

Minutes

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

22 May 2019



HILLINGDON
LONDON

Meeting held at Committee Room 5 - Civic Centre, High Street, Uxbridge

	<p>Voting Panel Members Present: Councillors Susan O'Brien (Chairman), Nick Denys (Vice-Chairman) and Tony Eginton</p> <p>Non – voting Panel Members Present: Children in Care Council Members, Helen Smith (Corporate Parenting Manager), Lisa Fenaroli (The Virtual School Head Teacher), Claire Walsh (The Local Authority's designated LAC Nurse), Councillor Alan Deville and Lesley Deville (Foster Carer Representatives)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Anisha Teji (Democratic Services Officer), Ana Popovici (Director of Children's Services), Zafer Yilkan (Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting), Poppy Reddy (Head of Service and Leaving Care), Joe Steele (Children's Rights and Participation Officer) and Sandra Taylor (Director of Provider Services and Commissioned Care)</p>
1.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>There were no apologies for absence.</p>
2.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>Councillor Eginton declared non-pecuniary interests in agenda items 3 – 9 as he had made an information request to receive specific details relating to Corporate Parenting related items. He remained in the room for discussion on all items.</p>
3.	<p>ESTABLISHMENT OF THIS CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>Members had regard to a report detailing the establishment of the Corporate Parenting Panel (the Panel). The report set out the Panel's membership and terms of reference.</p> <p>It was confirmed that as part of the new governance arrangements reports would be presented to the Panel and the Panel would report directly to the Social Care, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee (POC). It was noted that the Panel would have a direct line into the Council's decision making processes, through regular reporting to the POC and matters could then be put forward to Cabinet for consideration.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Panel noted the report.</p>
4.	<p>INTRODUCTION GAME (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>The Panel took part in an introductory game to break the ice and encourage the young people present and Members to get to know each other.</p>

5. **PRESENTATION BY YOUNG PEOPLE** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The young people present from the Children in Care Council updated the Panel on recent work and activities undertaken in the field of childrens' services, supported by the Director of Children's Services, the Assistant Director of Corporate Parenting, and the Corporate Parenting Manager.

It was emphasised that being a corporate parent meant doing everything possible for both every child in the Council's care and every care leaver to give them the opportunities that other children received.

The Panel received a presentation detailing key facts, key achievements and activities undertaken throughout the course of the year. It had been a busy year as a number of children and young people had been involved with service development and activities including:

- taking part in Children in Care Council (Cicc) meetings;
- interviewing newly qualified social workers and supporting the recruitment process of other officer roles in the Council, resulting in the recruitment and embedding of 15 AYSE social workers and five LBH staff into social work apprenticeships;
- the young inspectors programmes;
- the Whitehall Takeover;
- developing and leading on 'Walking In Our Shoes' training sessions,
- being involved in clarification meetings with providers as part of tendering the advocacy contract;
- meeting Ofsted inspectors in April 2018 in addition to the Corporate Director Corporate Director of Adults, Children and Young People and the Director of Children's Services; and
- attending a number of events and activities.

A short animated film was played telling the background and stories of different children and young people in care. This video had been produced as a training aid for social workers, foster carers and others who worked with children and young people in care to try to help them understand their thoughts and feelings.

It was noted that there were further plans to increase sufficiency to keep young people in the Borough through further campaigning and recruitment of foster carers. Further, it was noted that the feedback from the young inspector's programme had been phenomenal and had made a difference which had led to an action plan being worked on.

The Panel thanked the young people from the Children in Care Council and officers for their contribution towards corporate parenting. Members welcomed the presentation and found it insightful to see what recent activities children, young people and staff had been undertaking. The Panel was impressed by the overall positivity of the presentations and the openness of the young people to engage.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and video be noted.

6. **CORPORATE PARENTING PRINCIPLES** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Panel had regard to the report detailing the Corporate Parenting Principles and

background information.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted and the statutory Corporate Parenting Principles be endorsed.

7. **CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER : ANNUAL REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE HILLINGDON VIRTUAL SCHOOL** (*Agenda Item 7*)

The Virtual School Headteacher presented the Annual Report on the Work of the Hillingdon Virtual School.

The report detailed key data in relation to attainment levels. The Virtual School continued to work on the following three key areas of responsibility namely:

- 1) Making sure that there was a system to track and monitor the attainment and progress of all children looked after.
- 2) Ensuring that all children looked after had a robust and effective personal education plan (PEP) and monitoring the use of the pupil premium grant (PPG).
- 3) Championing the educational needs of children looked after across the authority and those placed out of authority.

It was reported that it had been a successful year for the Virtual School and changes to the staffing structure, policies, procedures and practice of the Virtual School had resulted in improved attainment and progress of children looked after.

It was confirmed that key challenges faced by the Virtual School were attendance and exclusion rates. However, despite these challenges, outcomes for children looked after were generally good.

The Panel was informed that all young people now had PEPs every term and these were a key driver in accurately specifying the needs of each child. The quality of PEPs had been commended by Ofsted. The Panel requested an example of an anonymised PEP.

With regard to the PPG, it was noted that considerable progress had been made - schools were now being held to account for the money they received and if they failed to report back to the Virtual School detailing how the money had been spent, payments would be stopped. It was reported that the PPG was being used effectively in schools but could perhaps be used more creatively in some cases. Moreover, exclusion rates for children looked after were still high and schools needed to look at the underlying issues. It was confirmed that the allocation of the PPG was £2,300 per annum per child however, this was dependent on need rather than entitlement.

The average PPP spend on unaccompanied asylum seeking children was questioned by the Panel as figures suggested that not enough support was being provided to this cohort. Officers confirmed that each case was evaluated on a case by case basis and the interim and long term positions both needed to be taken in to account. For example, there could be difficulties with timings, questions about when the best to join the schools and certainty about whether they would be able to cope. Further, it was confirmed that children looked after had priority in school places and educational achievements in this cohort were always extraordinary.

It was confirmed that the Virtual School was at full capacity at present and an

enrichment activity was organised each term. The Jamie's Farm residential trips are extremely successful, enjoyable and beneficial in building confidence and motivation. During these trips young people engaged fully with the activities on offer. They all sat down to dinner together and some young people reported that it had a positive effect on them.

It was noted that the Virtual School report made reference to children looked after rather than looked after children as the children came first.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and an example PEP be circulated to Members.

8. **WORK PROGRAMME** (*Agenda Item 8*)

The Panel considered the work programme and requested the following items to be added:

- A report detailing the culture in the team making reference to whistle blowing/audits/general team performance and examples of exit interviews.
- The Looked After Children (LAC) performance update report.
- Thematically meetings covering safeguarding, leaving care/ transition, health and wellbeing, education and participation.

RESOLVED: That the work programme be noted.

9. **CHILDREN'S HOME: OFSTED INSPECTION** (*Agenda Item 9*)

Following the departure of the Children in Care Council representatives from the Panel meeting, Elected Members and Council officers remained to discuss a report on a children's home which had been subject to a recent Ofsted inspection. This followed a request from the Social Services, Housing and Public Health Policy Overview Committee on 11 April for the Panel to review the matter further.

The children's home, which was staffed 24 hours per day had been inspected by Ofsted in November 2018 and a number of areas had been identified that required improvement. A follow-up inspection had taken place in March 2019 and it had been identified that not all actions had been completed. In particular, it was noted that there had been issues involving staffing and children not receiving the right guidance.

The Panel was informed that in light of the inspection outcomes, a Member site visit had also been undertaken to see what measures have been taken to improve.

The Panel also received a report from Council officers showing the detailed action plan and work that had and was being undertaken to satisfactorily address the issues raised by the inspections. The Panel was advised that staff were all trained and there were now new staffing arrangements in place at the home.

The Panel emphasised the need to work with colleagues in different areas such as the Virtual Schools team and welcomed the action plan in place to improve the children's home.

RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the report.

	The meeting, which commenced at 5.30 pm, closed at 7.45 pm.

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Anisha Teji on 01895 277655. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.

DRAFT