

Corporate Parenting Panel Supplementary Agenda



2. Minutes of the previous meeting (Pages 3 - 40)

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on Wednesday 3 March 2021, Wednesday 28 April 2021, Thursday 24 June 2021, Wednesday 22 September 2021 and Wednesday 10 November 2021 as an accurate record.

8. Children in Care Performance Scorecard (Pages 41 - 44)

The Children in Care Performance Scorecard for December 2021 is attached.

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Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 3 March 2021 at 5.01pm.
This meeting was held virtually.

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair);

Councillors Shafi Khan, Bernadette Khan, Jerry Fitzpatrick, Maria Gatland and Helen Redfern

Co-optee Members

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative),
Manny Kwamin (Foster Carer Representative),
Shelley Davies (Virtual School),
Sarah Bailey (Virtual School),
Dr Julia Simpson (LAC Nurse/Doctor)
Ashleigh Searle (Care Leaver Representative)
Pasquale Brammer (Health Commissioner)
Roneeta Campbell-Butler (Health Commissioner)

Also

Present:

Debbie Jones
David Garland (Lead Commissioner, Commissioning and Procurement)
Roisin Madden (Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care)
Hannah Doughty (Head of Adolescent Services, Early Help and Children's Social Care)
Sherry Copping (Interim Service Manager, Early Help and Children's Social Care)
Nana Bonsu (Head of Service for Systemic Clinical Practice at the Adolescence Service and Workforce Development)
Sarah Lawton (Interim Head of Temporary Accommodation & Service Development)
Veronika Yavricheva (Young Director)

Apologies: EMPIRE and Council Staff

PART A

12/21 Minutes of the previous meeting

There was no available minutes published for the Panel to review.

13/21 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

14/21 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

15/21 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

There were no actions

16/21 Children in Care Performance Scorecard

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children in Care Performance Scorecard which provided an overview of the August month. The Panel received an overview from the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care, Roisin Madden, and the Head of Adolescent Services, Early Help and Children's Social Care, Hannah Doughty, who highlighted the following red key performance indicators:

- *The children who had an up-to-date care plan and an up-to-date pathway plan.* The plans were to be updated every six or twelve months according to their need, however, the January performances had a low score of 74% and 70%. This had been acknowledged by senior officers who had put an improvement plan in place to support social workers in completing the documents.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care and the Head of Adolescent Services, Early Help and Children's Social Care and clarified the following:

- Responsible managers had been notified of the challenges and unacceptable performance of the red indicators that had been recognised for some time, and weekly meetings had been put in place to focus better performance and improving actions.
- An affirmative action approach and a contingency plan was to be taken to address the concern around the unaccompanied asylum seeking children care and pathway plans. It was recognised that this was an area the service had struggled for some time and needed more improvement. There were teams that had better performance than others, concluding for a better planning approach to improve the levels of practice and performance.
- It was agreed that the council did not have full control within the red key indicator relating to the number of young people that were not in employment, education and training, and though there was limited control, the global pandemic had impacted the availability of employment, training and volunteering opportunities. The service needed to utilise and access local and national government schemes

that provided support to employment within the pandemic recovery phase, and support from the whole council would aid better support to raise the performance score of 58% to a more satisfactory mark.

- The Care Leaver Representative addressed the importance of the issues not recorded within the 58% and that affected young children to not be in education or employment. Unsustainable accommodation was deemed a factor for example finding living costs would be claimed through universal credit, and therefore it was important to review the cause for why a young person would not complete pathways or remained in education. It was also highlighted that the South London Commissioning Programme had submitted a health inequalities bid for young people with mental health needs, social emotional needs and those struggling to get into education, employment or training for supported work to commence; further, the service proposed to support care leavers in apprenticeships within the council expanding opportunities in different sectors and not based around lived experiences. The Chair added that there was aspirations for apprenticeships to expand providing more opportunities for young people to work in other sectors for sustainability and provide young people with long-term training, which may suit young people who did not want to take a long routed course.
- Officers noted that there was an area for improvement within the suitability of accommodation for young people, their involvement in choices and what their options were, also the transition in moving to adulthood. The work the commissioning team were now undertaking had insight to what the young people had addressed.
- There was further discussion relating to the Staying Put policy and the concerns raised that the policy did not recognise young people with special needs living in independent accommodation. Comments highlighted that the policy was generalised. Officers addressed that the Staying Put policy had its complexities and there was a review to provide flexibility.

ACTION – The Chair recommended for available data of neighbouring authorities or good practice to benchmark employment, education and training to be provided in the future meeting.

RECOMMENDATION: To review the Staying Put policy and ensure it incorporates young people with additional needs living in an independent accommodation, which would be fed into the SEN Strategy Board.

17/21 Care Leavers and Support for Care Leavers - Care Leavers' Local Offer

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Care Leavers and Support for Care Leavers & Care Leavers' Local Offer which described the current position regarding the levels of support for care leavers in the key areas of housing; education, training and employment; health; involvement and the transition from being a looked after child to young adulthood. The report also

referred to the revised local offer and the new Care Leavers' financial policy and guidance. The Panel received an overview from the Head of Adolescent Services, Early Help and Children's Social Care, Hannah Doughty.

It was highlighted that the total of young people being supported in Children's Services had reduced from 848 in March 2020 to 765 in January 2021.

Officers noticed a dramatic rise in numbers due to the implementations of the Children's Social Work Act 2018. The service had reviewed the numbers and noted the high numbers of care leavers opened to the service and not in need of support at that time. The service had reviewed this and contacted those care leavers to provide them with information that they required should they be in need of support. The service was also moving towards a joint allocation of a social worker and a personal advisor for young people from the age of 15 and a half years.

Officers informed Panel Members that there were 56% of care leavers who were former unaccompanied children, of which two thirds were male.

The current voluntary arrangement was for each local authority to accept up to 0.07% of the child population that was unaccompanied asylum seeking children, which meant sixty-six children for Croydon Children's Social Care, though currently the service supported two-hundred and ten children due to the location of the home office – Luna House in Croydon.

There were fifty social workers who were trained to conduct the human rights assessments to determine whether, young people had their appeal rights exhausted and had no legal right to remain in the UK, and, to continue to receive support through the service. It was said that should the assessment state otherwise, the unaccompanied children would return to the Home Office for support in accommodation and charities which repatriation was considered. Currently there was approximately sixty-five young person ages 21 – 25 who had status, which gained an average cost of £11,500 per annum to service per child.

Officers further informed with regards to housing that more work was required around the housing offer to care leavers. Currently the majority of young people resided in private sector accommodation which was secured by housing. All care leavers would be offered accommodation upon their 18th birthday which would be within their assessment and heard at the housing panel. Young people with no recourse to public funds would be offered shared accommodation. The cost to children's services for young people accommodation procured by housing was due to a surcharge of 25% of rent of each young person with recourse to public funds at the charges agreed to offset non-payment of rent, for the reason of a shortfall in housing benefit claims. Additionally, there were sixty-nine young people who were currently residing with their former foster carers under a staying put arrangement and there was more encouragement for social workers to consider the staying put policy as a preferred first step towards independence.

Lastly, officers highlighted the local offer for care leavers and also work that the service had in place for care leavers which included a championship

scheme, education, training and employment and the transition from children looked after to leaving care services.

The Panel welcomed the report which was very informative and the proposals put forward, and commented on what was presented to them within the report.

The Co-optee Member and Care Leaver Representative had asked questions with regards to whether the proposals were made at the time of the Council's financial constraints, and whether the proposals were still achievable a priority. There were also comments on the new local offer which provided an undesirable review where care leavers saw this as a directory for other services and not what care leavers were entitled to. The financial policy and guidance was not clear within the local offer, and there were other missing information such as the drive-in support. Officers responded and addressed that the proposals had been written since the financial landscape had been known, and the service had ensured that they had retained quality of service upon review which was value for money and filled their statutory obligations. Officers also noted the comments raised by EMPIRE of the design and accessibility of information of the local offer which would be reviewed and included the financial offers. Further comments referred to the previous local offer where it was directed by the young people for the young people, and it was noted that the local offer should stick to what was working to represent young person's voice and experience within that. The Co-optee Foster Carer representative informed that foster carers would be available to help support social workers as they spent more time with the young children and many had built a good relationship with them; the Foster Carers Association were also previously involved in the last local offer. Members welcomed the idea for the local offer to be more user friendly.

Panel Members had put forward their concerns relating to whether the service was able to deliver within the financial difficulties the Council was under. Further with regards to affordable housing, officers informed that there was a quota as part of the allocation scheme, and Croydon had nomination rights intending to use the local housing association vacancies. Additionally, the service would often review whether there was relevant housing associations that had a separate waiting list, as this would indicate that they had their own rules on how they allocated accommodation.

Other questions from Panel Members was related to the housing costs that ranged from £600 to £1200 per month, and whether the service had influence within their purchasing power. There were also questions relating to choices being made with the council using low quality accommodation when the high quality accommodation was sat empty. Lastly questions were raised on the Staying Put arrangements, as it was noted that there was a low uptake, as Staying Put was not popular.

The Chair reminded the Panel of the commitment that was set in relation to increasing the number of council opportunities for young people to be put onto the Council register to access housing, which included some of the Brick by Brick sites; however though there was communications with senior officers

within the service on the progress, there was complex issues with the Brick by Brick sites and this meant that services did not operate in the same way.

Officers informed that there were different reasons for Staying Put arrangements, which depended on the individual of the young person, the foster cares and their ability or willingness to be able to provide, or even the expectation and preparation of what would happen after leaving home. More work was to be considered around Staying Put to ensure young people considered this option. Officers also raised new information from the budget proposal where the housing cap was raised from 22 year old to 25 years old from June 2021, which meant a care leaver would get a one-bedroom accommodation rate up until their 21st birthday. This would provide security though consideration would need to be considered with those dependent on housing benefits. Officers were working with Housing to get the right arrangements in place and address issues where it would be value for money for young people (tenants) residing at the units provided.

Members were positive of the ethos of children services who engaged with young people and listening to their voices.

ACTION – To be presented with a concrete setting of the nature and extent of the dialogue and engagement with young people relating to the local offer.

The Chair thanked officers for their report.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to agree the arrangements confirming the role of adult services in preparing for care leavers and the local offer and to return to the next panel.

18/21 Review of Missing Children

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Review of Missing Children report. The Panel received an overview from the Head of Service for Systemic Clinical Practice at the Adolescence Service and Workforce Development, Nana Bonsu.

Officers informed that there had been a 15% reduction in the number of young people reported missing from 2019 and 2020, this was due to the impact of the pandemic and lockdown; and 48% of the young people who were identified as missing in 2020 was discussed at the Complex Adolescence Panel.

Officers addressed the correlation of missing and exploitation where there was a clear connection. Of those that were missing in 2020, two thirds of young people were 16 plus year olds with the highest number being 17 year old, and further demographics highlighted 85% of those young people were from Black and Asian and other ethnic minority group backgrounds, and 75% of the young people had been subject to the Complex Adolescence Panel or MACE protocol even for child's sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation. [The

MACE protocol was a multi-agency panel that reviewed matters of concern around exploitation whether it was sexual, criminal or missing to young children.] The completion rate of return to home interviews were 71%. 60% were of young children out of borough, 64% were return home interviews, 64% were young children in semi-independent, 60% were young children in out of borough placement and 65% were local children. There was a high percentage of black Caribbean children represented in the figures related to the MACE protocol around sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, with some hypothesis around the risk in comparison to the demographic of other ethnicities; though socio-economic factors and inequalities may be contributing factors to the higher over representation.

Officers informed the Panel of the Missing Strategy meetings and through the Performance Team, data produced repeated missing children and social workers were to ensure that they followed through with the practice guidance with regards to the Missing Strategy meetings. The importance of these meetings was to include how staff engaged the views of young people's concern that was raised and enabling best practice.

Officers noted the way missing episodes were recorded for young children in placements who may have returned home late past their curfew time without authorisation, and that this needed to be revised to reflect the missing episode as appropriate to what has been coded on record.

The Panel welcomed the report presented by officers addressing a lot of data.

The Lead Representative for Care Leavers had commented on the report in relation to ethnic disproportionality, highlighting that there was a programme on race inequalities within placements, and moving commissioned placements for children and young people, exploring work reviewing language used to describe young people and how unconscious bias training could be improved.

The Lead Foster Carer Representative commented on the report for clearer guidelines for foster carers in regards to the procedure for missing children from placements following a recent training session. For example, at what time should the foster carer allow before contact was made to the police to report a missing child. The clarity would help foster carers due diligence in their role especially if it should be a standard time or a unique time to individuals. Officers informed that there was now a grab pack to be at every placement and residential semi-independent placement which provided essential detail and agreed position of each young person with an updated photo, contact details and very clear expectation of curfew time to the individual. This was to help with due diligence and manage calls to the out of hours emergency-duty team. Further comments from the Panel was shared around the importance of developing the relationship with the young person to avoid potential risk, understanding unusual patterns of a young person, over reporting than under reporting, and having open conversations with the young person. Additionally, the Interim Director of Education highlighted the importance with the schools working together with services to help develop children's independence skills.

Further comments of communication was addressed between services for better due diligence and better conversations around the current lockdown restrictions of the pandemic to help work within the context and for clear protocol to be shared for services to improve safeguarding young people and to exercise better due diligence.

Members of the Panel commented further in relation to the out-of-hours emergency duty team and the support provided to foster carers, and officers informed that there was a duty foster care offer which provided support to foster carers for situations where they required further support in high levels of anxiety and other elements to missing children.

ACTION – Clarification on whether there was a duty foster carer for out-of-hours support to foster carers.

Members of the Panel commented on the report and addressed concern of some missing strategy meetings not taking place and asked whether meetings were missed due to the pandemic and what action had been put in place to rectify this. Officers reassured Members and the Panel that the issue of children going missing and exploitation of children, sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation has not been off the agenda, though volumes of incidents had reduced during the pandemic, there had been good work with the Metropolitan British Transport Police and local authorities to persecute offenders of organised abuse to children. Further, officers informed that there was robust tracking of missing children and there was a series of workshops and training sessions to ensure staff managers were aware of protocol and practice guidance.

The Chair shared that she received weekly missing reports that outlined any young person missing with measures and steps made to contact the individual. In these reports it was noticed that there was a reduction in numbers which was possibly due to the impact of the pandemic, and this was discussed at the Children's Improvement Board. There was the suggestion of the themed friendly document such as a storyboard of the high repeated missing young person that helped contextualise what support would be provided to the young person.

The Chair thanks officers for their report.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report and the recommendations contained within the report.

19/21 How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?

Panel Members welcomed the number of actions and recommendations in the meeting particularly around working more closely with foster carers.

Panel Members welcomed more user friendly minutes and reports.

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Panel Members welcomed involving young people more robustly in discussions about the local offer and taking it forward and considering further commissioning arrangements and establishment of outcomes; and seeing more support in respect to those young people who were not in education employment or training.

Panel Members would like the staying put work to be driven forward.

Panel Members welcomed the focus on young people and thanked Members and officers for the pieces of work shared on behalf of the young people and their involvement towards their work thus far.

20/21 Work Programme

The Work Programme was agreed as received with the inclusion for an update on the development of the internal fostering services and what the structure, target setting for the service and staffing levels to be included in the next meeting.

21/21 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 7:30pm

Signed:

Date:

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Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 28 April 2021 at 5.06 pm.
This meeting was held virtually.

