

## **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Meeting of Corporate Parenting held on Wednesday, 20 September 2023 at 5.00pm in F10, Town Hall, Katharine Street, Croydon CR0 1NX

### **MINUTES**

**Present:** Councillor Maria Gatland (Chair);

Councillors Tamar Barrett, Amy Foster, Joseph Lee, Ian Parker, Helen Redfern and Catherine Wilson

#### **Co-optee Members**

Shelly Davies (Director of Education)

Lajay Taylor (EMPIRE)

Manny Kwamin (Foster Carer Representative)

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative)

Julia Simpson (Children Looked After Designated Doctor)

Charity Kanotangudza (Children Looked After Designated Nurse)

#### **Also**

#### **Present:**

Adam Feron-Stanley (Service Manager)

Jane Scott (Transformation Lead)

Anton Stewart (Strategic Lead for Children in Care and Care Leavers)

Ana Rasheed (National Management Trainee)

Simon Townsend (Head of Performance and Business Improvement)

Simon Robsen (Director of Adult Social Care Operations – Deputy DASS)

Joel Pace (CICC Coordinator)

Tom Hurst (Service Manager 16+ and Placements Service)

Carolyn Jones (Interim Head in Service Children in Care and Care)

Briege Gilhooly (Interim Head of Specialist Services for Children and Young People)

Shelley Prince (Head of Commissioning and Procurement – CYP&E)

Mary Larbie (Interim Director of Tenancy)

Mohamed Hasan (Head of Social Work with Families)

Leana Ebanks (Head of Specialist Services)

Alison Welsh (Leaving Care NEET Officer)

T'Shawn (Care Leaver)

Child K (Young Person in Foster Care)

**Apologies:** Councillor Tamar Barrett for lateness

Roisin Madden (Director for Children and Young People)

### **PART A**

#### **40/23 Minutes of the previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 21 June 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

**41/23 Disclosures of interest**

There were none.

**42/23 Urgent Business (if any)**

There was none.

**43/23 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)**

There was none.

**44/23 Welcome to new members & confirmation of the new Terms of Reference**

The Chair welcomed new members to the Corporate Parenting Panel [which would be changing its name to the Corporate Parenting Board] and noted the new Terms of Reference which was agreed at a previous meeting, highlighting the aims and objectives, and noting the importance to develop the view of Children in Care Council, well planned visits and to ensure that Board Members were committed in Sub-Groups.

A few changes in the Membership to note:

- that Members of the Council were to be appointed by their groups and not by the Chair as noted in the terms which would be revised.
- The abbreviation 'NHS' in NHS Commissioner should be revised to 'ICB' to be specific to Croydon.

The Terms of Reference would be reviewed annually.

**45/23 Update from Children's Participation Team & Children in Care Council**

The Corporate Parenting Panel received a presentation from Adam, Joel, and two care experienced young people to provide an update.

The Panel heard from a care leaver (representing EMPIRE) and a young person in foster care who shared the Corporate Parenting Principles and what principle stood out for them:

1. To act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of children and young people.
2. To encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings.

3. To take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people.
4. To help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners.
5. To promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people.
6. For those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work.
7. To prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

The Panel heard that from the young people's lived experience, their views, wishes and feelings were not often taken into account, though they recognised through attending the Panel meetings that changes in putting the child's voice first were adapted. Further, preparation for young people into adulthood and independent living, and providing young people with access to services have proven that young people have limited knowledge and access to the "pack" that details things young people would be entitled to.

The Chair welcomed the young people's voices.

The Panel reflected on the voices from the young people and recognised that more work was required to share information in placing young people with foster carers in an emergency and non-emergency situation to ensure that the needs of the young person would be met.

Further, the Panel reflected on the "pack" [the local offer], and how it was communicated to young people. Officers are exploring an 'app' for our Care Leavers which could provide up to date information which is more visible and accessible to them. It was also mentioned that the maintenance and local offer were different. This was discussed further in the local offer item of the meeting.

