

Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Tuesday 26 February 2019 at 2.00 pm at the Council Offices, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Charlie Smith

OFFICER SUPPORT: Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families
Tom Stevenson, Assistant Director, Quality and Performance, Children's and Adults' Services
Dr Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children
Angela Brown, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children
Helen Woolgar, Assistant Director, Safeguarding and Care
Kelly Henry, Head of Service Permanence
Dechaun Malcolm, Children's Rights and Participation Officer
Chair and Vice-chair of Speakerbox
Paula Thornton, Constitutional Team

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Catherine Rose.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The 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

No urgent items were identified.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

No disclosures or dispensations were made.

5. MINUTES

It was noted that the head of service: children in care and care leavers, provided the update for the Catch 22 Project under item 11 on the minutes. Subject to this amendment it was:

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2018 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chair.

6. OFSTED PROGRESS REPORT - OFSTED FOCUSED VISIT JANUARY 2019

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the Ofsted letter following the focused visit on 15 and 16 January 2019 (Appendix 1 of the report) be noted.
2. That the evidence of consistent progress and improvement with services for children in care since the last inspection in March 2017 under the single inspection framework be noted.
3. The following comments were made in respect of the report:
 - The committee welcomed the positive report.
 - Mechanisms to audit the service. It was explained that plans were in place to undertake this including the use of peer reviews.
 - Issue discussed in respect of “analysis” of contact with young people and record keeping. The importance of building relationships was discussed by the committee which was considered the primary objective and the difficulty when balanced against the demands of record keeping requirements. The chair and vice-chair of Speakerbox also emphasised the importance of building a relationship and bond with young people in this contact (did not want to see this as a tick box exercise to fulfil the record keeping requirements).
 - The chair and vice-chair of Speakerbox were able to confirm in response to issues previously raised by young people on sibling contact that their magazine and publicity continues to raise the issue. Speakerbox had not received negative feedback in respect this issue recently. Indicated the need to recruit more young people to enhance contact and interest in relevant issues, which will in turn encourage greater participation by young people.
4. That officers report back to the July corporate parenting committee on progress and including a response to the above issues discussed.

7. PROGRESS REPORT ON INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER (IRO) ESCALATIONS

RESOLVED:

1. That the contents of the report be noted.
2. That a further report be received back to the July corporate parenting committee to look at the current data and trends. This data should include the ethnic and gender breakdown as standard. In addition the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO), social workers and young people also be invited to attend to have a round table session to deal with the issues and concerns of the committee.

8. BRIEF REPORT ON THE 'WE WILL' STATEMENTS IN CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER AND CARE LEAVERS PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY 2018- 2022 AND DRAFT SUFFICIENCY DASHBOARD

Appendix 1 of the report was circulated at the meeting and an officer presented all the key issues arising.

RESOLVED:

1. That the brief updates on the 'We Will' statements in the sufficiency strategy in the updating report and the development of a sufficiency dashboard addressing some of the 'We Will' statements (the draft Sufficiency dashboard, Appendix 1 of the report) to monitor progress be noted.
2. The following issues /comments were made:
 - The importance of ensuring that the infrastructure is in place and that queries were answered quickly from potential foster carers
 - Initiatives in place to recognise foster carers highlighted including an annual ball, attendance at the Mayors ball, tickets for pantomimes (donated by local groups/businesses) and a wellbeing day. Officers confirmed the intention to open up some of these events by inviting members of the committee to celebrate foster carers
 - Discussed how to challenge some of the myths that prevail as barriers to people being interested in adoption and efforts to address
 - Assurance sought that no barriers to staying put (including financial) and young people being supported. Confirmed that links are maintained with relevant organisations including the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

9. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2018-19

RESOLVED:

1. That the corporate parenting committee note the work plan for 2018-19 as set out in paragraph 4 of the report.
2. That the draft agenda for the next committee be agreed as follows:

- Virtual headteacher's report
- Children in care celebration event due to happen in July and celebration event for children in care October 2019 – seeking input/comments from the committee
- Care Covenant
- Verbal update on cards to young people for birthdays and key events
- Verbal update responding to points raised by Speakerbox on recruitment interviews and their percentage vote.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Cards to acknowledge birthdays and other key events

The committee enquired on progress with regard this initiative set out in a motion from council assembly.

RESOLVED:

That an update be provided to the March meeting of the committee.

Recruitment interviews for service managers

Speakerbox confirmed the following issues in respect of their involvement with recruitment interviews for service managers as follows:

- Need sufficient preparation time
- Queried the current 33% voting allocation, feeling that it should be 50/50. This would be examined and reported back to the next committee.

The meeting ended at 3.50 pm

CHAIR:

DATED: