

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICE ADVISORY COMMITTEE
28 NOVEMBER 2005**

Councillors *Meehan (Chair), Adamou, *Adje, *Bax, Jean Brown, *Engert, *Harris, *Hoban, *Santry and Stanton.

* Members present

MINUTE NO.	SUBJECT/DECISION	ACTION BY
CSAC27.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</p> <p>Councillor Adamou</p>	HMS
CSAC28.	<p>MINUTES (Agenda Item 4)</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2005 were confirmed and signed by The Chair</p>	HMS
CSAC29.	<p>SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2005 - PERFORMANCE DATA FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES (Agenda Item 6):</p> <p>We received the report of the Director of Children's Services on performance details for September and October, which contained key performance data relating to children looked after, child protection, referrals and assessments, family support and staffing for members of the committee to consider. The data was compared to key performance indicators, which the Council was obliged to meet and contained the statutory requirements and local time scales for meeting these targets.</p> <p>We were informed that there had been 195 referrals received in the month of September and 227 in October. The outturn for 2004/5 was 50.6% and the average of the Council's comparator was 55.4% and the current year to date position was 57.5%. The Committee had conveyed its concern at the speed of which assessments were being completed at the last meeting and the Officers were pleased that the situation continued to improve and was now above 60%. We were informed by the Officers that this issue continued to be a priority and that measures introduced to improve performance in this area would continue to be monitored.</p> <p>In response to a question raised by a Member the Officers undertook to include within future reports to Committee the information placed before Fostering Panels especially in respect of the views of the children placed. David Holmes referred to the concerns raised by the Leader and indicated that he would report to the next meeting preparation of the project plan prior to its implementation. The Officers undertook also to address the issues highlighted by the Chair on the need for a protocol to encompass all the agencies involved in the protection of children and young persons.</p> <p>In respect of paragraph 9.5 and "key thresholds" we noted the excellent results that had been obtained and the Officers confirmed to the Chair that a progress report would be submitted to the January 2006 meeting.</p>	

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	<p>We discussed the difficulties of recruiting permanent staff and noted the need to rely on the appointment of agency staff. We noted that the position in Haringey was mirrored across pan London authorities. The Officers were requested to report in detail to the January 2006 meeting on the use of agency staff and the conversion of such staff to permanent employees directly appointed by the Council. The report would also set out the findings of the joint working party on the exit strategies undertaken when staff resign. In discussing this aspect of the employment of agency staff we noted the assurances of the Officers that agency staff were fully qualified and committed to caring for children.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That we note and endorse the contents of the report. 2. That future reports to Committee contain details of the views of children in a similar way to the reports made to the Fostering panels. 3. That a report be submitted to the next meeting on the progress in formulating and implementing a Project Plan. 4. That a report be provided to the committee in January setting out protocols that ensure that the various Council child agencies/departments are aware of any possible overlap in dealing with a child's case. 5. That a report on staffing be made to the January 2006 meeting to include details of the long term employment of agency staff and the conversion rate of agency to permanent members of staff. 6. That a report be submitted to the next meeting of the committee on all aspects of the adoption service. 	<p>CH/DH DH/CH CH/DH CH/DH CH/DH</p>
CSAC30.	IMPACT OF THE ADOPTION ACT – Report of the Director of Children's Services withdrawn. (Agenda Item 7).	
CSAC31.	<p>FRAMEWORK 1 UPDATE - (Report of the Director of Children's Services – not circulated or tabled - Agenda Item 8):</p> <p>The Director of Children's Services to report to the next meeting and to advise also on why the report was not circulated to this meeting.</p>	Dir CS
CSAC32.	<p>UPDATE ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN (Agenda item 9)</p> <p>Following discussion of the report the Chair, Councillor Meehan asked that the Officers report to the next meeting on the impact of these proposals on health service requirements for information sharing.</p>	Dir CS
CSAC33.	<p>THE MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (Agenda Item 10)</p> <p>We received a video presentation on the mental health needs of 5 looked after children from the area of the Borough of Haringey. Following the presentation the Officers responded to a series of questions raised by Members. The questions dealt with</p>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">i) Whether a child had a comprehensive case file that covered the child regardless of the various placements whether inside or outside of Haringey.ii) An ethnic breakdown of the numbers of children in care,iii) The need to ensure continuity and consistency of care for children,iv) The continual need for the Council to review its services to reflect particularly the needs of vulnerable children,v) The need for more adequate accommodation to allow for the recruitment and retention of staff to provide the service. (The Chair reported upon initiatives being pursued to address this problem).vi) In response to interruption from members of the public the officers reported that their primary objective was to care for troubled children and that in doing so they had regard to the children but to the parents, foster parents, carers and the children's and social services. <p>The Chair thanked the officers for the video presentation and for responding to the questions raised by Members and also placed on record the council's appreciation for the professional service they were providing and for the building of a secure and sound relationship with vulnerable children.</p>	
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GEORGE MEEHAN
Chair