

Minutes

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

02 November 2022



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

	<p>Voting Panel Members Present: Councillors Nick Denys (Chair), Heena Makwana (Co-Chair) and Gursharan Mand</p> <p>Non-Voting Panel Members Present: Siobhan Appleton (The Local Authority's Designated LAC Nurse), Representatives of the Children in Care Council, and Care Leavers, Helen Smith (Principal Social Worker and Corporate Parenting Manager), Kathryn Angelini (Head of Education for Vulnerable Children), Alex Coman (Director of Safeguarding, Partnerships and Quality Assurance)</p> <p>LBH Officers Present: Neil Fraser (Democratic Services Officer), James Jones (Democratic Services Apprentice), and (Michelle Thomas (Safeguarding Manager)</p> <p>Councillors Present: Councillor Peter Smallwood</p>
62.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Deborah Price-Williams.</p>
63.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
64.	<p>MINUTES OF THE MEETING ON 20 JULY 2022 (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2022 be agreed as a correct record.</p>
65.	<p>REVIEW OF SUMMER 2022 (INCL. KICA FEEDBACK) (<i>Agenda Item 4</i>)</p> <p>Officers presented the panel with highlights from the activities attended in the summer. These included Eid celebrations, a pride party, football stadium tours, CiCC days out, a summer BBQ, and the KICA awards. Feedback from event attendees and the Panel was positive, and Members highlighted the sense of community these activities helped to instil.</p> <p>In response to a query on how events were chosen, officers confirmed that suggestions were requested for consideration through the various meetings with Young People (YP), including Step Up and Stepping Out meetings. Attendance at such events was monitored and there were ongoing efforts to engage with those YP who were more reticent to attend activities.</p>

	<p>Officers highlighted the Virtual School's links with Brunel University, which included recent STEM trips to the university as well as revision sessions with year 11 students, and a trip to Oxford University.</p> <p>Panel members provided positive feedback on the Walking in Our Shoes training and requested that officers review the potential for incorporation into skills for foster training.</p>
66.	<p>ANNUAL REPORT - CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP (<i>Agenda Item 5</i>)</p> <p>Officers introduced the annual report for the Children's Safeguarding Partnership and its vision; to encourage young people to have a sense of belonging, good physical and mental health, and an opportunity to thrive. It was highlighted that the context to the report was related to Covid-19 recovery and moving away from lockdown constraints.</p> <p>Officers informed the Panel that the main priorities associated with this report were contextual safeguarding, prevention of child sexual abuse and early intervention. To work towards these priorities, practise development forums had taken place and various updates from external and internal agencies had also been received.</p> <p>The YP present were asked who they would go to when presented with a personal problem. The Panel was informed that it was likely that teachers would typically be the first point of contact if such a situation ever arose, due to their regular contact with YP. Additionally, officers reminded the Panel that YP had asked that interviews for new social workers required them to answer how they would manage such a situation.</p> <p>The Panel enquired about the confidentiality surrounding YP reporting problems to professionals and other affiliates. Officers assured the Chair that there was strict confidentiality in most circumstances. However, when there was a safeguarding risk, details were required to be shared with the relevant professionals. The response was proportionate based on the level of risk. The Panel asked if they could be provided with any examples of shared partnerships. The officers reported that there was a live website, a practice briefing, annual reviews and independent scrutiny, and also strategy discussions which included pathways to encourage broader participation.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
67.	<p>ANNUAL REPORT - INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS (<i>Agenda Item 6</i>)</p> <p>Officers presented the annual report of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), highlighting that it was primarily focused on the post-pandemic world and that changes instigated during the pandemic had now reverted back to normal. The panel was briefed on participation, the profile of Hillingdon's Looked After Children (LAC) and outlined the summary of key points in the report which included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 429 children and young people were in Local Authority care year ending March 22. • Timeliness of reviews and participation of children to reviews continued to be good. • A 100% permanent IRO team had continued to ensure excellent continuity to children. • IRO caseloads remained in line with the statutory guidance.

- The quality assurance system, including the dispute resolution process, was fully embedded and continued to evidence improvements in the provision of services to children and young people.
- LBH continued to provide care for a large number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC). The LAC participation and timeliness for UASC had continued to improve, supported by the allocation of a named IRO; and,
- the allocation of a named IRO for children remanded into Local Authority's care has continued to improve partner relationships and raise standards for care.

The YP present confirmed that they had a good relationship with their IRO's and that typical discussions involved talks about school, home life and other matters.

The Panel enquired whether IRO's were truly independent, despite being employed by the Council. Officers confirmed that IRO's shared in the same priorities and were autonomous in their decision making but reminded the Panel that there was a robust escalation process in place if necessary.

Invited by the Chairman to participate, Councillor Smallwood asked officers for clarity on the procedure for when a YP raised a concern, and how this is dealt with. Officers confirmed that social workers and placements could be changed, but that stability was encouraged. Engagement with independent visitors and the associated advocacy service, as well as the multi-agency psychology service was also encouraged. Additionally, Councillor Smallwood endorsed the statistic provided which stated 60/70% of YP were self-referring; but, in relation to this asked how YP would approach the situation in question. Officers subsequently informed the Councillor that information regarding self-referrals was made available to YP and they were well informed of this. It was also stated that IRO's were reminding YP of the advocacy service.

The Panel requested elaboration on the statement that 'timeliness of reviews and participation of our children to reviews continue to be good'. Officers explained that this referred to the set time for review meetings, which were regularly within the pre-established time-frame, and that participation remained at a satisfactory 60/70%, despite recent decline. Officers went on to set out the process by which the scrutiny process was conducted by IRO's, foster carers and others.

In response to a query regarding whether IRO staff resourcing, officers advised that there had been a significant spike in the number of UASC which had necessitated a temporary asylum intake team and consequently, an extra IRO had been employed during the period. Regarding monitoring, care plans were in place and IRO's were being invited to meetings, alongside the YP. Additionally, officers confirmed the quality assurance framework which was in place across all of children's social care.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

68. **UPDATES ON WORKPLACE OPPORTUNITIES** (*Agenda Item 7*)

In relation to workplace visits for YP, it was requested that officers provide a list of suggested workplaces that were of interest to YP, in order to cross-reference further opportunities for workplace visits. Officers communicated that the broad interests expressed by YP included health and care, engineering, creative arts and working in a business environment. It was agreed that a more detailed list would be provided the Chairman through the clerk.

	<p>It was agreed that officers would liaise with the Chairman regarding workplace opportunities for YP, with an update to follow at the January meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>1. That an update on workplace opportunities for YP be provided at the January meeting.</p>
69.	<p>CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE DATA - Q2 (<i>Agenda Item 8</i>)</p> <p>Officers briefed the Panel on the data and the key points of the report. It was noted that a national system for relocating UASC had been implemented and as a result, numbers had consequently levelled. Further detail on the profile of YP under Hillingdon care, their health and dental assessments, and foster placements, was provided.</p> <p>The Panel complimented the officers on the report figures and more specifically, the data on foster care placements and recruitment of social workers. Members asked for clarification on 'NEET' numbers and the specifics for supporting these. It was agreed that further detail would be provided to the Panel through the clerk.</p> <p>It was requested that officers elaborate on the 'pilot project', detailed on page 68 of the report. Officers highlighted the work done by the Virtual School and its collaboration with external partners in this capacity. It was explained that the circumstances for and causes of NEET categorisation was a key priority. In regard to the pilot project, officers disclosed that this related to attempts to move (mostly over-18) UASC from residential homes into foster care placements, private shared accommodation, or independent housing.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p>
70.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 9</i>)</p> <p>Consideration was given to the Panel's Work Programme.</p> <p>It was confirmed that the forthcoming LAC Health Report would be received at the January 2023 meeting.</p> <p>It was agreed that a new item on career opportunities and career development for YP be added to the work programme for the January 2023 meeting.</p> <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>1. That the Work Programme, be noted.</p> <p>2. That a new item on career opportunities and career development for YP be added to the work programme for the January 2023 meeting.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5.00 pm, closed at 6.40 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact James Jones on 01895 250692. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors and officers.