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair);

Councillors Shafi Khan, Bernadette Khan, Jerry Fitzpatrick and Helen Redfern

Co-optee Members

Shelley Davies (Virtual School)
Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative),
Manny Kwamin (Foster Carer Representative),
Dr Julia Simpson (LAC Nurse/Doctor),
Porsha Robinson (EMPIRE),
Ashleigh Searle (Care Leaver Representative)
Pasquale Brammer (Health Commissioner) and
Fiona Simmons (Health Commissioner)

Also

Present: Councillor Maddie Henson
Roisin Madden (Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care)
David Garland (Lead Commissioner, Commissioning and Procurement)
Veronika Yaricheva (Young Director)
Maret Arselgova (Young Director Apprentice)
Sara Lewis (Children Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Housing)
Sarah Lawton (Interim Head of Temporary Accommodation & Service
Development)
Brian Amos (Service Manager Early Help)

Apologies: Councillor Maria Gatland

PART A

1/21 Minutes of the previous meeting

There were no minutes to consider.

2/21 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

3/21 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

4/21 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

There were none.

5/21 Children in Care Performance Scorecard

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children in Care Performance Scorecard which provided an overview of the March month. The Panel received an overview from the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care, Roisin Madden, who highlighted the following performance indicators:

- the pathway plans were still within the red band highlighting the importance to work with the young people;
- the health assessments was a working progress;
- It was good to have consistency in social workers, 85% of Children Looked After were placed less than twenty miles from home;
- There was improvement on foster carers; and
- Virtual School in Croydon does very good in keeping children in employment and training.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care clarified the following:

- There were thirty-five children placed in a residential accommodation within the last year.
- The 10% of reviews and care plans not up-to-date were addressed in the weekly reports reviewed and operated within the service, which the performance team provided for officers to stay on top with data. The scorecard was therefore the highest level and provided other information such as health and delay. The performance meetings held addressed the narrative of every children who had not received a health assessment. There was also a clear pathway to children who had declined, and thus the 10% was not the same data each month.
- The percentage of the foster carer's most recent announced visit within timescales was confirmed by the fostering supervising social worker who conducted the visits to the child.
- Though the statistics for the referrals to CAMHS were misleading and desensitised, social workers would make referrals directly from foster carers. With the system heavily relied on CAMHS it was noted that there were concerns on CAMHS support service with other relevant agencies and relevant professionals and this was being reviewed to remodel the provision for better support.

- There were challenges feedback to the service for improvement and better results relating to the performance scorecard.
- The Children Social Care was remodelling their service to better the service gap with foster carers.
- The Chair discussed the advocacy in delivering fostering in-house to support work in foster carers.

The Chair thanked officers for the report.

6/21 Annual Report of Fostering Service and Panel

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Annual Report of Fostering Service and Panel and the Review of Fostering Service together with the Escalation Policy for Foster Carers report, which provided an overview of the overall aim of the Fostering Service, providing a range of high quality, safe and aspirational foster placements that met the needs of Children Looked After. The Panel received a detailed overview from the Service Manager of Early Help, Brian Amos.

The Panel welcomed the reports and discussed the report in further detail.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Service Manager of Early Help and the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care clarified the following:

- The fostering carer recruitment was brought back to in-house, recruiting a minimum of thirty carers.
- The fostering recruitment had a very good response as the service expanded to team managers with supervising social workers.
- There were 222 fostering households to date and 691 young people placed in a variety of placements in accordance with their care plan.
- 48% of Croydon children in care were placed with in-house foster carers, the remainder were placed with independent fostering agencies (IFA), residential units or in semi-independent accommodation, with some being placed at home with their parents and a number placed for adoption.
- There were a number of carers who had deregistered from fostering, with reason such as ill-health or retirement amongst others.
- The pandemic had impacted the financial difficulties to the fostering service. There were more training and exploring of different ways for better value for money; though there were difficulties in the take up of training.
- The escalation policy and the implications of fostering showed evidence of change and it was highlighted that there was plenty work to do.
- There were 45% of the young children cared for by the independent foster carers. The process acquired every foster carer who had vacancy to be approached and matched, to the needs for the children; if the match was not appropriate there would be no placement.
- The number of Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) carers

commissioned were fifty-one, though the agency had their own fostering social workers as well as the children having their own social worker. The supervising social workers were employed and remunerated by IFA. It was unknown whether there were any ex-council workers employed with the agency. Additionally, the South London Commissioning Programme (SLCP) was working to remove competition and working on a borough basis where the service needed to be more cohesive in addressing what foster carers required and what was not being delivered. With 48% of in-house fostering service, it was deemed that foster carers were not aware of the different types of placements and therefore IFAs were chosen to deliver the service; going forward the Children Social Care was striving for more in-house fostering service than sourcing outside.

Members of the Panel were pleased to learn that Croydon was building a skilled based on foster carers across the borough.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Panel discussed the following:

- It would be beneficial for connected carers to be introduced at the foster carers association.
- More in-depth information of the child's culture, beliefs and ethnicity needed to be addressed in the assessments to signify the importance of the young person who was being cared for. Cultural genograms had been encouraged in all assessments to celebrate history and culture of a child.
- The Chair added that the key focus on placement stability was also the same in staffing of foster carers working for a local authority or IFAs, to ensure that there was a clear mechanism for communication channels opened between all services, to communicate with workers within Children's Social Care, in particularly the out-of-hours service. Officers advised that there were no known gaps in the efficiency of safeguarding practices provided by foster carers in-house and with the IFAs who also followed service procedure. There were clear protocols in place for working with the out-of-hours service, missing children, allowances, activities, contacts and so forth.

ACTION: For an updated list of names of managers of the Children's Social Care to be circulated with the Panel.

- Members of the Panel highlighted the issue of the Emergency Duty Team (EDT) out-of-hours service, which drew concerns in the past and across the service and should be an area to review in the future in terms of support to foster carers. Further concerns included the missing policy and the clarity of how to record a missing child. Officers noted the challenges and were working very closely with other services to provide a better service in how a missing procedure was applied.

The Chair thanks officers for a very thorough and detailed report.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the two reports.

7/21 Fostering Statement of Purpose

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Fostering Statement of Purpose, which provided an overview of the aims and objectives of the service as a whole, and the services and facilities which were provided. The Panel received an overview from the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care, Roisin Madden.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the following was clarified.

- The Statement of Purpose focused on foster carers and noted that more information on the child's social worker and structure was needed.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report.

8/21 Croydon Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Croydon Foster Carer Recruitment Strategy report, which provided an overview of the aims and objectives to improve local foster care placement choice and stability for children and young people in Croydon, particularly for teenagers and children requiring short break care; and to increase the number of in-house foster placements and reduce the use of independent fostering agencies and residential care. The Panel received a detailed overview from the Service Manager of Early Help, Brian Amos.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Service Manager of Early Help and the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care clarified the following:

- Following research, the cost of placements were higher in ethnic minority groups nationally and not just within the Croydon borough. The use of the "All About Me" tool helped with placements. It had provided an insight to the child's needs when social workers were looking at placements for a young person, this included religious views and other cultural background to meet the needs of an unaccompanied minor asylum seeking children. With more systems in place, there was more understanding in young people and matching and placement costs of commissioning.
- Recruitment officers had been magnificent during this period in terms of establishing relationships. Fostering agency did support the background of the young people and social workers were relied upon to construct the matching with placements.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Panel discussed the

following:

- Positive feedback on the referrals made and the “All About Me” tool. With the national trend at a high price tag, on placements, UASC was considered cheaper as there was no family contact.
- It was noted that there was a disproportionality of black children entering the child care system and there was a need to understand the breakdown in placements and whether ethnic minority foster carers were recruited. Officers informed that the service had worked and contributed for ethnic minority work where foster carers benefited from the scheme.
- The discussion led to comments relating to the family group conference which coordinated a systemic practice - the independent person with no connection to the child or the foster carer would help bring together support. This service was deemed successful as the impact included a step down or a case closure or a proceeding of returning to the family or parents, and this was how success was measured.
- Members of the Panel welcomed feedback and contact from the service.

The Chair thanked officers for their report.

The Panel **RESOLVED** to note the report.

10/21 How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?

Panel Members welcomed fostering back to in-house, which was a really good uplift as there was more oversight, stability and many benefits. There was also great progress made which had been great.

Panel Members was glad to receive feedback from the foster carers and the young people present at the meeting to help with the progress of work and provide improvements.

Panel Members acknowledged the gaps within the service since after the pandemic. There was a need to understand young people and their needs, what they say though there was more work to do.

Panel Members appreciated the general work Croydon foster carer agency had done which had been productive, services were listening to others though there are still challenges; work provided for children was good.

Panel Members appreciated the Escalation Policy report which was an excellent document.

Panel Members would like for the out-of-hours service to be more efficient and thanked officers for their work with foster carers which was improving the lives of Croydon children. Additionally, Panel Members wanted to see the same relationship from all within the service.

Panel Members addressed the importance of the meetings that are important to children, particularly those needing alternative families.

Panel Members were pleased to hear how young children would use the service, and it was helpful to have the young people literature.

Panel Members continued to address the importance of the voice of the young people and commend the voice from EMPIRE to challenge officers and their reports.

Panel Members welcomed great leadership and communication shown.

11/21 Work Programme

At 7:45pm Councillor Bernadette Khan left the meeting.

The Panel discussed the work programme for the new municipal year and added for the following items to be heard at future Panel meetings:

- Youth Justice;
- CFCA – to also invite foster carers to speak at the end of the annual Corporate Parenting Panel to highlight the work in the year; to also incorporate their work in the Annual Corporate Parenting Panel report;
- Scrutinising housing issues in relation to care leavers;
- Inviting EMPIRE on the work programme and alongside for the Panel to meet with EMPIRE upon invitation to access conversations and celebrations;
- To ensure each report addressed the budget and financial implication;
- To include accommodation strategy and care leavers accommodation to sufficiency.

12/21 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 7:53pm

Signed:

Date:

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Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel meeting held on Thursday, 24 June 2021 at 5.01 pm. This meeting was held virtually.

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair);

Councillors Maddie Henson, Bernadette Khan, Pat Clouder, Helen Redfern and Sue Bennett

Co-optee Members

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative),
EMPIRE (EMPIRE),
Ashleigh Searle (Care Leaver Representative),
Dr Julia Simpson (CLA Designated Health Professional)
Roneeta Campbell-Butler (Health Commissioner) and
Fiona Simmons (Health Commissioner)

Also

Present: Roisin Madden (Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care)
David Garland (Lead Commissioner, Commissioning and Procurement)
Shaun Hanks (Head of Quality Assurance)
Veronika Yaricheva (Young Director)
Maret Arselgova (Young Director Apprentice)
Brian Amos (Service Manager Early Help)
Sara Lewis (Children Safeguarding Co-ordinator, Housing)
Thomas Joyce (Youth Engagement Worker)

Apologies: Co-optee Members: Shelley Davies (Virtual School), Angela Griffiths (Virtual School), Manny Kwamin (Foster Carer Representative), Porsha Robinson (EMPIRE staff), Pasquale Brammer (Health Commissioner)

PART A

13/21 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes to the meeting held on Wednesday 13 January was not approved by the Panel as the minutes were received late.

14/21 Disclosures of interest

Councillor Maddie Henson declared her involvement as a Governor at Monks Orchard Primary School.

15/21 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

16/21 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

There was none.

17/21 Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference (TOR) report was discussed by the Panel. It was noted that there had been a new Membership for the new municipal year. The TOR had not changed since 2017.

The Panel discussed reports that were to be presented at Panel meeting, and requested that themed topics covered a wide area addressing a detailed breakdown in particular areas.

Further, the extra accommodated existing willingness to have more meetings (total of 6 per municipal year) was welcomed. The Chair shared with the Panel that the increase of meetings had allowed for the Panel to review and hear more of EMPIRE and reports on specialised items.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To unanimously agree that the current Terms of Reference was sufficient and to include a Housing Officer Member as one of the co-optees.

EMPIRE

A number of EMPIRE Members were present at the Panel who shared their voices on their little involvement on the Corporate Parenting Panel and the experience they have in care. The discussions led the Panel to understand their frustrations on how young people received support mentally and emotionally; having repeatedly addressed that their voices were not being heard particularly for those care leavers who turned 18; and how EMPIRE could be more involved in the conversations and Panel meetings to share their voice.

The co-optee Care Leaver Representative welcomed the voices of EMPIRE that opened conversations of communication. As a care leaver representative, she addressed that the Corporate Parenting Panel was a function that oversaw the work services provided to the young people of Croydon, which included the opportunity for EMPIRE and a Care Leaver Representative engagement. It was noted that through this Panel there had been actions for better services provided for the young children in care such as the housing

changes, allocations to young people on the housing register, accommodation strategy and other pieces of work, and that a breakdown in communication of the implementations of these actions may have led to the disappointments highlighted by EMPIRE Members. Further, departments ought to be working closely with EMPIRE to facilitate conversations and working together.

Panel Members valued all the voices heard from EMPIRE at Panel meetings in the past and present, and noted that meetings held in public had more conversations directed at the young people present, which was very helpful and insightful. Panel Members invited for EMPIRE to continue to share their experience for the Panel to truly receive an understanding of how the services support Croydon's children in care.

The Chair shared with the Panel that Croydon had an open-door policy in inviting young people to attend the Corporate Parenting Panels, and in practice this enabled EMPIRE to be given a greater voice to ensure they were heard. There was no limit to the number of young people in attendance and the involvement from EMPIRE past and present was ongoing and functioned. The participation plan with EMPIRE was further developing for better communication, which included child-friendly reports and alternative approach for engagement in Panel meetings.

18/21 Children in Care Performance Scorecard

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children in Care Performance Scorecard which provided an overview of the May month. The Panel received an overview from the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care, Roisin Madden who highlighted the amber and red key performance indicators.

In summary:

- There were a number of amber performance indicators which were very close to green.
- Most children getting an up-to-date care plans and pathway plans were still difficult as this required the presence of a young person. This was statutory.
- Children in care continued to have the same social worker and the service was striving for this continuity to remain.
- Placement stability key performance indicator was close to green. There were a lot of children in care being placed in Croydon and others placed outside the borough.
- The fostering indicator highlighted that a lot more work needed to be done.
- The Adoption figures had shown that care was provided via the Adopt South, and this was good with the national indicators.
- There were concerns with the care leavers being in education, employment and training (EET). There was nearly 90% in EET and 41% care leavers who were not in EET.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the following was clarified:

- All services were working together to better the 20-day statutory obligation in completing the initial health assessments (IHA). Dissecting the data further, it appeared that a delayed referral from the social care team to the health services would impact on the 20-day turnaround time.
- The inaccurate data for the last month was presented for assurance. This addressed (for example) that should a young person be referred in the latter part of a calendar month, the 20-day period for their health assessment would enter into a new calendar month, and their attendance may only be seen as one appointment. The data was therefore presented in this manner.
- The fluctuation in April saw seven children referred for an IHA. Young children not attending their scheduled date or children transferred out of borough with assessments not completed before, may look as though the children did not have an assessment. However, this is the lowest number of children who had not received an IHA.
- There was a lot of learning during the pandemic year, whereby children who consistently declined for an assessment were offered telephone assessments which was preferred, particularly from the older children.
- A lot of work was undertaken relating to reducing the delay in initial referrals, many related to consent. Health services and social care services had been able to concur with accurate data since the beginning of this year and there were no longer discrepancies between the services with regards to cases.
- All children were receiving their IHAs in time for their Children Looked After Reviews; and all children were having their assessments completed even if it was a day or two outside of the 20-day timescale.

