

Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 26 April 2023 at 5.02 pm in F10, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Maria Gatland (Chair);
Councillors Samir Dwesar, Maddie Henson, Tamar Barrett and Helen Redfern

Co-optee Members

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative)
Shelley Davies (Director of Education)
Sarah Bailey (Head of Virtual School & Head of Service for Access to Education)
LaJay Taylor (E.M.P.I.R.E)

Also

Present: Roisin Madden, Director of Children's Services
Adam Fearon-Stanley, Service Manager
Jane Scott, Subject Matter Expert

Apologies: Councillor Sue Bennett and Mike Bonello

PART A

21/23 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 18 January 2023 and Wednesday 15 March 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

22/23 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

23/23 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

24/23 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

The Service Manager, Adam Fearon-Stanley, updated the Panel in relation to the Quality and Safety Review regarding Children in Care with Disabilities and Complex Needs (item heard in the January Corporate Parenting Panel meeting) that the service had set up a working group to implement improvements. A

report would be provided for the next meeting addressing the gaps identified when the work was previously discussed. Further, the Panel heard that Phase 2 had been published regarding the Doncaster case.

25/23 Update from Children in Care Council - E.M.P.I.R.E.

The EMPIRE representative Layjay Taylor, updated the Panel highlighting that:

- A young person became a champion for the National Care Leavers Forum following a two-day event in Leeds. This young person was supported by staff during the event. The young person had spoken to sixty managers from all local authority across the UK where the young person spoke very well providing her own experience and public speaking. Feedback from the sessions were positive with lots of reflection from the experience.
- There was a session for young people to meet with different employees to have 1-2-1 job interviews at the Edison Hotel, this aimed to give the young people opportunities for careers choices. Others career choices included football industry viewings amongst more.

The Panel welcomed the update and congratulated the young person on their achievement and success in this opportunity and credited their public speaking. The Panel further gave appreciation to the supporting staff who was present throughout.

In response to the question relating to the training young people were given for public speaking, the Panel heard that staff at EMPIRE provide public speaking training support, additional support was provided using clips from YouTube, encouragement and 1-2-1 support was also provided to the young person on the day. Further, at EMPIRE, weekly training sessions which are monthly themed were provided within their sessions.

Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy 23-25

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy 2023-2025 report which outlined key aspects of a proposed Draft three-year Corporate Parenting Strategy 23-25 with a new Draft Terms of Reference.

The Chair of the Panel shared with members that the Department had a recent visit from Mark Riddell from the DFE who was looking into the work done by Childrens Social Care to support our Care Leavers. He had also visited a number of other Councils. He recognised the changes to the Corporate Parenting Panel as positive but we need to do more for our Care Leavers not only in Childrens Social Care a "Whole Council " approach was needed. Following his meeting with a number of our Care Leavers and discussions with senior officers he shared his recommendations. Present at the meeting were

the Executive Mayor, the CEO, the Director of Childrens Social Care and the Lead Member among others.

The Panel received a presentation from the Service Manager, Adam Fearon-Stanley who shared the work the service had engaged in with the young people to contribute to the strategy. Adam highlighted that all children deserved to be cared for, respected, listened to and supported, to feel safe and loved. All children deserved an opportunity and support to grow into happy and successful adults. As corporate parents, it was the responsibility to be a supportive parent in times when birth, adoptive parents or carers were unable to fulfil the role, additionally to be corporate grandparents. This responsibility was for the whole council and partnership approach council staff and elected members and partners.

The Panel further heard that the voice of the children and young people often involved the engagement of activities. The service had established the Sunday Service, which was an opportunity for older members of the Children in Care Council (CICC) to get together. Over the last six months the service recognised how to widen focused participation approach: i.e., focus group for virtual college; permanence group; Corporate Parenting Panel Co-Chair; also work around the mocking-bird model – in supporting fostering and how the service received feedback of their experience. This would include CICC working with different teams. The service was recruiting to expand the team and continue to deliver and provide strength in support and management.

As part of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, the Subject Matter Expert, Jane Scott shared with the Panel the four priority areas as mentioned within the report which were: Housing; Education, Employment & Training; Permanence Stability; Health & Adult Transitions.

The Panel deliberated in detail the four priorities by discussing three main points: (1) were the priorities the right approaches to improving this area; (2) were the priorities the right measures to understand improvement and impact; and (3) what priorities were considered should be focussed in years 1/2/3 of the Strategy.

In summary, the Panel discussed that:

Health and Adult Transitions: showed a positive approach in improvement within this area, though challenged how access would be measured for young people, SEN and other groups. The basic right for a young person that entered care was to include GP registration, dental care, health assessments as the focal point.

Employment, Education and Training: included the mental health and wellbeing of a young person to address the voice of the child as the priority. The inclusion of co-chair, ambassadors, sub-groups and strategy would highlight the voice and concerns raised. The education provision and working side by side with other multi-agency professionals were considered to be the focal point.

Housing: The transformation project highlighted that housing could not develop on the quality and speed of what was required, so the transformation board encompassed young people to apply for affordable housing with a guarantor and support. Support included charity support and affective partnership. The ability for housing to recognise their accountability to support young people leaving care each year was reflected to be the focal point.

Permanence / Stability: The voice of a child and how the service could prove that young people's voices were heard included the clarity in the language used for accessibility for the young people was considered to be the focal point.

The Panel considered the Terms of Reference as set out in the report, which highlighted the purpose, membership and tenure to membership.

The Panel welcomed the Terms of Reference with no changes.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to provide feedback on the Draft Corporate Parenting Strategy Report and Terms of Reference.

27/23 Children in Care Performance Scorecard

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children in Care Performance Scorecard. The Director of Children Services, Roisin Madden highlighted that:

- CLA15 (up-to-date pathway plans for 16 years and under) – had dropped by 3% from amber to red which was poor. This was due to current staffing issues.
- CL a (up-to-date pathway plans for 18-25 year olds) – showed 84% though sitting in amber, the relationships were improving and they were more young person led which should be the case.

In response to the question from the Panel relating to staffing within the service, the Panel heard that all positions in the service were filled, though there was budget to recruit more staff as required who had the right aptitude and approach with working with young people.

In response to the question from the Panel relating to the issues of pathways plans and the service's solution, the Panel heard that a pathway plan was best developed through a good a relationship between the young people and the professional, a number of meetings were needed and these would be scheduled in advance. The plan writer needed skills for report writing in addition to relationship building, knowledge, skills and good self organisation. As the plan was the voice of the young person it was to be created in real time. Subsequently, robust conversations with professionals leading the pathway plans were being had.

The Panel further heard that the Independent Reviewing Officers had engaged with 16+ managers to change the culture and working relationships in the

meaning and practice of the pathway plans. This helped strengthen the work by using the resolution approach which had been useful.

In response to the question from the Panel relating to how the service was doing better to engage with harder to reach young people, the Panel heard that some young people often go missing or refuse to engage which they had the right to, though this was not the reason the statistics had dropped by 3%. The numbers were based on the volume of completed Pathway Plans.

The Chair requested for the Panel to continue to have an update on Pathway Plans and have a strong narrative in the upcoming Panel meeting.

28/23 How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?

The Panel collectively noted that the Corporate Parenting Strategy would have a positive impact in contributing a better service for the children in care and experienced care leavers of Croydon.

The Chair thanked the officers in Children Services and the Panel for their work today and during the municipal year and looked forward to the work planned for the care experienced young people and care leavers.

29/23 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Not required.

The meeting ended at 7:36pm

Signed:

Date: