge of care or at risk of offending. This was a pilot project which targeted young people that did not meet the criteria to receive a service from First Response but where there was enough concern about their behaviour and relationship with their families to refer them to the Youth, Community, Participation services. The Committee noted the successes of the targeted interventions and the longer term aim of continuing with this project with a staffing structure being put in place to enhance this model that would be fully operational from January 2013.</p> <p>It was clarified that the cohort of children and young people referred to the Youth, Community and Participation service did not require the same high level of care as the young people accessing the MST programme.</p> <p>Although the Youth, Community and Participation had received £400k in funding this could still not support a broader youth service offer. The Youth Community and Participation service would continue as a partial service providing targeted universal services.</p>	
JC11	<p>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no new items of urgent business.</p>	
JC12	<p>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</p>	
JC13	<p>NEW ITEMS OF EXEMPT URGENT BUSINESS</p> <p>There were no new exempt items of urgent business.</p>	
JC14	<p>NEXT MEETING</p> <p>16th May 2013.</p>	

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