**Action: For the Panel to receive an update of what has happened following what had been discussed.**

The Panel received an update of what the Children in Care Council (CICC) had been up to since July 2023 which included:

- The introduction of the new Coordinator
- Providing fun opportunities for young people to stay engaged during the summer break through nine summer provision, which had seen over forty young people participate in those provisions (which included a trip to the Urban Farm, Go Karting, Ice Skating and Dinner and Movies to name a few)
- To have the CICC young people continue to be provided opportunities to have their voices heard over the summer. This included the start of a focus group working with adults (of Virtual College [to be rebranded to

Triple E: Education, Employment and Experience]), to identify support most needed through a digital or online presence to ensure their entrance and journey through college or employment was successful; attending a site visit to the YMCA's Y Cube Mitcham as Croydon Council explored bringing a similar housing model to Croydon for care experienced young people, and being involved in the process.

Further scheduled activities included:

- The House Project which was co-designed with young people and worked on cooperative principles through which adults and young people in and leaving care work together to create their first homes, build a long-term community of support and develop pathways into education, employment and training. If approved, the CICC panel of young people would work on a pitch to Croydon Council leadership on why the House Project should be brought to Croydon.
- The Corporate Parenting Board Co-Chair. This saw twenty potential candidates for the position to work alongside the Chair. The Co-Chair would be supported by the CICC staff member and would work to assure that the Corporate Parenting Board was authentically engaging young people in the board meetings.
- Ambassadors, who were young people ages 12 to 25 years old who has had experience of receiving support from Children's Services and would want to improve the services for other children and young people. Ambassadors would play various roles including serving on interview panels, doing site visits, co-facilitating trainings with adults, and interviewing other youth who would be compensated for their time

The Service was growing which was positive to the CIC and exciting new sessions for looked after children was to be incorporated to support young people who were underrepresented on the CICC.

The Panel welcomed the update from officers.

#### **46/23 Corporate Parenting Strategy implementation - Action Planning**

The Corporate Parenting Panel took part in discussion around the action plan for the Corporate Parenting Strategy implementation, which was presented by the Transformation Lead, Jane Scott.

The purpose of this exercise was to understand and support the process and development of what the 3-year Corporate Parenting Strategy looked like.

The action plan included the immediate development of the Corporate Parenting Strategy, which was scheduled to launch in November of this year.

As part of the new way in working, the Panel would be introducing a co-chair where a number of young people would be coached to commit for six or twelve

months, and also be part of the sub-groups. There would also be ambassadors [who were young people] work alongside with the Members and co-opted Members providing specialised knowledge. Recruitment process was currenting taking place to ensure posts were filled in due course. Further a protocol to implement the changes of membership under the terms of reference was the next steps. There was also the Corporate Parenting Board visit programme which was ongoing and further induction training was provided to the new Board Members.

The strategic implementation was aligned to the four key areas within the Strategy. This would see a priority group report back to the Panel on challenges and strengths.

The evaluation part of the plan was to evaluate the process of the new Corporate Parenting Board, the approaches and strategy with focus on consultation with care experienced young people on their views of the effectiveness of what would be achieved.

The Panel discussed the strategy action plan, what the changes and settings would look like to include young people. It was acknowledged that a lot of the work had already started in the background and more work was in progress to continue to meet the timescales set.

While the Chair welcomed the action plan and recognised the huge amount of work that had gone into the new strategy, panel noted that some of the proposed timescales didn't appear achievable, and the Chair challenged officers in respect of the importance of no further delay. The Chair will look forward to the implementation of the strategy.

#### **47/23 Local Offer for Care Leavers**

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the report of the Local Offer for Care Leavers which provided an update on the work being undertaken to revise Croydon's local offer to our Care Experienced Adults aged 18-25.

The Panel received a presentation from the Service Manager Young People's 16+ and Placements Service, Tom Hurst, who informed that the last Local Offer for Care Leavers was last updated in 2021-2022. Since then, the document was to be simplified and more coherent to young people. The young people would be able to review what was expected from the council as their Corporate Parents in Croydon.

The legislative framework was found in section 2 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017.

The presentation in summary highlighted that the revised Local Offer had been written paying attention to the statutory guidance to include a focus on health and wellbeing; relationships; education and training; employment; accommodation and participation in society.

The updated Local Offer which was currently in draft would be produced to be an accessible document to be published online and printed in a brochure format for social workers and personal advisors to share with their young persons. The Local Offer was also to be made available via a Care Leavers App and was to be revised in six months.

The Panel discussed the local offer, specifically in relation to the visibility and communication of it with young people.

