

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2013**

Councillors Allison, Brabazon, Reece, Solomon, Stennett and Waters (Chair)

Apologies Libby Blake

Also Present: Marion Wheeler, Tracy Hutchings, Paul McCarthy, Fiona Henderson, Rachel Oakley, Dr Kim Holt, Marian Parks, Chris Chalmers,

<b>MINUTE NO.</b>	<b>SUBJECT/DECISION</b>	<b>ACTON BY</b>
CPAC238	<p><b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)</b></p> <p>Apologies for lateness were received from Cllr Brabazon.</p>	
CPAC239	<p><b>URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There were no items of urgent business put forward.</p>	
CPAC240	<p><b>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST</b></p> <p>There were no declarations of interest put forward.</p>	
CPAC241	<p><b>TO AGREE THE ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETINGS WITH ASPIRE</b></p> <p>A new protocol for Fusion offering leisure passes to children and young people in care was due to be signed off, on the 26<sup>th</sup> June, and the Committee asked if this had been completed. Chris Chalmers had met with the new Fusion representative at the end of May. She had learned that, although agreement had previously been reached to offer the leisure passes to children and young people in care, internal arrangements not been fully completed by Fusion. This had now happened, and it was also negotiated to offer care leavers a subsidised leisure pass at £18 a month. It was clarified that the care leaver would need to fund this from their own income, as the council could not be invoiced for the £18. The Committee agreed that this was still a good outcome and the £18 was a good discounted rate for use of the local leisure centres.</p>	
CPAC242	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>Cllr Allison had provided apologies to the meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> April and this had, in error, not been included in the minutes. Agreed that this be rectified and minutes published to reflect that apologies had been provided.</p> <p>The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the meeting.</p>	Clerk

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2013**

<p><b>CPAC243</b></p>	<p><b>MATTERS ARISING</b></p> <p>The Committee noted that the “Junction” (careers and training advice stop) was in place at Wood Green Library. This was opening up more often for use by young people and two employment skills workshops had also taken place.</p>	
<p><b>CPAC244</b></p>	<p><b>A DISCUSSION ON THE HEALTH PROVISION FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN</b></p> <p>Dr Kim Holt, the designated doctor for children in care and Marian Parks Specialist Nurse were invited to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee meeting to provide a wider understanding of their work with children and young people in care. They provided a presentation on their work with children and young people in care along with the targets that they are working to and their current performance.</p> <p>Children in care Health team are commissioned to provide statutory Initial Health Assessments (IHA). These are completed by a paediatrician (Dr Holt) and the review health assessments are completed by specialist nurses. It was noted that children under the age of 5 will require 2 health assessments per year and children aged 5-18 will require 1 assessment per year. Children coming into care must receive their first assessment within 20 days of coming into care. Currently 82.3% of children are seen within this timescale and the Health Team are working towards 90% rate.</p> <p>The Committee learned that the Designated Doctor, for looked after children (Dr Holt,) will also do quite detailed medicals on children who are going through the adoption process. There will often be quite tight timescales for these medicals taking place to ensure the child does not spend too long in care. When considering the performance statistics over the year, it could be ascertained when adoption medicals are given necessary priority.</p> <p>The performance indicators also currently reflect when there are peaks in the appointment of health assessments as there will be certain times in the year when foster carers are more likely to book these i.e. in the school holidays or just before the school holidays. The Committee noted the issues that can impact on completing a health assessment such as the need to get information from GP's, not having the red book (which will list the immunisations that a child will have received) and not having a medical history, for example, if the child was an unaccompanied minor.</p> <p>The Specialist Nurse team have taken over from GP's in undertaking Health Assessment reviews and the quality of the assessments has improved. The nurses have access to Framework I and RIO (Health database) and can get an understanding of the child's/ young person's circumstances before completing the health assessment. They will know the right questions to ask and how to approach the child and young person, better, from looking at the case history. The specialist nurses</p>	

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2013**

can also add information onto the FWi system which is then accessed by social workers.

The assessments take place at Bound Green Health Centre and this was reported to be good central location for children and young people in care to attend in the borough. It was noted that specialist nurse will complete visits to children and young people that are in the care of the local authority and live outside the borough. A current issue was making visits to young people in care that are on remand.

The Committee noted that, after the age of 16, a young person in care can actually refuse to have a medical assessment. However this was not a very frequent occurrence. The young people are encouraged to talk about any health concerns they have. The Committee noted that the Specialist Nurses have developed a good working relationship with the young people in care that they work with and will continually provide advice on health issues such as contraception, sexually transmitted diseases, and also pregnancy advice where needed. They will also make clear their professional boundaries and their duty to report ,to the social worker, any information shared that affects the care and safety of the child/young person. For example, if they learn that a teenager has a boyfriend they will ask how old he is to help assess risk of potential domestic violence or sexual exploitation and report concerns to social worker.

