

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON SEPTEMBER 12<sup>TH</sup> 2006

### 1. From Councillor Bevan

#### 1.i) Fostering Services

Please can it be confirmed that Haringey Council

- Has a comprehensive strategy for foster care recruitment to meet the needs of looked after children?
- Has a dedicated post to develop, oversee and promote this strategy.
- Has an identified recruitment budget that fits the size and nature of the task.
- Has a recruitment process covering initial enquiries, assessment and approval.
- Has developed training and support that meets the needs of foster carers in their first year and throughout their fostering career.

#### **Answer**

A comprehensive strategy for foster care recruitment has been developed to meet the needs of looked after children? It was commended by the JAR Inspection. A dedicated post of Campaign and Communications Manager oversees the development and promotion of the strategy. There is an identified recruitment budget appropriate to the task. There is an established recruitment process covering initial enquiries, assessment and approval. Haringey provides training and support facilities for foster carers during their first and subsequent years as Haringey foster carers.

1.ii) On the 15<sup>th</sup> July at a Somali community event “Raising the Educational Achievement of Children and Young People from the Somali Community” the Director of Children Services agreed with members of this community that there was an urgent need to get Somali speaking people into Haringey Schools. A meeting was offered to pursue this issue with interested members of the Somali community. Please may I be advised as to the results of this meeting, how many speakers of Somali have we identified as able and willing to work in Haringey Schools. How many member of this community have started to work / or have applications being processed.

#### **Answer**

The Somali community event “Raising Educational Achievement of Children and Young People from the Somali Community” on 15 July was a useful event. The Director of the Children and Young People’s Service agreed with many of the speakers that there is a need to more actively promote the achievement of Somali young people in our schools. One aspect of this is to get more Somali speaking people working with young people in a variety of settings including schools. The Director indicated that a first step was to open a more formal dialogue with the Somali community through a number of

senior officers so that awareness can be raised both in the community and in schools. There are of course regulations about teacher recruitment. Since the conference there has been the school summer holidays and we are now actively taking this forward. I will report back to the committee in due course.

**2. From Councillor Catherine Harris:**

Would the Lead Member for the Children & Young People's Service please outline her planned commitment to provide free nursery places on a long term basis, at Noel Park Nursery, in keeping with the deprivation and child protection challenges the parents of young children in the ward face. Currently there are nurseries in wards in Tottenham with similar deprivation indices that have 70 free places per nursery. Can she indicate whether a start of 10 free places at Noel Park Nursery, would be a possible start in facing the challenges to vulnerable children and families in Noel Park?

**Answer**

All three year olds are eligible for part-time funded nursery education – regardless of the setting they attend (from the term after their third birthday). Thus all eligible three and four year old children attending Noel Park Nursery will access 12.5 hours funded nursery education for 38 weeks a year.

In early 2000 Haringey allocated a number of full-time funded places to support children in need attending maintained nursery settings. Three of the current Children's Centres have developed from maintained nursery schools. As part of the maintained provision for nursery education, these Centres were allocated up to 45 full-time places each for children in need. This funding is only for nursery education for 3 and 4 year olds – not younger children – and covers only school hours and term time.

**3. From Councillor Weber:**

**A Temporary Accommodation Haringey House in Crouch End appears to be taking in juveniles who might well be "Looked After Children". Can you confirm that they are Haringey Children or whether they are from another borough?**

We do not have any young people that we know of residing at the address provided and we do not believe that this address is operated by one of our contractual partners. We therefore do not know who is residing at this property.

**With regard to properties like this one in Haringey, what safe guards for children in terms of security and well being are in place?**

Looked After Children under the age of 16 can only be placed in accommodation registered by the Commission for Social Care Inspection. This is a central government inspection and regulatory body. If an

unregistered children's home is found to be operating the matter would be referred to CSCI who have the power to both inspect and close the home.

Young people over the age of 16 can be placed in semi independent accommodation as part of preparing them for independence. These young people may be either looked after or formerly looked after and in receipt of services under the Leaving Care Act 2000.

The practice in Haringey is to place with providers under a contractual relationship which specifies expectations in relation to both the service provided and standard of accommodation. We currently contract with a number of providers who provide supported accommodation with a package of support according to the assessed needs of the young person.

**Is this type of Temporary Accommodation appropriate for their needs?**

Semi independent accommodation is not temporary accommodation but a specific type of supported housing where young people are helped to prepare for independent living.

**How long are Looked After Children in Temporary Accommodation?**

Young people placed in semi independent accommodation are placed until they are 18 and entitled to housing. They would then move to a flat of their own, continuing to receive support from the Leaving Care Team.

**Who is responsible for these children?**

**Who is actually responsible for the teenager's well being/development?**

For children looked after and young people leaving care responsibility for their welfare rests with the placing local authority.