



Corporate Parenting Committee

Wednesday 1 February 2023 at 5.00 pm

Conference Hall - Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way,
Wembley, HA9 0FJ

The meeting will be held as an in person physical meeting with all members of the Committee required to attend in person.

The press and public will be excluded from this meeting.

Membership:

Members

Councillors:

Grahl (Chair)

Collymore

Dixon

Gbajumo

Hirani

Substitute Members

Councillors:

Chappell, Conneely, Kennelly
and Rubin

Councillors: Mistry and Maurice

For further information contact: Hannah O'Brien, Governance Officer
020 8937 1339, hannah.o'brien@brent.gov.uk

For electronic copies of minutes, reports and agendas, and to be alerted when the minutes of this meeting have been published visit: **www.brent.gov.uk/democracy**

Notes for Members - Declarations of Interest:

If a Member is aware they have a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest* in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent and must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item.

If a Member is aware they have a Personal Interest** in an item of business, they must declare its existence and nature at the start of the meeting or when it becomes apparent.

If the Personal Interest is also a Prejudicial Interest (i.e. it affects a financial position or relates to determining of any approval, consent, licence, permission, or registration) then (unless an exception at 14(2) of the Members Code applies), after disclosing the interest to the meeting the Member must leave the room without participating in discussion of the item, except that they may first make representations, answer questions or give evidence relating to the matter, provided that the public are allowed to attend the meeting for those purposes.

***Disclosable Pecuniary Interests:**

- (a) **Employment, etc.** - Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit gain.
- (b) **Sponsorship** - Any payment or other financial benefit in respect expenses in carrying out duties as a member, or of election; including from a trade union.
- (c) **Contracts** - Any current contract for goods, services or works, between the Councillors or their partner (or a body in which one has a beneficial interest) and the council.
- (d) **Land** - Any beneficial interest in land which is within the council's area.
- (e) **Licences**- Any licence to occupy land in the council's area for a month or longer.
- (f) **Corporate tenancies** - Any tenancy between the council and a body in which the Councillor or their partner have a beneficial interest.
- (g) **Securities** - Any beneficial interest in securities of a body which has a place of business or land in the council's area, if the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body or of any one class of its issued share capital.

****Personal Interests:**

The business relates to or affects:

(a) Anybody of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management, and:

- To which you are appointed by the council;
- which exercises functions of a public nature;
- which is directed is to charitable purposes;
- whose principal purposes include the influence of public opinion or policy (including a political party of trade union).

(b) The interests a of a person from whom you have received gifts or hospitality of at least £50 as a member in the municipal year;

or

A decision in relation to that business might reasonably be regarded as affecting, to a greater extent than the majority of other council tax payers, ratepayers or inhabitants of the electoral ward affected by the decision, the well-being or financial position of:

- You yourself;
- a member of your family or your friend or any person with whom you have a close association or any person or body who employs or has appointed any of these or in whom they have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000, or any firm in which they are a partner, or any company of which they are a director
- any body of a type described in (a) above.

Agenda

Introductions, if appropriate.

Item	Page
1 Exclusion of the Press and Public	
<p>The committee is advised that the public may be excluded from meetings whenever it is likely in view of the nature of the proceedings that exempt information would be disclosed. Meetings of the Corporate Parenting Committee are attended by representatives of Care In Action (CIA), the council's Children in Care Council. The committee is therefore recommended to exclude the press and public for the duration of the meeting, as the attendance of CIA representatives necessitates the disclosure of the following category of exempt information, set out in the Local Government Act 1972: - information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.</p>	
2 Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members	
3 Declarations of interests	
<p>Members are invited to declare at this stage of the meeting, any relevant disclosable pecuniary, personal or prejudicial interests in the items on this agenda.</p>	
4 Deputations (if any)	
<p>To hear any deputations received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order 67.</p>	
5 Minutes of the previous meeting	1 - 6
<p>To approve the minutes of the previous meeting as a correct record.</p>	
6 Matters arising (if any)	
<p>To consider any matters arising from the minutes of the previous meeting.</p>	
7 Update from Care in Action / Care Leavers in Action Representatives	
<p>This is an opportunity for members of Care In Action (CIA) and Care Leavers in Action to feedback on recent activity.</p>	
8 Brent Care Journeys Report	7 - 16

To provide information to the Corporate Parenting Committee about the Brent Care Journey partnership and how it is contributing to our participation work and achieving good outcomes for children.