The Committee were asked to keep in mind the complexity of the some of the cases that the Designated Doctor will need to deal with. There will be young children that will present at range of neurological developmental problems due to exposure to drugs and alcohol and there will be some young people that will have severe mental health issues and their assessment will take longer to complete.

The Health team were continually exploring ways to keep young people interested in taking forward their health assessments and exploring ways to reach out to hard to reach young people. The Health team will have informal team meetings to discuss and reflect the issues being raised in the assessments and identify any trends or common issues that need to be dealt with.

The Committee noted the achievements of the health team during 2012-13 which included: 90 children (planned for adoption) being seen and 15 placed for adoption, immunisation rate improvement, and a steady increase in the rate of reviewing health assessments. The Committee further considered the current challenges and vision for the future.

The Committee noted that the Health Team had put forward a business case for recruiting an additional doctor to help with further improving the rate of assessments. Given the number of LAC in the borough and complexities of some cases, this additional support was needed. Committee agreed to highlight the support needed at the next meeting with Whittington Health Trust and with the CCG. (Clinical Commissioning Group)

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Waters  
/ Dir  
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**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2013**

CPAC245	<p><b>PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT : CHILDREN AND FAMILIES</b></p> <p>The Committee considered the end of year summary of performance information relating to looked after children. The report brought together all the performance information considered on a monthly basis by the Committee and reflected on the issues and challenges going forward.</p> <p>Overall, the number of children in care was reducing. This reflected the better practice in planning the smarter objectives which were helping assess, early on, whether a child can realistically live with parents and if a foster carer or kinship carer from the family can be sought.</p> <p>Comment was made on the number of foster carers recruited between 2012-13, which was much reduced from previous years .The Committee learned that that some foster carers were adopting their placements and there was also a cohort retiring. The Fostering service review was occurring at a time when there was a need to consider these factors and have an analysis of what was needed to improve the service. The review had already identified a number of blockages to the recruitment of Foster carers. In response to a member question, it was clarified that there was no pressure put on foster carers to adopt , although there was now more impetus placed on early permanency planning , this was an activity that had been in place for a significant number of years and therefore any transgression (fostering to Adoption)placements would always have been agreed at the early stage of permanency planning.</p> <p>It was commented that issues concerning the lack of in house foster carers had been consistently raised by this Committee over a number of year's .In response , the service accepted that the number of in house foster carers recruited had not been to a high number and generally the service did not offer value for money. However, high quality placements for children and young people were consistently taken forward by Placement officers. The newly appointed interim Head of Service for commissioning and placements advised the Committee that he had seen meticulous care taken in finding good matches for children and young people coming into care and this was essential in ensuring stability for a child/ young person going into care.</p> <p>The Committee noted that part of the work by impower would be looking into the internal assumptions being made about what a foster care should offer , in terms of their circumstances and housing, to understand if this had an impact on numbers recruited. Some members of the Committee felt that there should be an opportunity to have an input in the Fostering review and share their experience of being part of this Committee which had considered the performance of the fostering service over the past 4 years. The Chair and the Interim Head of Commissioning and Placements agreed to facilitate this focus group meeting with Committee Members and impower.</p>	PM

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2013**

CPAC246	<b>INDEPENDENT REVIEW OFFICERS(IRO) ANNUAL REPORT</b> <p>The Committee were reminded of the statutory role of the IRO (Independent Reviewing officer). Part of the role was quality assuring the care plan for the young person/child that was looked after and there was a prescriptive legal framework for this. There was a need to have effective challenge and scrutiny about the care being received by the child or young person in care. Legislation reinforces the requirements for a care plan to be reviewed within 10-20 days of completion. It was estimated that each Haringey IRO had around 70 children/young people in care to oversee and this number had greatly reduced from previous years, meaning there was more opportunities for the IRO's to participate in the strategic policy initiatives. The achievements and work of the IRO's was set out in the attached report</p> <p>The Committee noted there were a total of 7 full time IRO's who were mostly permanent full time staff with some agency staff members .The Committee were assured that the agency IRO's had a high expertise and were able to contribute to improving further working practices from the experience they had of working in different boroughs. There were a total of 1023 reviews completed by IROs, this included visits and assessments made of looked after children that lived outside the borough. They were currently performing at 95% of reviews completed within timescales. The IRO report further illustrated how children contribute to the reviews and an explanation was given of how children, young and old, are encouraged to participate in the review to ensure they genuinely express their feelings. The Committee noted that the main issue of concern highlighted by care leavers to IRO's had been the standard of accommodation for care leavers.</p> <p>The Committee informed the IRO, attending the meeting, that they had invited Aspire to complete a survey, with fellow young people in care and care leavers, to provide a stakeholder perspective on the support provided by IRO's.</p> <p>The Committee were interested in finding out what happens if a child/young person in care is negative about their foster carers. They were informed that the IRO will speak with the social worker about how the situation is being managed and will ensure that the child/young person feels safe in their placement. The issues raised will be followed up by the IRO along with any actions arising from the previous IRO meeting, in line with their role of being an advocate for the child. The Committee were assured that, depending on the level of the matter raised, the IRO will not wait until the 6 month review to follow up on actions with the social worker.</p> <p>In terms of IRO relationship with the Children in Care service, the challenge of the IRO was generally welcomed .When issues were raised, social workers kept in mind the specialist role of the IRO in being an advocate for the child/ young person. The improved permanency planning process, together with monthly meetings health meant there was a lot of communication between the IRO's and the Children in Care</p>	
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**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2013**

Team. The Committee were advised that where IRO's found a delay in follow up of an action, arising from a review meeting, this would be taken forward with the social worker's line manager. The Committee were assured that the IRO's did take forward difficult conversations with social workers when the need arose. It was important to note that no issues had been raised by the IRO's with CAFCASS. [This was the agency that took forward IRO concerns about the care of a looked after child/young person if the council process was not receptive]

Understanding was sought on the relationship between the IRO and the child/young person in care, following on from the discussion at the informal meeting with Aspire. The Committee learnt that the IRO will make contact with the child/ young person before the review meeting and start to try to build up a rapport with them. The review of the plan was about empowering the child/young person in care to take the lead in the review meeting. Examples of how this had been achieved with younger children was provided and involved breaking down perceptions and ensuring the voice of the young person/child in care was dominant in the proceedings. The Committee noted that the IRO's are available for young people, in between reviews, to talk to. The IRO's will send out birthday cards as well to continue the rapport and relationship with the child/young person in care in between review meetings.

In terms of the family court proceedings, the guardian's views often carried more weight in proceedings and understanding was sought on the role of the IRO where there was a conflict between the local authority and the guardian about the care of a child/young person. It was noted that where there was concerns from the local authority on the ability of the guardian to carry out the requirements of the care plan, the IRO would work with both the guardian and local authority to help resolve issues.

In terms of preparing a young person to leave care, pathway planning began from the age of 16 .The IRO had a crucial role in making this plan as strong and coherent as possible to prepare the young person for independence.

The IRO, attending the meeting, was asked by the Committee to put forward their perception of their role in the council. The Committee heard that the IRO's were able to make a difference to the working practices for staff involved in the care of looked after children and they felt that their views were valued and respected. They completed audits and found their findings were taken seriously by all levels of staff in Children's services as they were about improving practice and in the ultimate interests of the child/ young person in care. The IRO's views would also be sought in the review of the Fostering Service as crucial stakeholders.

The Chair thanked Fiona Henderson for attending the meeting and providing a key insight into the crucial corporate parenting role of the IRO.

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2013**

CPAC247	<p><b>HARINGEY ADVOCACY AND INDEPENDENT VISITOR SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT - 2012/2013</b></p> <p>The Committee considered an annual report on the Independent advocacy and Independent visitor service to children and young people in the borough. The Committee noted the emerging themes and patterns.</p> <p>The report highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• That there was not enough notice being given of the placement role</li> <li>• The issues with advocates visiting young people outside the borough</li> <li>• The main recipients of the advocacy service were care leavers between the ages of 18-21.</li> <li>• A lack of male workers provided by the provider of the service to undertake the advocacy role.</li> <li>• That advocacy had different forms and that clear guidelines were needed of what is expected of the advocacy service as well as parameters and guidelines that ensure the advocate is free to challenge the local authority.</li> </ul> <p>Agreed that there was a need to ensure that there was a continually confident and challenging dialogue. This could be done in future by changing the power balance and helping Aspire actually commission this service to ensure the users needs were continually at the centre of commissioning process.</p> <p>Following welfare reforms and proposed changes to the housing allocations policy of the council (which was currently being consulted on) the Children in Care Team were working on a new housing protocol in relation to how care leavers are placed. The Committee agreed to consider a report on the Housing protocol at a future meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed to forward the Committee an update on the provider which would be chosen to provide Independent visits before the next meeting in October with a report to follow on how the provider was progressing.</p>	<p>CC</p> <p>RO CC</p>
CPAC248	<p><b>NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b></p> <p>There were no new items of urgent business put forward.</p>	
CPAC249	<p><b>EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC</b></p> <p>The press and public were excluded from the meeting for the following item.</p>	
CPAC250	<p><b>MINUTES</b></p> <p>The exempt minutes from the meeting held on the 29<sup>th</sup> April 2013 were agreed.</p>	
CPAC251	<p><b>NEW EXEMPT ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS</b></p>	

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
THURSDAY, 27 JUNE 2013**

	None	
<b>CPAC252</b>	<b>ANY OTHER BUSINESS</b>  The date of the next meeting was on <b>03 October 6.30pm.</b>  Some Members enquired about the recent unannounced OFSTED thematic inspection which was focused on the responses of Children's Services to neglect in under 10's. A number of local authorities had taken part in the inspection and verbal feedback had been given. The inspection findings were due to be published in October 2013 and the Assistant Director for Children's Services agreed to complete an analysis of the feedback and provide this to the Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Committee and to Corporate Parenting Committee.	<b>MW</b>

Cllr Ann Waters

Chair