The Co-optee Foster Carer representative Member commented on the pathway plan and how the service had been performing very well over the last years. Foster carers had now seen their children being more involved in the plan, though it was noticed that the plans were not often completed within the timeframe in time for a change over in social workers or transitioning down. Remuneration was also often an issue.

The Chair informed that the limited change of the social workers for the young person would be helpful and recommended for conversations at an earlier stage to happen.

19/21 Annual Report of Corporate Parenting Panel 2020-2021

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Annual Report of Corporate Parenting Panel 2020-2021 which detailed the work of the Corporate Parenting Panel and their services to Children Looked After and Care Leavers. The Panel received an overview from the Head of Quality Assurance, Shaun Hanks.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Panel discussed the following:

- Panel Members welcomed the annual report which highlighted the Corporate Parenting Panel year in great detail. Though the health section within the report did not include the missing targets data, the report it did address how the Panel discussed and scrutinised topics in detail within the Panel meetings.
- With the budget was under review, the Panel challenged the cost expenditure impact on young people.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To approve the Corporate Parenting Panel Annual Report 2020-2021 to take to Full Council in July.

20/21 Update on the South London Commissioning Programme

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the South London Commissioning Programme report which detailed an update on the work of the programme in tackling issues for children in care on behalf of seven South London boroughs with particular reference to the London borough of Croydon. It also contained a summary of the strategic priorities of the programme for the 2021-22 period. The Panel received an introduction from the Lead Commissioner, Commissioning and Procurement, David Garland.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the following was clarified:

- In the South London Commissioning Programme, the service had seen change within the last six months, which included the Approved Provider Panel Agreement (APPA) now live.
- The 'All About Me' was implemented in other boroughs, which highlighted the importance of hearing the voice of a child.
- The Youth Custody project referred to the holding of a young person in custody under the age of 18. The services had seen that young people held in custody under 18 was not appropriate. The project was to help better placements for young people in better custody whilst waiting for their court hearing. Further, the service was considering specialist services to help assist within the project.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Panel discussed the following:

- It was helpful to receive feedback and update on the South London Commissioning Programme to help support young people before going to custody to divert from crimes.
- The APPA and framework was a core part of the work programme and had joined items across London.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To note the updates and progress of the South London Commissioning Programme and the strategic priorities of the programme for 2021-22.

21/21 Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Independent Reviewing Officer Annual Report which detailed the Independent Reviewing Officer Thematic Audit. The Panel received an overview from the Head of Quality Assurance, Shaun Hanks.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the following was clarified:

- The Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) had shifted the way reviews were conducted, which was more child-centred.
- The issue around information accessible to young people speaking different languages was under review as this was a financial issue.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Panel discussed the following:

- There was great improvement with the Looked After Children reviews. The letters received from the IROs to the young children were more child-friendly, and better than having a report as the letters were personalised with positive messages.
- The quality of staffing was very good, which was a major improvement to the service.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To note the recommendations set out in within the report.

22/21 Children's Social Care Placement Sufficiency

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children's Social Care Placement Sufficiency report which detailed an update of the Croydon Sufficiency Strategy and Plan. The Panel received an overview from the Lead Commissioner, Commissioning and Procurement, David Garland.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the following was clarified:

- The fostering service was an in-house service and supported in-house delivery. There were new and less experienced carers recruited.
- Independent Fostering Agency accommodated young children who could not Stay Put and welcomed them in supported accommodation.
- There were eight residential homes that operated separately to the Council. The highest needs cohort for children residing in this setting were for children experiencing behavioural concern or mental health.
- Semi-Independent was a more systemic designed accommodation for

- care leavers, 16-18 young people and homeless young people.
- There was supported housing was also provided. The service was in favour of a smaller provision of 5-10 bed units; day and night 3-5 bed.
- Supported lodgings were similar to Staying Put. It had positive feedback from young people as there was more family support with more freedom, and was a more natural setting than commissioning development service.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Panel discussed the following:

- There were concerns raised of the Staying Put policy and the anticipation that Staying Put would not put off a young person who required the security of having a family life;
- The commitment of the Council to Staying Put was to ensure that the concerns raised was addressed within the Staying Put policy;
- The need to recruit more foster carers to support the children in Croydon.
- The Service Manager for Early Help, Brian Amos, highlighted that the more Staying Put arrangements there were, limited the numbers of foster placements, therefore the capacity within the fostering service could increase.

ACTION – To review the Staying Put Policy and update foster carers.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To note the report.

23/21 How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?

The Panel in turn reviewed that:

- Improvement and evidence of good practice in the IRO service had led to better involvement and care in children;
- The reports presented had mapped out ambitions for children and addressed professional standards. There was also a range of opportunities for the young person;
- It was beneficial to hear the voices of EMPIRE and the impact of their lives, sharing their passion and integrity with the panel; accommodating no filtered expression of their views, feelings whether comfortable or uncomfortable; additionally, visiting and speaking to service users was important;
- Having no limit on the number of young people in attendance to the Corporate Parenting Panels, and also acknowledging more work was required.

24/21 Work Programme

The Panel discussed the work programme to include participation sessions

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with EMPIRE that would co-inside with the Panel, addressing individual experiences.

Further, the Panel discussed receiving reports in the future on fostering breakdown including fostering disruptions and the learning for practitioners; adoption breakdown and the global picture of the figures of children that have been successfully adopted; and incorporating these themes into the Terms of Reference. Additionally, to address in the health themed reports a focus on the challenges raised; to also incorporate juvenile justice into the work programme; and to ensure more presentations from externals be presented at the Panel in the future.

25/21 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 8:11pm

Signed:

Date:

Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 22 September 2021 at 5.00 pm. This meeting was held via Microsoft Teams.

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair);

Councillors Pat Clouder, Sue Bennett and Maria Gatland

Co-optee Members

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative),
Shelley Davies (Virtual School),
Sarah Bailey (Virtual School),
EMPIRE (EMPIRE),
Porsha Robinson (EMPIRE)
Roneeta Campbell-Butler (Health Commissioner)

Also

Present: Roisin Madden (Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care)
Adam Feron-Stanley (Independent Reviewing Officer & Independent Visiting Service Manager)
Shaun Hanks (Head of Quality Assurance)
Veronika Yaricheva (Young Director)

Apologies: Councillors Maddie Henson, Bernadette Khan and Mike Bonello

PART A

1/21 Minutes of the previous meeting

There were no minutes to consider.

2/21 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

3/21 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

4/21 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

There was none.

**5/21 EMPIRE - Summer Provision Overview Presentation; and
EMPIRE - Engagement (January to June 2021) Presentation**

The EMPIRE presentation was shared with the Panel by the Service Coordinator for EMPIRE, Porsha Robinson who gave a comprehensive summary of EMPIRE's Summer Provision and EMPIRE Engagement (from January 2021 to June 2021).

In summary, the EMPIRE overview highlighted:

- The EMPIRE offer;
- Wellbeing calls and messages;
- Life Skills and Accredited Programmes; and
- Rewards and Incentives.

The Panel heard that all Children Looked After and Care Leavers become automatic members of EMPIRE. Staff engaged with over 100 Children Looked After and Care Leavers through attendance at sessions (both face to face and online), regular communication, surveys and consultations; which the potential to expand further within the borough reaching out to more young people. The Panel learned that staff support and training was advocated through mentoring and training was currently provided in-house.

Amongst some of the highlights within the report, EMPIRE was awarded the Children & Young People New National Awards 2020, which was highly commended.

A video presentation of EMPIRE (which stood for Empowerment. Memories. Positivity. Interesting. Respect. & Educational) was also shared at the Panel and illustrated the young people's commitment to the service during the covid-19 pandemic and how EMPIRE had helped them through the difficult times. EMPIRE members present at the Panel also shared their experience of the service.

