

Corporate Parenting Panel

Meeting of Corporate Parenting Panel held on Wednesday, 29 November 2023 at 5.00pm
in Room 1.01 and 1.02 - Bernard Weatherill House, Mint Walk, Croydon CR0 1EA

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Maria Gatland (Chair);

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

Co-optee Members

Shelly Davies (Director of Education)

Manny Kwamin (Foster Carer Representative)

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative)

Dr Julia Simpson (Children Looked After Designated Doctor)

Angela Christmas (Foster Carer Representative),

Shelley Davies (Virtual School)

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

Dr Julia Simpson (LAC Nurse/Doctor)

Also

Present:

Roisin Madden (Director of Children Social Care)

Carolyn Jones (Interim Head of Service for Children in Care)

Adam Fearon-Stanley (Service Manager)

Joel Pace-Jr (CICC Coordinator)

Mary Larby (Director of Housing Management)

Tom Hurst (Service Manager 16+ and Placements Service)

Jasmin (Observer)

Shakeva (Young Care Leaver)

Jordan (Observer)

Kaydron (Observer)

Apologies: Councillor Catherine Wilson; Manny Kwamin (Foster Carer Representative); Jane Scott (Transformation Lead); Charity Kanotangudza (Children Looked After Designated Nurse); Beatrice Cingtho-Taylor (Director of Housing, Homelessness Prevention & Accommodation)

PART A

51/23 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 20th September 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

52/23 Disclosures of interest

There were none.

53/23 Urgent Business (if any)

There was none.

54/23 Update on actions agreed at previous meeting(s)

There was none.

55/23 Update from Children's Participation Team & Children in Care Council

The Corporate Parenting Panel were informed of the changes within the Children Participation Team and Children in Care Council. The Panel was joined by three young people at the meeting who shared that young people would:

- Want for their voices to be heard.
- Want to help other young people due to the care experience they have had and would like to better other people's experience.
- Want to fix the system.
- Want to provide a unique insight and relate with a new prospective.

The Panel heard that in the preparation for the co-chair recruitment, there had been six finalists to be interviewed.

The Sub-Committees as part of the Strategy, would have two ambassadors. Recruitment within the team was still undergoing to have a working hard full team.

Officers further thanked everyone present who attended the launch that took place earlier that week and highlighted that the energy portrayed from the event was put into the work for the future.

The Chair welcomed the comments from the young people present who shared their experience which was very useful and thanked all staff involved.

56/23 Housing Sub-Group discussion - Housing Priority 1 of the Corporate Parenting Strategy

The Corporate Parenting Panel received an update from the Director of Housing Management, Mary Larby, in relation to the Housing Sub-Group meeting which took place on the 16 November 2023. The meeting was a general overview of the housing and the transition from care leavers to temporary accommodation.

In summary, the outcome from the meeting included that:

- Consistency and the same message communication with the young people for different pathways for housing for young people was important. The messages were required to be provided in advance of their need.
- A visit by the young people to the housing project in January would be a good insight to what a local offer would look like.
- The financial implications saw that there would be an element of housing funding for young people who generally require accommodation. This was currently under review.

In discussion, the message was very clear that young people do not tend to hear the same message twice. It appeared information on pathway plans were different to what young people were being told. However, it transpired that there was shortage of housing and names were on the waiting list, but this would not often be communicated back to the young person, highlighting that communication was to improve.

The strategy launch was about training for the young people around housing so that they understood what it was actually like to have the independence living (benefits, budgeting, paying bills etc), and this was something each young person should receive from age 16.

Officers further informed that there were other developments in communication with the YMCA. The house project worked towards preparing young people for those tenancies, and after care (to support young people to stay in the tenancies and not lose their tenancy). With the project being based in Croydon strengthened the relationships with the local authority.

Officers further informed that housing officers and personal advisors were to work through and understand what the local offer had in practice and how it would be provided, further the service was working with the assets department to develop CUBE, though what worked for one local authority may not work for all, and this was under review. It was not known at this stage how many buildings would be on the site.

The Chair welcomed the news of the CUBE and appreciated the work happening in the background which included reviewing sites and small self-contained units.

In response to addressing the issues that came from the sub-group, it was concluded that the service had to start with the basics to communicate with young people with what they were entitled to and when, and at what age they should be in the know of their independent living. This was to be reviewed further at the next housing sub-group meeting.

With the Panel highlighting that the housing capacity and communication was an issue for young people, particularly once they had turned 18 years, officers ensured that seamless communication with all stakeholders would be the

starting point to address issues raised, including providing clear information to young people on what could be offered, this included young people having available contact numbers. Officers added that when issues were raised by a young person, it was followed up.

The Chair thanked all officers involved and encouraged more engagement from Panel Members to the sub-groups and taking part in visits.

The Corporate Parenting Panel **RESOLVED** to note the developments information.

57/23 Local Offer for Care Experienced Young People

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Local Offer for Care Leavers which was an update following the presentation from the September 2023 meeting and the content of the Local Offer, illustrated by the Service Manager 16+ and Placements Service, Tom Hurst.

The Panel heard that since the meeting in September, there were two separate consultation sessions presented with Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel, and a session held with the Foster carers association, and further presentations to personal advisors, social workers and young people.

The Local Offer returned to the Panel today to address and agree the document since its last update in 2021. The document sets out the entitlements, a pathway plan, differences between social worker and personal adviser, how to contact services, to name a few. The Local Offer was a live document that would be revised continually.

The Panel discussed the Local Offer document and considered things which could be added or addressed, such as the diversity range of young people having access to the Local Offer and celebrating their culture and identity, which officers informed could be addressed in a personal consideration.

In regard to a question relating to university students finding it difficult to receive short term tenancy over the summer and what support the council provided. Officers informed that each young person was reviewed on an individual basis for different options put in place.

The Panel welcomed the document which was to be published on the website and apps to go live and this was also translated into all primary languages of all Croydon's care leavers.

58/23 Communicating the Local Offer for Care Experienced Young People

The Corporate Parenting Panel took part in an exercise led by the Service Manager, Adam Feron-Stanley, and the CICC Coordinator, Joel Pace-Jr, which

looked further into the communication of the Local Offer to care experienced young people.

Feedback from the exercise for communicating the Local Offer, included:

- Ensuring information of the Local Offer was relevant and tangible – i.e. job fairs.
- To be binding across the council.
- Getting people more engaged with the Local Offer, such as using social media platform or something for apps with soft information adverts.
- Information on health assessment, with links and signposts to sexual health, immunisations etc.
- An app to be child appropriate to the age of the young person.
- To be convenient and quick.
- To not take up too much space on the phone (if an app or downloading information).
- To include tips i.e. for GCSEs, schools, leaving for 6th forms etc.
- To have focus groups so no one deletes the app after two weeks.
- Possible artificial intel.
- To have Frequently Asked Questions within the document.
- The provide group chats for young people to talk together.
- To have games or regular updates of information on the app to draw to more users and avoid having a mundane handbook.
- A possible birthday announcement
- Variety of locations to access the Local Offer, i.e. app or in the library.
- To have leaflets from social workers or personal advisors presented to young people who may not have access to a phone for safeguarding purposes.
- Upon turning 18 years old, the personal advisor to provide information via the app, or on various mediums to access information.

Following the exercise, the Chair highlighted that the service would need to find different ways to communicate.

The Panel were informed that Care Leavers benchmark forum was held every month in various places and was a great way for other participation with other local authorities.

The next step was for the service to regroup to secure the app for implementation.

Action – for the Board to be updated on the communication plan for young people and the Local Offer.

59/23 Performance Report

The Corporate Parenting Panel considered the Performance Report introduced by the Director; Children's Social Care Roisin Madden. The report consisted of a dashboard and picture representation.

Officers informed that the service was pleased with the sustaining performance in the completed pathway plans with young people.

The Panel discussed the highs and lows of the performance report:

- It was noted that the Looked After Children (LAC) reviews were up in percentage and also the PEPs were ahead of target which was good to see.
- The Panel highlighted that the health assessments required a lot of work. In response to the health assessment, Julia Simpson shared that the CLA18 (Percentage of initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after) data noted that from April 2023 to September 2023 had shown an average of 41% and 51% noting that there was a change in children on the health data which may have been removed. The service noted the difficulties in maintaining appointments and the challenges with illness in carers or the young person, further other challenges with appointments not accepted within the 20 days, therefore appointments would be seen outside of the 20 days statutory timeframe. Officers highlighted that there was ambition to see improvement amongst the figures in the data, though every child who come into care were different and challenges would not be predicted by children social care, though the service aimed to ensure all young people seen within their GPs and other capacities to change appointment. It was also noted that children from another local authorities placed in Croydon were also the responsibility of the health team also.
- The CLA18 (Percentage of initial health assessments delivered within 20 working days of date child became looked after) target was shown at 85% which was a target set to be achieved by the local authority. The service was reviewing the data in order to set a target. Reasonable targets were set and also aspirational targets, which may take three to four months to achieve. Targets set were not in comparison to a benchmark from another local authority.
- The numbers for adoption were very low and the targets are set by the national Adoption Scorecard. There were some children who were adopted after a long time. Some of the reason for low numbers relates to children with complex needs, further international adoption would be outside the national target timescales. Further, regionally adoption figures are reported nationally and were benchmarked.

The Panel raised comments relating to the graph presented to be more meaningful, for example providing a breakdown of children's background, to highlight the unknown, and what and who they were representing. Officers informed that a demographic overlay would be broken down to all key indicators.

60/23 Exclusion of the Press and Public

This was not required.

The meeting ended at 6.59 pm

Signed:

Date:

.....

.....