



## **MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE**

### **Tuesday 19 July 2016 at 5.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillor W Mitchell Murray (Chair), and Councillors Conneely, Dixon (for Hossain) and Thomas

Also present: PE and HM (Care In Action)

Apologies were received from: Councillor Hossain

1. **Declarations of interests**

None made.

2. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 April 2016 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

3. **Matters arising**

None.

4. **Deputations**

None.

5. **Children in Care - feedback on the Brent Pledge**

PE (Chair, Care In Action) updated the committee on activities since the last meeting. The committee heard that in May, Care In Action representatives had played a role in the interview process for three Children and Young People head of service posts which participants felt had been a valuable experience.

HM (Care In Action) advised that the Head of the Virtual School had visited the CIA members and given them an opportunity to comment on the PEP (Personal Education Plan) pack. CIA feedback had included requests for PEP meetings to take place outside school hours and with advance notice, the need for sensitivity over carers attending school meetings and more involvement in target setting. As a result, it had been agreed that the CIA's views would be included in the PEP guidance which would be shared with social workers and carers. There would be a follow up in late Autumn.

PE gave an update on the Brent Pledge and Care Leave Charter training. CIA members had been trained to deliver workshops to participants which included professionals, care workers, heads of service and nurses. The workshops were based on those trialled at the previous meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee. He outlined key points arising from the workshops which included the need to improve communication when children were moving placements and also improved communication between social workers. It was felt there should be meetings between the outgoing and a new social worker (not just reliance on case notes) and for meetings with social workers to take place in relaxed settings, for example, over lunch, ensuring the child was both listening and understanding. The LAC children had also requested earlier receipt of consultation forms and to ensure over 14 year olds were given the opportunity to comment on their Health Action Plan (part C form). The young people had also stressed that, in circumstances when there was a need to change arrangements, it was important to inform and explain to the child, the reasons why this was necessary. Regarding leaving care, the CIA had reminded that living alone could be daunting, lonely and depressing and the emphasis should be on making the change smoother. Discussion had also taken place on the qualities of a social worker and it was felt they should be fun and engaging, show love, respect, have both time and patience and be easily contactable by telephone. PE was pleased to report that the post workshop evaluation had been overwhelmingly positive, all had found the session useful, had valued the opportunity to hear the young people's views and more would be held in future.

Committee members welcomed the opportunity to hear about the workshops and congratulated the young people on their successful delivery. PE and HM added that participants had been very open, the event had flowed well and it had been a rare and valuable opportunity to work alongside social workers in an informal setting.

In discussion, Janet Lewis (Head of Virtual School) confirmed that updated guidance on the PEP process would be circulated and directed to designated teachers within schools. She agreed to feedback the need for after school meetings. In response to members' concern on hearing that young people were not consistently involved in target setting, Janet Lewis hoped this was rare and stated that PEP should be designed to bring about improvement and should be agreed jointly.

Chris Chalmers (Head of LAC and Permanency) added that efforts would be made to follow good practice and for advance visits to new placements to always be made.

## **6. An induction presentation for members regarding Corporate Parenting**

Chris Chalmers (Head of LAC and Permanency) gave a presentation on Corporate Parenting, primarily for the benefit of the new members on the committee. She outlined the current LAC population, responsibilities of Corporate Parenting, additional support given to care leavers, the Brent Pledge, the role of the virtual school and factors impacting on educational achievement.

The committee welcomed the presentation and suggested that arrangements be made for a member development session on Corporate Parenting and for young people to be invited to be involved. In discussion, questions were raised on the

unaccompanied minors who were primarily from Afghanistan, Albania and Syria and the support available. Nigel Chapman referred to the process for age assessment and collaboration across the country. Gail Tolley (Strategic Director, Children and Young People) referred to local authorities' and Corporate Parents' moral responsibility to support. Regarding training, the committee heard that some was available to the 16/17 year olds and felt that key workers providing support were also in need of specialist training. Attention was drawn to work of Newman Catholic College whom, it was said, provided have a number of support programmes.

RESOLED:

- (i) that the presentation on Corporate Parenting be noted;
- (ii) that the Strategic Director, Children and Young People investigate the possibility of a Member Development Training Session on Corporate Parenting.

**7. Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report 1 April - 30 June 2016**

Chris Chalmers (Head of LAC and Permanency) introduced the Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring for April to June 2016 which provided information about the general management of the in-house fostering service and how it was achieving good outcomes for children. This was in accordance with standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011). She drew attention to the continued increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children, the number of fostering vacancies and the increase in enquiries following a recent recruitment campaign. Reference was made to the Annual Joint Training Day for fostering panel members and social workers which took place on 24 June 2016, highlighting continued collaboration. Chris Chalmers drew attention to the Key Stage 2 SATS results noting that those for punctuation and grammar had room for improvement. Good news was hoped for forthcoming GCSE results and Chris Chalmers was pleased to report 100% attendance at examinations with 20% projected to achieved the target 5+ A\*-C grades. Additionally, 96% of the year 11 cohort had a guaranteed post 16 education place.

The committee were pleased to hear the view that the Brent Fostering Panel was considered to be very professional, participative and with high calibre panel members. They also asked that their congratulations be extended to the GCSE exam entrants.

RESOLVED: that the contents of Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report, 1 April – 30 June 2016 be noted.

**8. Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 6.20 pm

W MITCHELL MURRAY  
Chair