

Minutes

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

05 November 2024

Meeting held at Committee Room 6 - Civic Centre,
High Street, Uxbridge UB8 1UW



	<p>To Members of the Panel:</p> <p>Voting Members: Councillor Heena Makwana (Vice-Chair, in the Chair) Councillor Jan Sweeting Councillor Peter Smallwood</p> <p>Non - voting Members: Representatives of the Children in Care Council, and Care Leavers Emma Kavanagh, Assistant Director Corporate Parenting and Fostering Kathryn Angelini, Assistant Director for Education & Vulnerable Children Bridget Owen, Designated Nurse Looked After Children (Harrow and Hillingdon) (NHS North West London ICB) Dr Kate Head, Designated Doctor for Children Looked After covering Harrow, Hillingdon and Brent</p> <p>Officers Present: Helen Smith, Principal Social Worker Donna Hugh, Safeguarding Manager Lynne O'Higgins, Independent Reviewing Officer Ryan Dell, Democratic Services Officer Naveed Ali, Democratic Services Apprentice</p> <p>* This meeting was co-chaired by a Children in Care Council member</p>
15.	<p>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (<i>Agenda Item 1</i>)</p> <p>Apologies were received from Councillor Nick Denys with Councillor Peter Smallwood substituting.</p> <p>Apologies were also received from Ash Knight, Participation Manager, with Helen Smith, Principal Social Worker, substituting.</p> <p>Apologies were also received from Alex Coman, Director of Safeguarding, Partnerships and Quality Assurance.</p>
16.	<p>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST IN MATTERS COMING BEFORE THIS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 2</i>)</p> <p>None.</p>
17.	<p>MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (<i>Agenda Item 3</i>)</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting dated 16 July 2024 be approved as an accurate record.</p>

18. **KICA FEEDBACK** (*Agenda Item 4*)

Officers presented a PowerPoint outlining the recent Kids in Care Awards 2024.

Over 700 nominations were received in total and over 200 winners attended the awards ceremony.

40 staff attended in support of the event.

The presentation outlined the events of the awards, including photos, games, a bouncy castle and guest speakers including emergency services.

The Mayor of Hillingdon was in attendance, along with a number of friends, family and carers of the young people.

The young people noted that the event was 'fantastic' and 'great fun' and there were a range of activities for younger children. The catering companies were noted as being very generous.

The Chair noted their thanks to the Participation Manager and the wider team in putting the event together.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Panel noted the presentation

19. **INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS' ANNUAL REPORT** (*Agenda Item 5*)

The Safeguarding Manager introduced the Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report for 2023-24. The Safeguarding Manager attended with an Independent Reviewing Officer.

Stable Relationships: The team had over 130 years of combined experienced and focused on building and maintaining stable relationships with families to foster trust and consistency in their work. This approach helped create a supportive environment that enhanced the effectiveness of safeguarding efforts.

Partnership working: Independent Reviewing Officers worked with Child in Need and Corporate Parenting teams and were involved in reviews; attended service meetings and highlighted available services. Further to this, teams worked together to ensure the voice of the child was captured from children with disabilities.

Health and Care Plans: The team actively engaged young people in the development of their health and care plans, ensuring they understood and had a say in these plans. Each plan was carefully reviewed to prioritise the child's needs, guaranteeing they were robust.

Ofsted Inspection: During the latest Ofsted inspection, the team's child-centred approach was commended, with emphasis on their prompt, thorough assessment processes that focused on understanding and addressing the emotional wellbeing of each young person.

Inter-Panel Support: The team participated in multiple panels (including the Heart Panel, Transition Panel and Health & Wellbeing Panel), providing advocacy and support for young people across different areas, ensuring continuity in support.

Education Support: There was close collaboration with Virtual School colleagues to address educational needs, especially for children with special requirements, such as non-verbal children, to ensure they receive tailored educational assistance.

Sufficiency and Stability: The team were continually assessing national concerns about housing sufficiency, particularly as they related to ensuring stable housing arrangements for young people transitioning out of care.

Youth Empowerment: The team was working to help young people become more confident in managing their own meetings, while also ensuring that staff members were up-to-date with relevant training. In addition, the team worked to ensure young people's participation, and officers worked with the Participation Team.

Profile of Looked After Children: The profile was diverse, in part due to Hillingdon being a port Authority. A number of young people arrived at Heathrow and were transferred under the National Transfer Scheme.

Staying Close & Staying Put: Officers supported these programmes whereby young people transition out of care.

Young people in attendance noted that they liked the multi-agency approach, such as working with MAPS.

Members asked if the young people felt enough was being done to promote their inclusion. The young people noted that this had 'drastically improved'. They further noted that they needed to know how many options they had when they transitioned from being looked after children to care experienced young people. Topics to cover included private renting in addition to universal credit and housing benefit.

When asked how they would like this information to be available, the young people referred to the new website, which could include information on how to find apprenticeships, and how to privately rent.

The young people highlighted a social media page that called The Mix which provided advice, tips and support for young people.

The young people further noted that advice to them could be more aspirational. This could include options and work experience opportunities where available. Officers referred to a recent opportunity for a summer internship at Microsoft. These were paid and offered laptops and CV referencing. Whilst some young people were interested, there were no firm sign ups to this, which officers suggested may have been a confidence issue.

A suggestion was raised of a social media platform for the fostering and participation teams, which could encourage young people to share advice and experiences with each other.

Officers noted that there had been an increase in the number of Care Experienced Young People employed by the Council, and one Care Experienced Young Person was commended for recently winning a national Children and Young People Award in the 'biggest impact' category.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Panel considered the report and noted its content.

20. **CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE DATA Q2 2024-25** (*Agenda Item 6*)

The Assistant Director for Corporate Parenting and Fostering introduced the Children's Services Performance Data report.

Population Data: Currently, there were 335 Looked After Children and 652 Care Experienced Young People under the council's oversight. This provided context for planning and resource allocation.

Health Assessments: The completion rate for health assessments was slightly below the national average and statistical neighbours, largely due to logistical challenges when young people were placed outside of the borough via the National Transfer Scheme. Delays occurred for those young people as other boroughs prioritised their own residents for health assessments.

Dentistry: There were issues around accessing dentistry. Officers noted that Hillingdon paid for private dental appointments where there an accessibility to NHS or timely appointments.

Training Initiatives: A second round of training is being implemented for CNWL and Council staff, with a goal to complete it by the end of the year. This aimed to improve service delivery and responsiveness.

Asylum-Seeking Young People: 23% of the young people served by the Council were unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), which highlighted the need for specialised support and resources tailored to these individuals.

Fostering: Interest in fostering has risen sharply, with a 250% increase in expressions of interest compared to last year (7 to 92). 12 foster carers were currently under assessment. Eight foster carers were recruited last year. The Council was on track for 18 new foster carers, reflecting efforts to expand fostering capacity and the new Fostering Offer.

Transition: The Council was working toward transitioning young people from residential care into foster placements, which was beneficial for long-term stability. There had been a significant reduction in the time take to complete transitions, from 13 months to 16 weeks. One young person had recently transitioned.

Staying Close: This scheme launched in November 2023 and allowed young people to move into supported living arrangements of up to 3-4 young people. Grant finding had been received for this. It was aimed that the programme would support 45 young people over two years. Currently, 40 young people were supported.

Future Housing Support: The Council was awaiting approval for a new tenancy and guarantor deposit scheme, which aimed to provide financial support for young people moving from the Staying Close scheme to independent housing.

Case Worker Focus: Each young person received individualised attention through a dedicated case worker approach, which allows for focused support tailored to their specific needs.

Transition Support: There was a strong emphasis on simplifying the process for young people as they transitioned out of care, particularly with respect to housing registration

	<p>and Universal Credit applications. Many young people lack adequate information about these steps, so the program aims to bridge these gaps.</p> <p>Website Accessibility: Young people suggested that a revamp of the website could improve accessibility, making it easier for young people to find and access available support services.</p> <p>The Assistant Director for Education and Vulnerable Children noted that 100% of PEPs had been completed on time during the quarter, and roughly 90% were of high quality.</p> <p>Attendance was positive, at over 90% for statutory school age children. It was noted that the figure did not hit 90% during the course of the previous year.</p> <p>There had been two suspensions, and no Year 11 placement moves.</p> <p>On engagement, numbers of young people without a school place, and those not in education, employment or training (NEET) had reduced, though it was noted that the NEET figure was generally high in September. A NEET caseworker had been seconded in.</p> <p>In terms of exposure to careers for young people, there was a carousel in place with Uxbridge College, whereby young people could experience 4-6 weeks of vocational courses. This was commended by the young people.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Panel noted the content of the report</p>
21.	<p>WORK PROGRAMME (<i>Agenda Item 7</i>)</p> <p>Members considered the work programme.</p> <p>Officers noted that they were reviewing their reports, and so there may be a change to the way reports were presented in future.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the Corporate Parenting Panel considered the report.</p>
	<p>The meeting, which commenced at 5:30 pm, closed at 6:25 pm.</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions, please contact Naveed Ali on democratic@hillingdon.gov.uk. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.