The Chair congratulated the work of EMPIRE and the impact it had made with the future young people who had reached out to inspire others. Panel Members welcomed the presentation from EMPIRE and the testimonies from young people.

Recommendation (put forward from the Panel): For training to be provided to EMPIRE staff.

7/21 Annual Report of Virtual School

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Virtual School Annual Report which detailed the summary of achievements and involvements for the Croydon Virtual School for Children Looked After in the academic year 2020-

2021. The Panel received an overview from the Head of Virtual School, Sarah Bailey.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Head of Virtual School clarified the following:

- The challenge to increase completed PEPS from 98% to 100% relied on the timeframe a young person came into care as the process would take twenty days to complete. Though there were often a very small number of young children whose PEP was completed out of that timeframe.
- Post-16 PEPs were lower than it should be as there were no funding in staffing for the Post 16 education cohort. There were also young people in colleges receiving different support for education and training, thus the consistency with the quality in training were difficult to improve. Relationships with colleges had improved greatly which included neighbouring boroughs. Further field colleges were difficult to receive information and building relationships were revised.
- General attainment (exam) results saw of the total young children - 26% were struggling and 68% were on track to the predictions of trajectory. The general attainment results were not compared to other local authorities as the track targets were set personally to the young people within the school. Benchmark of each key-stage were compared with other local authorities. In detail, young children in the 'below target' cohort were a grade below their predicted trajectory, and young children in the 'significant' cohort would have had additional mitigated circumstances that affected their trajectory.
- Good Development Level was a measure for young children in reception at aged 5. Greater Depth was beyond the national expected standard (higher achieving standard).
- There were three secondary school exclusions in the borough which were rescinded and upheld by governing bodies, and effectively Croydon did not officially have any exclusions from Children Looked After in the academic year. The children were provided further intervention. There were no primary school CLA exclusions.
- Attendance in schools had been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. The primary school cohort had a very strong attendance and secondary school attendance had dipped hugely. The attendance lead staff member within the cohort helped to improve the young person's attendance on a case by case basis. It was established that late attendance was marked as a non-attendance (high numbers of young children were marked as absent for being very late); further, during the pandemic, not all schools marked attendance in the same way, meaning some children were marked as absent for home learning and not present in the school building.

During the consideration of the recommendations, the Panel discussed the following:

- The role in which the Panel would play to explore how to demonstrate the continuance in supporting young people to success.

The Chair welcomed the excellently detailed report and presentation from Virtual School and the Panel congratulated Virtual School on the work over the last few years particularly seeing better results in the PEP and SEND expectation and understanding the education sector.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To note the report.

8/21 Independent Visitor Service and Mentoring Services

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Independent Visiting Service report which provided an overview of volunteering services provided to Children Looked After in Croydon. The Panel received an overview from the Independent Reviewing Officer & Independent Visiting Service Manager Adam Feron-Stanley.

A short video was presented at the Panel titled “Have your say” which illustrated a young person’s experienced support from their Independent Visitor, capturing the value of the relationship based practice and volunteering.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Independent Reviewing Officer & Independent Visiting Service Manager clarified the following:

- The framework around the issues of safeguarding and continued support were to avoid ad hoc relationships Post 18; and with working models, the service invited more quality assurance with the Local Authority Designated Officer who reviewed any allegations against adults. The framework also included reviewing its appropriateness for both the young person and the volunteer in supporting relationships.
- Volunteers were taken from various platforms such as the website portal, local advertisement (to where a young person was based), volunteering pages and word of mouth. Training was intensive that consisted of an interview, five days of training, panel interview and matching. This was done to ensure that volunteers were volunteering for the right reasons, making time and space in their life to prepare for commitment, and further addressing their values in volunteering.

The Chair appreciated the great work from the service and particularly consistent support provided to young children Post 18, which was a good success. Further highlighting the 15% against the national average which was also an accomplishment. Additionally, the Panel acknowledged the presentation and the good work from the Independent Visiting Service around loss and change and encouraged the service to maintain the support the relationships of the young person and their Independent Visitor.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To note the report.

9/21 Children in Care Performance Scorecard

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children in Care Performance Scorecard which provided an overview of the August month. The Panel received an overview from the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care, Roisin Madden, who highlighted the following amber and red key performance indicators:

- *CLA10 and CLA11 - Visiting*: these were coloured amber and slightly off target from being marked green, which was a consequence of a service restructure over the summer months and other mitigating circumstances affected by covid-19 effecting availability. This was to be improved.
- *CLA 14, CLA 15 and CLA 16 - Care Plans, Pathway Plans and Health Assessment Plans*: these were coloured red and was a continued concern within the service in keeping up to date. Significant impact included high level support a young person required, which was often the challenge social workers had in completing plans within time; there were also practice issues that the service was reviewing to address within the coming months.
- *CLA 19 - Young person having the same social worker for a number of time*: The ongoing service restructure and loss of staffing resulted in social workers keeping cases for a longer period of time.
- *CL 1a - NEET*: Some of the issues of the care leavers were unavoidable.

The green key performance indicators were reflected as very good.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care clarified the following:

- Better outcomes was to come in regards to the key performances indicators: care plans, pathway plans and health assessments that had often been highlighted in red for a significant length of time. This included further implementing staff training together with understanding the impact the plans and meetings had for children and the process of recording them on time. As part of the service, the restructure had created a 16-25 team and a 0-16 team which would provide more focus on the 16+ young children and the younger children. Supervision was another area for improvement, to respond and supervise difficult circumstances.
- The scorecard did not illustrate the impact of any obstruction to why plans were not up-to-date, though when officers reviewed the percentages of children who had plans out of timescale, it was noted

that $\frac{3}{4}$ of them were out of date by a couple of weeks, though the detail of this was not clear and would be looked into further for future reports.

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ACTION – for some Panel Members to work with officers to provide additional scrutiny focusing on understanding key indicator detail, and bring back to the Panel.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To note the October performance scorecard.

10/21 How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?

There were positive feedback throughout the meeting on how the Panel had helped the Children in Care today. Further reflection was shared on the focused discussions of how well children were supported and highlighting positive messages.

11/21 Work Programme

The Work Programme was received with no amendments.

12/21 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 7:47pm.

Signed:

Date:

Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 10 November 2021 at 5.00 pm. This meeting was held remotely.

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Alisa Flemming (Chair);

Councillors Maddie Henson, Bernadette Khan, Pat Clouder, Mike Bonello, Sue Bennett and Maria Gatland

Co-optee Members

Shelley Davies (Virtual School)
Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative)
Manny Kwamin (Foster Carer Representative)
Dr Julia Simpson (LAC Nurse/Doctor)
Porsha Robinson (EMPIRE)
EMPIRE (EMPIRE)
Roneeta Campbell-Butler (Health Commissioner)

Also

Present:

Roisin Madden (Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care)
Derek Dyer (Service Manager for Children Looked After)
Dawn West (Service Manager, Quality Commissioning & Performance Improvement)
Adam Feron-Stanley (Independent Reviewing Officer & Independent Visiting Service Manager)
Jo George (Head of Systemic Clinical Services, Workforce Development & Principal Social Worker, Childrens Social Care)
Hendrix Hammond (Lead Family Therapist, Childrens Social Care)
Ann Guindi (Named Nurse)
Shaun Hanks (Head of Child Protection & Review, Quality Commissioning & Performance Improvement)
Veronika Yaricheva (Young Director)
Maret Arselgova (Young Director Apprentice)

PART A

13/21 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 13 January 2021 were agreed as an accurate record.

14/21 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

15/21 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

There were none.

16/21 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

17/21 EMPIRE Presentation

Councillor Michael Bonello arrived at the meeting at 5:19pm.

A presentation by EMPIRE was presented by the Service Coordinator for EMPIRE, Porsha Robinson who shared an update with the Panel of what EMPIRE had been up to since the last Corporate Parenting Panel and also a video in relation to the health assessments.

Since the last Panel meeting, EMPIRE had hosted a youth hub session with over twenty people present delivering a variety of activities, creativities and learning. They had weekly sessions that included Barnardo's informing of their service; t-shirt printing sessions; cooking sessions and learning of the portal system.

The Panel watched a video that saw young people have a conversation and voiced their understanding of what health assessments meant to them including looking after self, emotionally, mentally and physically; understanding what a review health assessments was for Children Looked After; how they were affected by the pandemic lockdown and what resources they would require from the Corporate Parenting Panel to support health needs.

Additionally, the Director of Education, Shelley Davies highlighted that EMPIRE was awarded the Team of the Year Award at the Staff Awards; and Maret Arselgova was awarded the Children Families and Education Staff Award for working with Children and Young People.

The Panel welcomed the presentation from EMPIRE and thanked them for all the work that they were doing, further Panel Members congratulated members of EMPIRE where their achievements had been highlighted.

18/21 Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments for Looked After Children Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health offer for Children Looked After

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Initial Health Assessments and Review Health Assessments for Looked After Children & the Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Offer for Children Looked After reports which explained the current performance and pathways for the Initial Health Assessment and Review Health Assessments (Part 1); and provided an update on Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health offer for Children Looked After (Part 2). The Panel received a detailed overview from the Lead Commissioner for Health, Roneeta Campbell-Butler; the Service Manager for Children Looked After, Derek Dyer; the Designated Looked After Children Doctor, Dr Julia Simpson; the Lead Family Therapist, Childrens Social Care Hendrix Hammond; the Named Nurse, Ann Guindi; and the Head of Systemic Clinical Services, Workforce Development & Principal Social Worker, Jo George.

In response to queries raised by the Panel the following was clarified:

- The health assessment was to assess good health screening tests for preventable illnesses, and to ensure all immunisations were up to date, further, the assessment provided the opportunity to discuss any emotional well-being, schooling and aspirations.
- Explicit consent was also appropriate to start the health assessments.
- The Service's objective was to complete assessments within four weeks with monthly updates, and provide additional training for further support.
- Subjects such as sexual identity, sexual health, drugs and alcohol and emotional difficulties with the right support was also provided to the young people.
- Unaccompanied and separated children were also reviewed during their assessments for any anxiety they may have.
- The voice of the child and carer's feedback was paramount to quality control prospects for young children and foster carers, these were part of the audit. The health action plan was to be smart and identify a person to action giving specific timeframe.
- Physical, emotional and mental health were holistic with time spent on the health assessments which supported young people experiencing difficulties. There was also an interpreter to assist those with a language barrier to further express themselves. Young people were often always signposted to what would best suit and benefit their needs. Further, it was essential for emotional health to be discussed at supervisions.
- Emotional Wellbeing referred to mental health, experiencing changes in thoughts and moods; and mental health was also on a spectrum.
- There was a waiting list for many of the services including CAMHS. There were five qualified staff across the service to provide systemic programme to the young people. There were also front line staff being trained at foundation level which provided a therapeutic understanding in a child's life to carry out assessments.

The Chair thanked officers for their report.

The Panel **RESOLVED:** To

1. Review and note the performance of the initial and review health assessments and the actions that have been undertaken to reduce the risks associated with delivering these statutory assessments.
2. Review and note the Emotional and Wellbeing Offer for Children Looked After

Councillor Maddie Henson left the meeting at 6:36pm

19/21 Independent Reviewing Officer Service

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Independent Reviewing Officer Service presentation which provided an overview of the service. The Panel received an overview from the Independent Reviewing Officer & Independent Visiting Service Manager, Adam Feron-Stanley.

Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) were recognised for their support to young people as they had received personal messages of thanks from their Looked After Child.

The work of the IRO involved reviewing a young person(s) care plan with them, and therefore being part of the conversations and network to Staying Put; carers that seek a Special Guardianship Order or adoption; or an assessment for a child returning home. IROs look further at the quality of plans ensuring procedures and policy were adhered to, additionally strengthening the quality assurance of relationships.

The Panel welcomed the presentation and the admiration Independent Reviewing Officers had for the young children including the different deliverance of service provided to young children.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Service Manager, Quality Commissioning & Performance Improvement, and the Independent Reviewing Officer & Independent Visiting Service Manager clarified the following:

- Following the figures in the report of the children's commissioner regarding the accommodation children were found in, the service reflected on the practice of listening; listening to children; and for services to ask questions and listen to each other; thinking out loud together to provide better responses to the children in care.
- Additionally, a lot of work with Barnardo's had undertaken, though the work was slow paced, there was a lot of work based on concerns raised for young people leading up to their 18th birthday. Also developing a 16 plus was also important for a young person's lead up in transition. With regards to placements, there was a process of

ensuring the young person was in the correct accommodation for their need.

- Bespoke training in letter writing for the IROs helped better communication with children through stories and their experience.

The Chair thanked officers for their report and highlighted the challenges and great work of the IRO which was well received by the Panel.

The Panel **RESOLVED**: To note the report

20/21 Children in Care Performance Scorecard

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Children in Care Performance Scorecard which provided an overview of the October month. The Panel received an overview from the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care, Roisin Madden who highlighted the following:

- There were still concerns for the children in care plans which was currently 84% in 6 months. The number of children by aged 0-5 had a smaller percentage than children aged 16-18 which was low. This was also an overlap with confusion for care plan and pathway plans. Care plan was for Looked After Children. Overall 84% of children aged 0-18 had a plan within 6 months. Upon the review into the backlog of plans, there were around twenty cases from January who had a delayed plan.
- There were 656 care leavers (or experienced care) who were eligible for a plan. 77% of young people aged 18-20 had a plan within time. Some young people aged 21-24 may not require a pathway plan, and the active monitoring and 6-monthly review may not be required, resulting in a reduced number of active plans (as independence was growing).
- 94% was the target for care plans, and 85% was the target for pathway.

In response to queries raised by the Panel, the Interim Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care clarified the following:

- The service had seen an improvement in the quality of the assessment plans with further training provided for meaningful plans, and it was intended for targets to be maintained.

The Chair requested for a breakdown of the background, which would provide a narrative to why there was a delay for the twenty cases in January.

The Chair thanked officers for the report.

21/21 How has the Panel helped Children in Care today?

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There were positive feedback throughout the meeting on how the Panel had helped the Children in Care today, with a meaningful insight into the young children.

22/21 Work Programme

The Work Programme was received with no amendments.

23/21 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 7:46pm

Signed:

Date:

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Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2020/21				2021/22							RO	2021-22 Target	RAG	YTD/LATEST	2020-21 YTD or latest	2021-22 YTD or latest	Comparative Data				
			Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21							Dec-21	DfE Published Croydon 2020-21	Stats Nbr Average 2020-21	London 2020-21	England 2020-21
Children Looked After (CLA)																								
CLA 1	Number of CLA at the end of the month		699	697	691	661	641	633	622	616	595	589	570	575	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST	691	575	683	500	9,670	80,850
CLA 2	Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population		73.6	73.4	72.8	69.4	67.5	66.4	65.3	64.6	62.4	61.8	59.8	60.3	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST	73	60	72.0	51.8	47.0	67.0
CLA 2a	Rate of CLA per 10,000 under 18 population excluding UASC		51.1	51.2	50.7	47.8	47.6	48.5	49.2	49.3	48.1	47.3	46.9	47.3	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST	51	47	51			
CLA 3	Number of CLA at the end of the month who are Local CLA (Non-UASC)		485	486	481	456	451	462	469	470	458	451	447	451	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST	481	451	69%			
CLA 3b	Number of Ceased CLA in the month who are Local CLA (Non-UASC)		18	12	19	24	14	12	16	16	15	13	13	8	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	200	131	31%			
CLA 4	Number of CLA at the end of the month who are UASC		214	211	210	205	190	171	153	146	137	138	123	124	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST	210	124	211	36	1,330	4,070
CLA 4b	Number of Ceased CLA in the month who are UASC		22	7	11	10	19	26	21	12	11	13	17	6	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	116	135	116			
CLA 5	Number of new CLA in month (total)		18	12	16	11	17	15	28	20	13	15	19	31	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	199	169	195	187	4,250	28,440
CLA 6	Number of new CLA in month who are UASC		4	4	7	4	3	3	6	5	4	12	6	6	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	51	49	51			
CLA 7	Rate of adolescents entering care per 10,000 (13-17 year olds) population excl. UASC – New					14.5	19.4	29.0	36.3	31.0	28.2	25.6	26.6	28.5	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST		28.5				
CLA 8	Rate of adolescents leaving care per 10,000 (13-17 year olds) population excl. UASC- New					19.4	12.1	9.7	13.3	14.5	14.5	14.5	16.9	15.6	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST		15.6				
CLA 9	Percentage of the under 18 years population who are UASC – New									0.15%	0.14%	0.14%	0.13%	0.13%	SH	0.07%	Grey	LATEST		0.13%				
CLA 10	Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (6 weekly Visits)	BIB	95%	96%	95%	95%	93%	96%	94%	93%	95%	94%	95%	90%	SH	95%	Green	LATEST	95%	90%	95%			
CLA 10a	Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (4 weekly Visits) New	BIB											82%	77%	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST		77%				
CLA 11	Percentage of CLA children with an up to date review	BIB	97%	96%	95%	94%	94%	94%	93%	91%	91%	95%	93%	92%	DW	95%	Amber	YTD	95%	93%	95%			
CLA 12	Percentage of CLA who have participated in Reviews (aged 4+) in the month	BIB	82%	72%	77%	86%	76%	69%	75%	76%	74%	79%	77%	73%	DW	80%	Amber	YTD	75%	76%	75%			
CLA 13	CLA 13 - Percentage of CLA at SSA (Statutory School Age) with a Personal Education Plan (PEP) reviewed & completed in the last 6 months.	BIB	97%	97%	93%	98%	97%	96%	97%	97%	94%	87%	77%	97%	SH	85%	Green	LATEST	93%	97%	93%			
CLA 14	Percentage of eligible CLA with an up-to-date Care Plan (6 months)	BIB	74%	75%	85%	82%	84%	87%	77%	69%	66%	74%	92%	88%	SH	95%	Amber	LATEST	85%	88%	85%			
CLA 15	Percentage of eligible CLA with an up-to-date Pathway Plan	BIB	70%	70%	82%	71%	74%	79%	73%	65%	57%	57%	74%	70%	SH	95%	Red	LATEST	82%	70%	82%			
CLA 16	% of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments are up to date.	BIB	93%	92%	90%	86%	82%	84%	86%	86%	89%	84%	82%	85%	SH	95%	Amber	LATEST	90%	85%	95%	92%	94%	91%
CLA 16a	Number of children in care for at least 12 months for whom health assessments were due in the month (RHA's completed in the year to date/Health reviews due in the year from April to date)		17/41	28/44	27/57	14/90	13/108	23/105	38/107	22/99	25/79	24/100	37/121	29/93	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST	27/57	29/93				
CLA 17	% initial health assessments requested for health service within 3 working days of date child become looked after.	BIB	65%	70%	43%	63%	57%	44%	44%	62%	64%	60%	47%	TBC	SH	NA	Grey	NA	43%	TBC	43%			

Indicator Number	Indicator Title	Polarity	2020/21												2021/22												Comparative Data				
			Jan-21	Feb-21	Mar-21	Apr-21	May-21	Jun-21	Jul-21	Aug-21	Sep-21	Oct-21	Nov-21	Dec-21	RO	2021-22 Target	R/G	YTD/LATEST	2020-21 YTD or latest	2021-22 YTD or latest	DfE Published Croydon 2020-21	Stats Nbr Average 2020-21	London 2020-21	England 2020-21							
CLA 18	% initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after.	BIB	93%	60%	83%	60%	67%	89%	53%	89%	55%	100%	75%	TBC	SH	95%	Grey	NA	83%	TBC	83%										
CLA 19	Percentage of CLA that have been in care for 12+ months, that have had same social worker for last 6 months	BIB	71%	66%	72%	73%	75%	62%	57%	57%	54%	55%	53%	57%	SH	65%	Amber	LATEST	72%	57%	72%										
CLA 20	Percentage of CLA under 16 in care for more than 2.5 years: in the same placement for 2+ years.	BIB	73%	77%	70%	70%	74%	72%	70%	72%	72%	73%	73%	72%	SH	75%	Amber	LATEST	70%	72%	70%										
CLA 21	Percentage of CLA at end of month with 3 or more placements during the year	SIB	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	6%	5%	5%	5%	3%	6%	SH	8%	Green	LATEST	5%	6%	5%										
CLA 22	Percentage of CLA placed <20 miles from home	BIB	84%	83%	85%	83%	85%	83%	82%	84%	84%	84%	83%	85%	SH	90%	Amber	LATEST	85%	85%	85%										
CLA 23	Number of CLA allocated to CWD		24	23	23	21	21	22	22	22	22	20	18	16	RC	NA	Grey	LATEST	23	16	23										
CLA 24	Percentage of CLA for whom a visit has taken place within statutory timescales (Allocated to CWD teams)	BIB	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	94%	100%	RC	95%	Green	LATEST	100%	100%	100%										
CLA 25	Number of CLA who returned home (E4A, E4B, E13, E41)	BIB	9	6	7	8	3	5	7	7	5	4	3	2	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	87	44	39	40	810	4,610							
Fostering																															
F 1	Total number of foster carer households	BIB	223	222	222	221	217	218	216	213	212	210	209	211	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST	222	211											
F 2	Percentage of DBS Checks within time	BIB	97%	98%	98%	99%	99%	99%	100%	100%	99%	98%	97%	97%	SH	95%	Green	LATEST	98%	97%											
F 3	Percentage of Annual Reviews of Foster Carers completed on time	BIB	97%	98%	95%	93%	92%	93%	95%	93%	93%	90%	92%	93%	SH	95%	Amber	LATEST	95%	93%											
F 4	Percentage of Foster Carers' most recent announced visit within timescales (6 weekly)	BIB	83%	85%	88%	89%	89%	95%	92%	90%	87%	87%	87%	87%	SH	95%	Amber	LATEST	88%	87%											
Adoption																															
AD 0	Number of Adoption Orders achieved in the month	BIB	1	0	2	2	2	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	19	8											
AD 1	Number of children for whom the agreed plan is adoption (ADM)	BIB	0	0	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	2	4											
AD 2	Number of children waiting to be matched to an adopter		13	13	11	11	7	11	10	10	8	11	11	13	SH	NA	Grey	LATEST	11	13											
AD 3	Number of children placed in the month	BIB	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	12	3											
AD 7	Average time between a child entering care and moving in with the adoptive family , for children who have been adopted (days) (12 Months rolling average)	SIB	504	504	527	549	549	545	492	492	461	437	449	449	SH	558	Green	LATEST	527	449											
AD 8	Average time between the LA receiving court authority to place a child and the LA deciding on a match to an adoptive family (days) (12 months rolling average)	SIB	208	224	223.4	238	238	233	205	206	201	191	191	190	SH	226	Green	LATEST	223	190											
AD 9	Number of special guardianship orders made in the month (from care)	BIB	1	0	2	5	5	0	0	2	4	0	5	1	SH	NA	Grey	YTD	15	22											

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