



Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Wednesday 7 July 2021 at 2.00 pm at 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Charlie Smith (Vice-chair)
Councillor Maggie Browning
Councillor Sunny Lambe

**NON-VOTING
CO-OPTED
MEMBERS** Tracey Harrison, Critical friend of the local community

YOUNG PEOPLE: Leanne, Tyler, Daniel and Nammi (Speaker box representatives)

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families
Andrew Fowler, Head of Service, Children in Care and Care Leavers
Michael Crowe, Service Development Manager
Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director – Safeguarding & Care
Jenny Taylor, Head of Clinical Service, Children's and Adults' Services
Leval Haughton-James| Interim Children's Rights Officer
Sue Goode, Clinical Lead for Southwark and Consultant for the Carelink Team
Amanda Cross -
Usha Singh, Headteacher - Virtual School for Looked After Children
Paula Thornton and Beverley Olamijulo - Constitutional Team
Poonam Patel, Departmental Coordinator, Children's and Adults' Services

EXTERNAL: Susannah Daus, Adopt London South

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephanie Cryan, Evelyn Akoto and Eliza Mann. Apologies for absence were also received from Michele Sault, Dr. Stacy Legere-John and Dr. Mark Kerr.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

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

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR FOR THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE 2021-22

A motion to nominate Councillor Charlie Smith as vice chair for the committee was moved, seconded and agreed.

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Charlie Smith be duly elected, as vice chair of the Corporate Parenting Committee for 2021-2022.

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

The chair gave notice of the following late item:

- Item 9: Self-Evaluation of Social Work Practice with Children in Care and Care Leavers

The reasons for urgency and lateness will be specified in the relevant minute.

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

None were declared.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

7. CORPORATE PARENTING STRATEGY - 2021-2024

Alasdair Smith introduced the report.

Mike Crowe, service development manager introduced aspects and context around the strategy outlining the core values of the borough plan through the corporate parenting principles to ensure that everybody has responsibility for this area whether it was through the council, various partnerships and the wider corporate/private sector.

The strategy highlighted different sources of information from children and young people i.e. from the bright spot survey or their conservations with social workers or through these meetings. It had identified six key priorities; the strategy would outline how those priorities would be delivered and achieve this on their terms.

The officers took questions from members.

Questions highlighted included the delivery of excellence for our children which outlined the 6% ratio of our children in higher education and 33% of those that had reached the standard level in reading, writing and maths in KS1 and KS2.

Andrew Fowler, head of service, children in care and care leavers also spoke about the training target group for young people - 17 to 25.

The chair requested that the strategy report should be circulated as wide as possible and send to members of cabinet for information.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee noted the final draft children in care and care leavers strategy, the Corporate Parenting Strategy, and plans for the finalisation and adoption of the strategy.
2. That the committee agreed to the following:
 - i. To provide comments on the draft corporate parenting strategy
 - ii. Agreed the priority areas for the delivery of the strategy
 - iii. Agreed the delivery of the strategy and to be monitored regularly, through the workplan of the committee.

That the committee agreed to:

- To provide comments on the draft corporate parenting strategy
- Agreed the priority areas for the delivery of the strategy
- Agreed the delivery of the strategy and to be monitored regularly, through the workplan of the committee.

8. ANNUAL VIRTUAL HEADTEACHER REPORT JULY 2021

Usha Singh presented the annual virtual headteacher's report and outlined the following:

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the school exams were cancelled which meant that the authority did not have the usual collective data obtained by this means.
- The school were able to assess grades by teacher-assessed grades, which showed the children's performance had improved although it created tracking difficulties; there was progress across the board.
- For safe guarding reasons, children continued to attend school during the pandemic. After the Easter break, more Southwark children attended school.
- The pupil premium was an issue because of unexpected financial restraints during the pandemic.
- Pupil premium and upgrading special education needs (SEN) practices and improving other practices throughout the year.

Usha took questions about reconnecting to those in care and how virtual schooling works.

The response was during the first lockdown – there was a loss in engagement once pupils knew there were no exams.

However, during the second part of the pandemic, the school introduced virtual meetings, which assisted children in the borough and a personal education plan (PEP) developed for each child.

