

Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Monday 8 July 2019 at 2.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room GO2C, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)
Councillor Bill Williams (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Evelyn Akoto
Councillor Sunny Lambe
Councillor Eliza Mann
Councillor Charlie Smith

OFFICER SUPPORT: Alasdair Smith, Director of Children and Families
Andrew Fowler, Head of Service, Children in Care and Care Leavers
Dr Stacy John-Legere, Designated Dr for Looked After Children
Kate Mayes Quality Assurance Service Manager
Tom Stevenson, Assistant Director, Quality and Performance
Helen Corry Specialist LAC Nurse
Olivia Nation, Children's Rights and Participation Officer
Beverley Olamijulo, Constitutional Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence was received from Angela Brown and apologies for lateness was received from Councillor Eliza Mann.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

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

3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Bill Williams be elected as vice-chair of the corporate parenting committee for 2019-20.

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

The following information was tabled at the meeting:

- Southwark care leavers – performance and outcomes – handouts
- Children’s social care – care leavers – information handouts
- Care leavers data information aged 19 – 21: Reporting year 2018 -19 – handouts.

5. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

None were disclosed.

6. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE - WORK PLAN 2019-2020

Alasdair Smith, director of children and families introduced the corporate workplan 2019-2020

Alasdair summarised the following:

- If members could submit their ideas and topics they would be considered for discussion at future corporate parent committee meetings
- What Members should consider and what to expect from the committee meetings
- Addressed issue regarding the non attendance of young people at corporate parent committee meetings. Representatives for the young people felt that the topics on the agenda were mainly data specific which they thought might not be relevant to young people wishing to attend the meeting.

The chair asked that the children’s and adult services should ensure the young people receive their invites for each meeting.

Summary

Alasdair drew members’ attention to the report which refers to the committee’s role and functions:

- Officers would like to strengthen the role of non voting members and look at providing extra support as well as arranging for them to attend the corporate parent committee
- Members agreed the person nominated or selected as a voting member should be a foster carer
- A critical friend from the local community and a critical friend from an area of the council outside the children and adults service
- Invite a representative from Southwark’s frontline service workforce, possibly a

social worker or a senior council officer from the housing or environment departments. This would not include statutory linked officers. The named representatives would be identified by the committee

- Alasdair proposed the housing and support for care leavers would attend a meeting with a presentation
- Provide advanced notice on themes for the committee
- Noted that the workplan would be reviewed at every committee meeting.

Alasdair also responded to questions from members on performance and outcomes particularly the numbers that were in care and those in independent living.

ACTION:

1. That an annual report on regional adoption should be provided at the next meeting.
2. The workplan must be reviewed at the end of scheduled meetings 2019/20.
3. Keep track of ongoing issues with the corporate parent committee. Alasdair said they would be revisited at future meetings and what progress had been made on past topics and discussions.
4. This would include what had been achieved as a result of discussion at the corporate parent committee meeting.
5. Teenage pregnancy and teenage mental health: Look at service providers to ensure they get the right level of support and assistance.
6. A report on the achievements of the corporate parent committee be made available to the committee.
7. Members requested information concerning those A level students under care that went on to university – chair agreed this was an important point which was addressed under the topic care leavers.

RESOLVED:

1. That the committee's approach to the workplan be agreed.
2. That any further items for consideration be reviewed and identified.
3. That the additional reports as set out above be received by the committee.

7. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HEALTH AND SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS - A DEEP DIVE

Dr Stacy John-Legere, designated doctor for Looked After Children introduced the report.

The following was highlighted at the meeting:

- School exclusion for those in care – look at ways to ensure young people stay in school especially those with special needs and disabilities. The focus was to keep the children in education.
- Identify any health needs and provide an educational plan or overall health plan and liaise with school commission and educational psychologists.
- Exclusions: Most of the exclusions were boys that had health problems such as asthma, obesity and learning needs.
- Referred to communication with schools – and develop a plan for those children that might be excluded.
- Referred to girl with complex PSD (post stress disorder), mental health issues, who had experienced physical abuse within the family. The girl had previously been excluded but has now been assessed. Steps are now in place to improve her health and wellbeing which includes working closely with her foster mother.
- Continue the working relationship with child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS).
- Southwark Virtual School for looked after children: Continue work with children that have challenging behavioural problems and provide a structural plan for those children through the Southwark LAC health team.

Dr Stacy John-Legere responded to questions from members on the following:

- Widen access to services for young people especially those with challenging behaviour
- The behaviour of children improved when they had breakfast in the morning
- School nurses: Review of schools that do not have access to a school nurse
- Better self care skills – train children life skills
- Mental health strategies – providing additional support and signposting Health assessments for referrals on autisms and dyslexia
- Dyslexia in adults report that 40% are not identified in early childhood
- Virtual School – a review on the number of exclusions and evaluating self assessment forms relating to the number of young people in care.

ACTION:

The committee receive a report back on Virtual school's number of exclusions and evaluating self assessment forms that involved the number of young people in care.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

8. CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

Tom Stevenson, interim assistant director, quality and performance presented the report.

Tom referred to the self evaluation of social work practice in children's social care assessment and confirmed they were all up to date even though there was a delay with its completion.

Summary of the presentation

- Assessments: Child protection services; assessments had increased by 12% more than last year.
- Review assessments for those that do not have children protection plans.
- Number of children with child protection plans had increased by 300.
- 5% reduction of children in care from communities established in Southwark compared to neighbouring boroughs.
- There were more children in care in Southwark compared to other boroughs and more children placed in care within or around the borough as opposed to placing them outside Southwark.

The committee noted the above. The chair asked members to digest information and discuss issues at a later date.

9. ANNUAL REPORT - INDEPENDENT REVIEWING SERVICE 2018-19

Tom Stevenson, interim assistant director, quality and performance presented the IRO statutory report 2018-19. He outlined that the independent reviewing officers are dedicated to improving outcomes for children and young people in care through the review and challenge aspect of their role.

The report addresses the Ofsted focused visit in January 2019 particularly around care and increased impact of IROs. Reference was made about the two reviews that take place each year and the two visits which also take place each year.

- The report referred to the robustness on the escalation process
- Beneficial effect of recording and tracking information
- Further improvement on the review and obtaining the necessary paperwork.

RESOLVED:

That the Independent Review Officers (IRO) Annual Report be noted.

10. WORKSHOP: PERFORMANCE AND OUTCOMES

The committee were provided handouts of the Southwark care leaver's performance and outcomes.

Tom Stevenson introduced the item and addressed the point concerning quantitative and qualitative data.

The chair suggested the committee consider this item as a group discussion.

- *What does the data tell us?*

- *What are our goals and how will we achieve them?*
- Questions, *discussion and next steps*

Discussion points:

- Cohort of children – triangulate data to give a better understanding
- Pathway planning – how much work is involved in that
- Looking at best practice across the country
- Goals – have to be shared priority, goals for young people
- Key aspirations for young people that are meaningful to them
- Feedback given is the trust support worker – how do they provide a service and access services for young people in care and the care worker receiving a level of support as well
- Working with colleagues in Speaker box.

Alasdair referred to:

- Team of young inspectors and young advisors - make sure it is a proper scheme and ensure those relationships work.
- Care leavers – through housing, accommodation issues provide key workers and focused on care leavers officers said a newly appointed young people housing practioners to help with care leavers.
- Corporate parenting committee – monitor progress on the above.
- Looking to recruit personal advisors (4) so the new workers appointed – to look after more complex children.
- Specialist housing employment services.

Next part of the group discussion

- *What is going well?*
- *What do we want to do better?*

Noted that some of the children are doing well and have gone on to university and were doing well academically.

ACTION:

Officers agreed to provide more data to the corporate parent committee.

- Data performance – need to be consistent on performance.
- More varied form of housing accommodation (to address total isolation).
- Significant number of care leavers returned to their birth families.
- Develop children's' networks so they reconnect with their families.

Alasdair stated reviews are not addressed in time so the timeframe needs to be improved - need to have aspiration for our young children.

The chair thanked everyone for their input and asked members to focus on what their contribution would be for the committee and what they want to scrutinise.

11. MINUTES

Members considered the minutes after Item 2.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes held on 25 March 2019 be agreed as a correct record of the meeting and signed by the chair.

Bright Spots

Following the Bright spots report which was noted at the previous meeting, the chair stated that if there was a role for elected councillors then officers should let them know.

Number of exclusions of children in care at Virtual School

It was noted that the above report on exclusions in care at Virtual school was not on the agenda. The committee asked for the data information concerning the exclusions in care on the Virtual school be considered at the next meeting in November 2019.

Greeting cards

Alastair explained a special mail box has been set up for this which he agreed to circulate to Councillor Jasmine Ali. Councillor Ali agreed to circulate it to members of the committee.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were none.

The meeting ended at 4.10pm

CHAIR:

DATED: