

Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel held on Thursday, 22 September 2022 at 5.00 pm
in F10, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Maria Gatland (Chair);

Councillors Sue Bennett, Mike Bonello, Samir Dwesar, Maddie Henson,
Tamar Nwafor, Helen Redfern and Catherine Wilson

Co-optee Members

Manny Kwamin (Foster Carer Representative)

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative)

Jo Jack (Interim Head of Virtual School & Head of Service for Access to
Education)

E.M.P.I.R.E

Porsha Robinson (Youth Service Co-Ordinator)

Also

Present:

Shaun Hanks (Head of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People)

Adam Fearon-Stanley (Service Manager IRO & Children's Participation)

Kim Jones (Youth Engagement Practitioner (E.M.P.I.R.E))

Maret Arselgova (Youth Engagement Practitioner E.M.P.I.R.E.)

Apologies:

Co-optee Member: Shelley Davies

Roisin Madden (Director for Children's Social Care)

PART A

44/22 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 23 June 2022 were agreed as
an accurate record.

45/22 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

46/22 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

47/22 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

There was none.

48/22 Update from E.M.P.I.R.E

Members of E.M.P.I.R.E shared with the Panel a video of their summer activities which included various sessions of learning new skills, experiences including fun and games and learning. Sessions included cooking, beach trips, skydiving, and a trip to Jamie's Farm. Going to the farm helped bonding and relationship building as no phones were allowed and the children had to work with nature learning new skills.

Members of E.M.P.I.R.E present expressed their gratitude for the on-going support from the staff of E.M.P.I.R.E and highlighted that the summer experience had taught them to be more sociable to go outside of their comfort zone.

Panel Members welcomed the progress of E.M.P.I.R.E and their journey and the support from staff was acknowledged.

During a discussion regarding engagement with E.M.P.I.R.E, Members of E.M.P.I.R.E asked for more interaction from the Panel and other professional support (such as schools and personal advisors) other than their foster carers and social workers. Building relationships was very important to Members of E.M.P.I.R.E, as E.M.P.I.R.E was a place of comfort, acceptance, feeling safe, and relationships built were honest and growing. E.M.P.I.R.E had been effective for some children, and it was positive to have some things mirrored with the same things and goals.

Members were supportive of this change, which included their involvement with E.M.P.I.R.E activities and other issues pertaining to the children's needs. Further, the Chair welcomed the interaction and engagement from Members and was working towards this change.

49/22 Housing & Support for Care Experienced Young People in Croydon

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the report of the Housing Support & Support for Care Experienced Young People in Croydon. The Head of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People, Shaun Hanks, shared a presentation addressing the different options available for young people, which was contained within the report.

The Panel welcomed the presentation and report shared.

During a discussion regarding opportunities of support, the Panel heard that there were plenty of support available, which included financial, skills and experiences, though it was clear that communication was not transparent

when sharing information to children looked after and experienced care leavers. Members of E.M.P.I.R.E informed that sharing information through social workers and personal advisors were often delayed or things were put in place without any communication. Further, the Panel heard that there was a portfolio of opportunities for care experienced and young people that was promoted, this included civil service programmes, and opportunities within the Education Team service.

During a discussion regarding suitable accommodation, the Panel heard that most B&B accommodation were not suitable for an emergency. Further, the panel learned that most private accommodations, HMO's, Residential Care Homes and Staying Put were solutions to bringing change.

The Chair recognised that there was no representation from the Housing department to address many concerns raised at the Panel; additionally, as part of the change in supporting children looked after and experienced care leavers, the Chair proposed for Councillors to be more involved in the accommodation provided to young people, by visiting properties, addressing concerns and so forth.

ACTION – To ensure Corporate Directors were invited to Panel meetings.

In conclusion, the Panel discussed and noted the lack of communication in delivering services to young people, and that more work was required to deliver success for the young people in what they deserved.

50/22 Children in Care Performance Scorecard

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children in Care Performance Scorecard which provided an overview of the August month.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Head of Children in Care and Care Experienced Young People, Shaun Hanks, clarified the following:

Pathway Plans:

- The scorecard key indicator had shown improvement though there were still arising issues relating to staffing which had impacted the percentages.
- All young people should be provided information relating to their pathway plan.

ACTION – To provide Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel a copy of the pathway plan to complete.

Care Plans:

- At 78% this was a gradual improvement, though it was noted that more improvement to what affected the results was to be made.
- Care plans were not converted to a pathway plan.

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET):

- Though still in the red, this had shifted by 1%. In comparison with the neighbouring boroughs, Croydon was still higher.

ACTION - NEET to be investigated in depth.

51/22 What decisions has the Panel made to help Children in Care today?

The Panel discussed that more work needed to be done as Corporate Parents to support care experienced young people and definite actions was welcomed for change. Concerns were also raised in relation to additional barriers that care experienced young people may have experienced such as language barrier or immigration status difficulties.

The Panel proposed to have business styled meetings and option styled meetings for future Corporate Parenting Panels to address further difficult conversations and experiences from care experienced young people, in addition to meeting the needs of business matters

52/22 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 7.05 pm

Signed:

Date:

.....

.....