Usha explained that the school offered extra tuition for each child, which involved schools linked with local artists.

Further questions on virtual teaching, support and participation were mentioned at the meeting.

Usha explained their meetings took place on Zoom and Teams, which meant participation increased as a result of online communication through a digital device. There was also a great sense of commitment with one to one support.

Also highlighted: Speech and language services – all happened on an online basis. Online communications discussed complex case panels – particularly children with social issues.

Some concern was raised about school enclosure in the cohort number of children

- "looked after children" that were out of the borough.

RESOLVED:

1. That the virtual headteacher's report for Southwark looked after children be noted.
2. That the committee notes the feedback given by the headteacher at the meeting.
3. That the virtual headteacher send information as requested relating to children not in education, employment or training (NEET).

9. SELF EVALUATION OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE WITH CHILDREN IN CARE AND CARE LEAVERS

Alasdair Smith, director, children and families introduced the item. He explained the report should have been included with the attachment set out in the supplemental agenda.

Helen Woolgar, assistant director, safeguarding and care explained the contents of the report related to the short term stability which had improved and long term stability (two and half years stay with the same family) otherwise referred to long term match.

Helen also spoke about support for the 14 – 15 year olds which involved families - to ensure long stability and matching. Although there was still room for improvement and more work needed to be done.

Ofsted reported in 2019, that they were in a stronger place now. The next Ofsted would be in September 2021.

The chair congratulated officers for their hard work and asked if more time could be allocated for this item at the next meeting in November 2021.

10. SOUTHWARK ADOPTION PERFORMANCE - 2020-2021

Alasdair Smith introduced the report and Susanna Daus from Adopt London South presented the item highlighting current key points and background information.

Helen Woolgar provided evidence of a recent adoptions that had taken place within the timeframe.

RESOLVED:

1. That the progress of the children in Southwark with a care plan of adoption during 2020-21 be noted.

2. That the activity of the local authority working in partnership with Adopt London South (ALS) during 2020-21 be noted.

11. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2021-22

Following discussion, the chair announced the theme for the next meeting would be on education and employment opportunities for young people.

Tracy Harrison (co-opted member) asked whether other agencies could be invited to the next corporate parenting committee to participate in the theme which was agreed.

RESOLVED:

1. That the corporate parenting committee approach and work plan be agreed.
2. That the following item be agreed for consideration at the next meeting on 3 November 2021:

Theme on Education and Employment Opportunities.

At 3.40pm the meeting had a two minute comfort break.

12. WORKSHOP AND THEME: EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING - CARE LEAVERS

A summary of the presentation:

- Care leavers – diverse group of people with 535 young people over 18
- 70% from BME backgrounds, some born outside of the UK and unaccompanied asylum seekers

Southwark's local offer

- Good secure housing
- Support needs – relationship difficulties
- Support with education

Mental health and emotional wellbeing:

- Adolescence could be a challenging period of life for most young people and care leavers
- Core challenges lead to increased risk for looked after children
- Southwark care leavers – access to mental health support
- 10% care leavers and those in care have anxiety and depression
- 17% out of 45 are likely to receive some sort of support
- Need to reduce social care gap

- 16 to 25 year olds looked after children classified in the system as a care leaver
- Over 18 year olds would be assigned a special advisor

Services:

- In house clinical services – supports social workers and those with mental health needs

Sue Goode spoke about the long term NHS plan.

- Care link offer
- NHS Mental health needs
- Focus of NHS services and systems for 16 to 25 year olds
- Reform of current models for 18 to 25 year olds across the board
- Provision for 16 to 25 year olds- e.g. SLAM services
- Outreach service (STEP) – name of service for the first stage of psychosis for young people
- Specialist CAMHS
- Support system for young people with intense emotions

At this point of the meeting, the young people accompanied by Leval Haughton-James, interim children's rights officer (Southwark), talked about case studies that were presented by Alex and Jenny.

Topics of discussion were young people diagnosed with attention ADHD – autism and what support was in place for them and how could they engage with a young person who had these issues.

Andrew Fowler commended the young people who shared their experiences and presented their own ideas/solutions on the case studies. Alasdair Smith supported this and said it was important to get a full insight of these services from a young person's perspective.

The meeting ended at 4.40 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: