



Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Monday 25 March 2019 at 2.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room GO2C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT:	Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair) Councillor Evelyn Akoto Councillor Sunny Lambe Councillor Eliza Mann Councillor Charlie Smith Florence Emakpose
OFFICER SUPPORT:	Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families Danny Edwards, Strategy and Partnerships Manager (Local Economy) Andrew Fowler, Head of Service, Children in Care and Care Leavers Glenn Garcia, Assistant Director, Education, Access and Statutory Services Dr Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children Louise Neilan, Head of Communications Usha Singh, Headteacher, Virtual School for Looked After Children and Southwark Alternative Provision Everton Roberts, Constitutional Team

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Catherine Rose and apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Evelyn Akoto. Apologies for absence were also received from Neil Gordon-Orr, Helen Woolgar and Speakerbox.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

Those members listed as present were confirmed as the voting members for the meeting.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

The chair agreed to accept the follow late item on to the agenda

- Southwark's Care Leavers' Covenant

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2019 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair subject to the inclusion of Florence Emakpose being recorded as present.

6. BRIGHT SPOTS

Andrew Fowler, Head of Service, Children in Care and Care Leavers introduced the report.

He reported that this was a research based, independent survey undertaken in January 2018. Information was gathered via online surveys with participation rates of 38% for Looked After Children and 40% 18+ which made the survey significant and meaningful.

Following the officers explanation of the data, the following points were made:

- Part of future work should be to find out why non participants did not take part in the survey and their cultural / ethnic background. This would be to determine whether their cultural background influenced their non participation and to tailor support for them in the future.
- Sign posting for homeless LAC – it was report that a specialist worker, funded by the DfEs homelessness grant and an officer from the housing department with a focus on preventing and addressing homelessness for care leavers would shortly be starting within the children in care team. Discussions would also be taking place with the DfE on how the project would be managed and priorities going forward.

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the Bright Spots reports: Your Life Your Care children (aged 4 – 18) and Your Life Beyond Care (18+) attached as appendices to the report be noted.
2. That the homelessness prevention officer be invited to a future meeting of the committee.

7. ANNUAL VIRTUAL HEADTEACHER'S REPORT

Usha Singh, Headteacher, Virtual School for Looked After Children and Southwark Alternative Provision introduced the annual virtual headteacher's report and presented data on the educational attainment of Southwark's cohort of Looked After Children.

A question raised around transition from looked after child's home and placement and whether there is an examination / assessment done to identify the impact of the transition and their educational attainment. Usha explained that, within virtual school there are specialist teams and one of the specialist teams will have primary team. As child enters education, a specialist education advisor is allocated to that child and that same education advisor will follow that child throughout their education. When the child enters care, within 10 days a personal educational panel meeting needs to take place. This is done at transition point, such as when child is moving from primary to secondary school.

Usha highlighted that attendance is an area of growing concern especially at key stage 4 which seemed to be the point that some young people in care decide that they don't want to go to school anymore (age 15/16). They find it challenging and the virtual school has to become more creative in ways to encourage them, and put forward opportunities and incentives for them to continue with their education.

The virtual school has set up an attendance panel that runs every month and school attendance monitored. The social care team and virtual school team both meet and social workers and education advisors discuss ways they can mitigate these incidences of non attendance in the context of the national threshold of what attendance levels should be.

In terms of exclusions, the virtual school buys into an attendance service where they are immediately informed when there is a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

A question was raised around pupil premiums and what it actually pays for. Usha explained that most of it is allocated to schools (£1,500) and schools are guided on how to use the funding. During the PEP meeting a discussion is held on how the funding is to be used to support the needs of a particular child. Once the school has put together idea of how they would like to use the funding it comes back to the virtual headteacher and reviewed taking into account what the child's education outcomes are, attainment data and progress data.

A question was raised regarding engagement with parents. Usha explained that parents are present at the PEP meetings which are also attended by Social Care who are the drivers of the meeting, a member of the virtual school is also present (child's dedicated advisor), foster carers, schools designated teacher. Where there is need, also have any tutors or services such as CAMHS involved. The child may also be in attendance.

In relation to school exclusions it was explained that wherever there are instances of extensive amounts of fixed term exclusions or threat of a permanent exclusion the virtual school will highlight to the school and through the team that there is references in the strategy guidance relating to exclusions that specifically lists looked after children as a group that must not be excluded. The educational advisor and the designated social worker are there to challenge schools to make sure children are kept.

RESOLVED:

1. That the virtual headteacher's report for Southwark Looked After Children be noted.
 2. That a meeting be arranged to discuss issue of school exclusions and pupil premiums. (Members of the corporate parenting committee to be invited to the meeting).
 3. Information to be provided to the chair on what proportion of young people being excluded were receiving CAMHS support.
8. **CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2018-19**

RESOLVED:

That the work plan as set out in paragraph 4 of the report be noted.

9. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Southwark's Care Leavers' Covenant

The committee heard from Alasdair Smith, Danny Edwards and Louise Neilan on the outline and launch plans in respect of the Southwark's Care Leavers' Covenant.

The intention was for an event to take place in the early part of May.

The following points were raised during the discussion:

- Outline launch plan section on 'What are the needs of our care leavers' to be rephrased in a more positive context.
- Barriers for care leavers who have a criminal record – appropriate advice to be given to care leavers with DBS on career options.
- Planning and delivery – Councillor Jasmine Ali to be given opportunity to input from Councillor perspective.
- Unpaid internship to be avoided where possible.
- Issue raised around co-ordinating and branding events with similar themes (strategic banner).
- Also holistic approach on youth offer being carried out by different department (mapping exercise).
- Query raised around the amount of jobs Southwark residents get from external employment initiatives (Tideway and Shard projects given as an example) – available statistics to be provided.

B Inspired

Alistair Smith reported on a conference taking place on 22 July 2019 which has been organised by Ashley John Baptiste a Cambridge undergraduate who grew up in care. The conference is aimed at inspiring other care leavers to aim high.

Greeting Cards

Can we get a paragraph that the chair can send out this week?

The meeting ended at 4.08pm

CHAIR:

DATED: