

Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 10 January 2018 at 5.00 pm in
Council Chamber - Town Hall

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair);

Councillors Maria Gatland, Shafi Khan, Andrew Rendle and Andy Stranack

Apologies: Councillors Patricia Hay-Justice and Bernadette Khan, Sandra Richards and Gill Manton.

PART A

1/18 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 November 2017 were agreed as an accurate record.

2/18 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

3/18 Urgent Business (if any)

There was no urgent business to consider however Councillor Flemming and the Executive Director – People updated the Panel on a recent visit to the Camden Corporate Parenting Panel. It was noted that young people were heavily involved in Children's Services, including through young independent inspectors (that provided an annual report to the Panel) and pre-meetings with the Chair and Vice-Vice Chair of the Panel. There was a family atmosphere at meetings which contributed greatly to the work of the Panel. There had been a lot to take away from the visit and look at how Croydon could adopt some of the best practice witnessed at Camden.

4/18 Staying Put

The Head of Looked After Children tabled the report and a review of Staying Put had been brought for the Panel's consideration after the Ofsted report had identified it as an area for improvement; the scheme had not been reviewed since 2014. The details of Staying Put were explained to the Panel, as were

the benefits for young people. The goal was to make the scheme more financially inviting to foster carers was also keeping it cost effective.

At 18.20 Councillor Gatland left the meeting.

Foster carers present at the meeting provided feedback on how the scheme had been working. It was stated that there was a significant financial impact on foster carers when a young person stayed after turning 18 was significant. In addition the young person was required to sign up for housing benefit which created a somewhat difficult relationship between the young person and foster carer, more akin to a landlord/tenant relationship. It was agreed amongst the foster carers present that a fundamental block in increasing numbers of staying put children was the negative financial impact on foster carers. In addition, education and awareness on staying put needed to be provided to foster carers at a much earlier stage, so that the scheme wasn't a short notice decision for carers to make.

Panel Members explored the key issues with the foster carers and officers present and welcomed the recommendation to review Staying Put. The review would be put on the work programme for the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel for Members to consider the scope of the review.

5/18 **Virtual School Annual Report**

The Head of Standards Safeguarding and Youth Engagement introduced the report to Panel Members; attention was drawn to the positive results for looked after children in KS1 (Key Stage 1) and KS2, however the KS4 results were not as positive. It was noted that Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASCs) achieved well within the KS4 group.

The Panel discussed the contents of the report and noted that there was no data on looked after young people whom were out of school and it was requested that such data be made available in the next report. It was also requested that there be a more detailed breakdown of the provided data, such as KS4 results and exclusion rates. Panel Members and officers agreed that benchmarking against appropriate local authorities would be useful, such as authorities with a high number of UASCs. Officers explained to Panel Members how pupil premium funding was used to provide support to young people in care such as one-to-one tuition and designated teachers, within a framework of bespoke support for each individual child. It was noted that engagement with schools was generally good but with differing levels of engagement across the borough. There was a restructure underway in the service which looked to move caseworkers away from being focussed on specific key stages and broadening into all educational levels.

There was mixed feedback on how out-of-borough children were supported within the education system. Officers were looking at the issue on a strategic level to ensure better cooperation between different authorities.

It was agreed that the Virtual School would increase engagement with the Fostering Network, as well as neighbouring Virtual Schools, to ensure there was good cooperation for out-of-borough educated looked after children. Some Panel Members expressed a desire to see a dedicated session on blue sky thinking for improving attainment levels of looked after children.

Panel Members also requested that the data in the report include a breakdown of what special education needs young people experienced, and look into what initiatives are being undertaken to support these differing needs.

6/18 Looked After Children Services Performance Dashboard

The Director of Children’s Services introduced the report and requested Panel Member feedback on the data being provided, which was proposed to be brought to every Panel meeting.

A Panel Member requested that as well as the category of “missing episodes”, the data also captured the numbers of missing people to allow for a broader picture of whether the issue was multiple episodes from a few young people, or the levels of individual children going missing was high. Officers also agreed that the data would be presented at future meetings in a larger format and on a screen.

To conclude the meeting, the Chair invited everyone present to summarise what they had taken away from the discussions held.

7/18 Exclusion of the Press and Public

Not required.

The meeting ended at 6.56 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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