In regard to the question relating to why some young people were not aware of the local offer, officers commented that we need to be assured that young people are aware of the local offer and shared that the service was looking into a new model of intervention and the whole approach was of a co-production, multiagency, to help establish better feedback to young people. Officers are clear that visits to see our young people should reference conversations and reference to how the Local Offer could support them. Further, foster carers were also to be included in sharing information with young people, ensuring a joined-up approach.

The Panel further discussed on how partners could share the information and how the local offer was communicated more widely, to minimise any difficulties in finding up to date information. Additionally, the way in which young people received the information should be revised.

The Panel discussed that making the Local Offer visible and accessible to young people could be better communicated with them. Opportunities for signposting and accessed was to be considered.

The Panel noted that what was on the Local Offer for young people should not only be about where it could be accessed, but also how the detail within the offer could be further reviewed.

In regard to the question relating to how to differentiate the local offer to those children placed in the same household from a different local authority, officers ensured that joint co-ordination work should be communicated between the social workers to avoid any confusion in what each child was entitled to.

**Action: For the Local Offer to return to Panel and clarity for how the Local Offer was communicated.**

**Following panel officers offered two workshops for panel to attend and share their views about the content of the Local Offer.**

The Panel **RESOLVED:**

- 1.1. To note the contents and provide comment and challenge to the updated Local Offer.
- 1.2. To endorse the updated Local Offer.
- 1.3. Provide agreement for the draft Local Offer to be shared with Esther and Children in Care Council groups, following Corporate Parenting Board consideration, to provide for further consultation and co-production.

#### **48/23 Treating Care Experience as a Protected Characteristic**

The Panel received verbal information from Jane Scott pertaining the option to consider the issue of a Protected Characteristic for Care Experienced Adults, and panel's view was that a new task and finish group to look further into 'care experienced young people' being given the status protected characteristic, which would include the engagement of young people and Board Members in the process, would be helpful. This followed a debate at a previous Full Council meeting which was an action to this Panel.

#### **49/23 Performance Report**

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Performance Report introduced by the Head of Performance and Business Improvement, Simon Townsend.

The report focused on key indicators for looked after children.

The Panel raised some concerns on the style of the performance report that did not address the tracking progress with whether the figures have gone up or down and whether there were improvements. A snapshot with more in-depth information was to be considered. Other comments included that the percentages produced were helpful but the graphs not so much. Other concerns noted that the report did not highlight what Panel Members should consider, and the paper should reflect what Members would want to see. Officers addressed that the performance report shows a reflection of the inspection framework, practice framework and corporate parenting strategy framework. Officers informed that the paper brought an indication of the work and outcomes sought to be achieved and noted for future performance reports to have the data interpreted for Panel Members and the desire to address what was required. Panel members requested data, rather than reports, to enable them to choose their own avenues of scrutiny and challenge.

The data provided within the paper highlighted improvement following the last Panel meeting particularly in regard to the pathway plans. There had been a significant improvement in the pathway plans recorded within time scales. Work was still continuing in the background to maintain performance for pathway plans, and to consider how we achieve consistently good quality plans for our young adults.

With regards to the fostering households, the data within the report had shown this had declined, which was due to retirement of foster carers, health, though the service had met targets to recruit fifteen a year bringing positive recruitment and activity. There was also support for existing foster carers with the introduction of fostering hub.

The Chair welcomed the update from officers and the transformation of the service.

In regard to the question relating to the number of dentists being so low, the Panel heard that some of the foster carers were still post covid recovery having difficulty in registering their children with a dentist. Support have been provided to assist in assigning dental practice within South West London which cause delay, further there were some dentistry delaying on taking on new patients. Further information shared to the Panel addressed the number of dentists that had closed during the Pandemic which also had significant impact.

Regarding the question relating to placements and accommodation for over 18s, the Panel heard that there was little data for post 18's as placements were provided through the housing pathway, though there was data for semi-independence placements. Officers informed that they were accommodating an 18 plus accommodation pathway for access and monitoring. The Housing protocol was also to be aligned to the new data development, which would add to the improvement in data.

In regard to the question relating to an update on CAMHS referrals allocated within a timely manner, officers informed of a recent appointment of two specialist health nurses incorporated within the teams and were placed within the local authority social care workers, as well as the children looked after nurses, in the aim to improve practice with access to resources within the community and developing the work streams and how things would be reported.

**50/23 Exclusion of the Press and Public**

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 6.50 pm

**Signed:**

**Date:**

.....  
.....