9 Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report Quarter 3: 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022 17 - 26

To provide information to the Corporate Parenting Committee about the general management of the in-house fostering service and how it is achieving good outcomes for children, in accordance with standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011).

10 National Safeguarding Review Report of Children with Additional Needs Placed in Residential Educational Provisions (exempt) 27 - 32

To provide the Corporate Parenting Committee with the local authority's response to the National Safeguarding Review of Children with Additional Needs placed in Residential Education Provisions.

11 Annual Looked After Children (LAC) Health Presentation 33 - 42

To receive a presentation from NHS representatives on the way health services respond to the health needs of Looked After Children.

12 Exclusion of Press and Public

The following items are not for publication as they relate to the category of exempt information set out below, as specified under Part 1, Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972:

Agenda item 10: This appendix has been classified as exempt under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, namely: "Information relating to any individual".

13 Any other urgent business

Notice of items to be raised under this heading must be given in writing to the Head of Executive and Member Services or her representative before the meeting in accordance with Standing Order 60.

Date of the next meeting: Monday 24 April 2023

MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE
Wednesday 19 October 2022 at 5.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Grahl (Chair), Chappell (substituting for Councillor Collymore), Dixon, Gbajumo, and Hirani

1. Exclusion of the Press and Public

RESOLVED: that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the duration of the meeting, on the grounds that the attendance of representatives from the council's Children in Care council, necessitated the disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 2, Part 1 of Schedule 12A, as amended, of the Act, namely: Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.

2. Apologies for absence and clarification of alternate members

Apologies were received from:

- Councillor Collymore, who was substituted by Councillor Chappell.

3. Declarations of interests

None.

4. Deputations (if any)

None received.

5. Minutes of the previous meeting

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the last meeting, held on 20 July 2022, be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

6. Matters arising (if any)

None.

7. Update from Care In Action / Care Leavers in Action Representatives

T (Care in Action) informed the Committee that the Bright Spots Survey was now officially finished, and the Care in Action (CIA) group were preparing for the next survey launch and designing posters for publicity. The CIA group had also designed a 'dos and don'ts' leaflet for foster carers which was now being shared with the Fostering Support Team and Care Leavers in Action (CLIA) for comments and incorporated into foster carer training. The leaflet focused on day-to-day life, such as how foster carers could accommodate a child's needs including dietary requirements, religious beliefs and cultural celebrations. CIA had trialled some other venues to run their group sessions and were now back at the Civic Centre as it was felt to be a trustworthy, safe and comfortable space. Over the summer, CIA had arranged a members meet up with activities such as quizzes, prizes, catering, a bouncy castle, pool table, crafts, and a DJ, and had over 50 people attending. There had been many leaders in attendance and T felt it had been good to see them in a more relaxed space outside of their professional capacity. CIA also had a residential trip scheduled and T was excited for the people attending that and hoped they had a good experience. One of the main projects T had been working on was with the Brent Care Journeys Team, co-designing a crafts project to capture the memories

of looked after children. T shared the memory book she had created as part of the project, which had made her feel like important and valued. She would be feeding back the pros and cons of the project and hoped it would soon be available for other foster children to access.

J (CLIA) informed the Committee that CLIA had been involved in a play at the Kiln Theatre with Brent Care Journeys, following personal stories about people's experience in care and how they felt. He felt it had been a good experience to get voices heard. There had also been a display wall featuring poetry, model boxes and other work CLIA had been doing over the last few months. CLIA had already had their residential trip, doing activities such as archery, laser tag and making bracelets. Newer members of the group had attended, and everyone got along well so it had been a good bonding experience. J gave feedback that the beds at the residential had been too small. Two of the areas of focus that CLIA were now working on, following the Bright Spots Survey, were housing and issues relating to trust. J had co-facilitated training around this, with the objective for staff to understand that young people needed at least one trusted person in their life. Good collaboration and partnerships had formed while doing the piece of work and J hoped it would enhance his skill set.

C (CLIA) had been part of a commissioning panel for a targeted mental health and emotional wellbeing service for children and young people. C was also involved in the work on the Bright Spots Survey and was currently looking at how to get more responses from young people and the communications channels that could be used.

The Chair thanked those present for their contributions and invited members of the Committee to ask questions to the CIA / CLIA representatives. The following questions were raised:

Members were impressed with CIA / CLIA representatives presentations and felt that it had given them a good picture of what the group did. They had been particularly moved by the memory book T had shared with them.

The Committee asked how more looked after children and care leavers could be encouraged to take part in CIA / CLIA. C advised that one of the benefits he used to encourage his peers to join was that there was a free meal for participants during or at the end of sessions. He felt that his peers needed a reason to turn up and therefore this was something that might entice someone to join.

The Chair highlighted the feedback that there was a lack of things to do at weekends and asked what CIA / CLIA would want to be available from the Council to help with access to activities during weekends. C acknowledged that this would depend on the age bracket, but there were several leisure centres in Brent. He thought the Council could speak to managers and owners of these leisure centres, such as the Trampoline Centre in Brent Cross, Inflate Nation in Colindale, and the Ball Park in Vale Farm to arrange a day every month where children could go to do different specific things. There would only need to be 3-4 activities and then children would have something to do every weekend. Within the care leaver age bracket, help with gym memberships and securing library cards, as well as dealing with overdue library bills, may help. Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children and Young People, Brent Council) would speak to Wembley Stadium about arranging a regular supply of event tickets for looked after children and care leavers. Kelli Eboji (Head of LAC and Permanency, Brent Council) added that the department were currently working on communications to children in care and care leavers about free access to all Brent Leisure Centres. The department also had allowances for gym membership contributions. There were also good links with local theatres and support from the Kiln where children and young people could get involved.

The Committee asked about the outcomes of the Bright Spots Survey. C advised members that the figures showed that fewer children and young people between the ages of 8-18 in Brent reported having a pet compared to the general population, and 1 in 10 survey

respondents reported that they did not take part in any hobbies. Fewer young people reported regularly talking to their carers about the things that mattered to them, and in the ages of 4-7 fewer felt settled. The positives from the survey included the finding that all of the children who took part in the survey felt safe where they lived now, and 92% reported always feeling safe in their placements, which was noticeably higher than children in the general population.

In relation to the Bright Spots Survey, the Committee queried how 4-7 year olds had been surveyed. C advised that the questions had been phrased to them in a child friendly manner and then 'aged up' for inclusion in the survey.

Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children and Young People, Brent Council) advised that a report would be brought back to the Committee with all the details about the Bright Spots Survey, outcomes, and plans for the future.

The Committee thanked the representatives for the updates and **RESOLVED:**

That the updates by the representatives of Care in Action/Care Leavers in Action be noted.

8. Placement Stability Report 2021-22

Zafer Yilkan (Director for Integration and Improved Outcomes, Brent Council) introduced the report. He highlighted there had been a slight increase in placement moves since 2021, mostly due to covid-19 and the number of contacts coming through to children's services. In terms of the placement pattern, there were a large number of over 16s coming into the system under emergency arrangements and a large number of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASCs). Linking those issues with the national shortage of placements meant that Brent had a challenge in terms of placing children and young people. There were a number of local authorities bidding for one placement every day, and the competition caused the cost of placement to rise. The department were implementing a number of strategies to ensure placements remained stable, including placement stability meetings, care packages and wraparound support. In addition, there were challenges with recruiting foster carers. In relation to care leavers, the percentage of staying put arrangements in Brent was relatively high, which meant those children were in stable, long-term placements with their foster carers past the age of 18, but the placement was then not available for other children to move in to.

The Chair thanked Zafer for his introduction and invited contributions from the Committee, with the following points raised:

The Committee noted that Brent's fostering allowance was below the average compared to the rest of West London and asked if it could be changed. Anecdotal evidence suggested that other local authorities were paying around £100 more per week than Brent. Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children and Young People, Brent Council) advised that historically Brent had paid lower due to budget constraints. The allowance worked on a graded approach, aligned to the age of the child/ren being placed. He felt that the allowance was not the only reason people became foster carers, as the support available also attracted foster carers. Brent was looking at their arrangements currently, working with Ealing and Harrow around the possibility of combining services. If the department made the case to level up allowances to attract foster carers, this would have implications on the cost to the budget. It was highlighted that when people stopped foster caring their reasons for doing so were not usually related to allowances.

The Committee queried whether there was anything IFAs were doing better than Brent that the Council could learn from. Kelli Eboji (Head of LAC and Permanency, Brent Council) advised the Committee that IFA recruitment processes were not different from Brent's processes. In terms of retention, the department were looking at how they could further

support foster carers with a therapeutic offer, looking to see what additional benefits could be offered within the resources it had, because IFAs often had good out of hours support systems that could be accessed 24/7. Zafer Yilkan added that most local authorities were very clear about the fostering guidance and followed the same processes. Brent's placement sufficiency for bed capacity was relatively good and the department maximised that capacity where it could. The service foster carers received from Brent was very similar to other local authorities and IFAs and there was well established support for clinical supervision from the Anna Freud Centre to help sustain placements.

The Committee highlighted that the report showed that the data relating to older children referred to an increase in UASCs, and queried whether there were any unique challenges for that group of children. Nigel Chapman advised that the previous year there had been the challenge of the use of hotels in the local area, where the Home Office had initially placed people as adults who were then presenting as children at the Civic Centre. The initial challenge of that had been conducting age assessments quickly and fairly, and for the child there was the stress and uncertainty of being believed and what would happen to them. There was a dedicated team doing that work as quickly as possible. UASCs also had potential trauma from what they had experienced in their own country and their journey to the UK, so there was dedicated therapeutic support for UASCs. The number of UASCs fluctuated and had recently increased again as the government now required local authorities to take 0.1% of asylum seekers, compared to 0.07% previously, and this added pressure to the local placement challenge.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the report and activity undertaken to enhance placement stability for looked after children in Brent.

9. Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report Quarter 2 – July 2022 to September 2022

Kelli Eboji (Head of LAC and Permanency, Brent Council) introduced the report. she explained that there had been a change in the fostering team's structure and two fostering teams had now amalgamated into one team. She introduced Elena Muller as the new Service Manager for Fostering and Kinship. Work in the team was currently focused on how value could be added to fostering support, using internal resources where possible. For example, how the in-house trained social pedagogue could be used to support placements.

The Chair thanked Kelli for her introduction and invited contributions from the Committee, with the following points raised:

In relation to recruitment, the Committee queried how the Council promoted the need for local foster carers and whether the department were in touch with organisations such as Brent Hubs to help spread that message. Nigel Chapman (Corporate Director Children and Young People, Brent Council) informed the Committee that there was a Marketing Recruitment Officer within the team who was plugged in to the communities team and the different events that were occurring through the Council and through community organisations. Outreach work had been targeted at specific communities including Somali communities with some success. Much of the outreach work involved educating communities as to what fostering was and the department had done work with Brazilian communities and Brent faith forums to reach newer communities. The data on outreach work would be included for future reports.

Nigel Chapman committed to inviting a foster carer and kinship foster carer to the next meeting to talk about their fostering experience.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the report.

10. Brent Adoption Report – 6 monthly update – 1 April 2022 to 30 September 2022

Debbie Gabriel (Adopt London West) introduced the 6 monthly adoption update. She highlighted that the partnership in Brent felt very strong and mature, and the performance in Brent was strong. The two major indicators of performance were; the average length of time it took from the court granting a care order to the match with a family being identified; and the amount of time it took to move a child in with the family. The target length of time for matching following a care order was 121 days. The national average for matching was 125 days and the London average was 274, compared to Brent's average of 171 days. The target length of time for moving a child in with a family once matched was 426 days. The national average was 450 days and the London average was 476 days, compared to Brent's average of 328 days. Brent currently had 7 children placed, but it was highlighted that the courts continued to struggle with delays.

Work within the service currently was focused on promoting and developing permanence with adoption and social work colleagues. In addition, Adopt London West (ALW) were working to promote and enhance the take up of advice, support and advocacy from 'Kinship' for kinship carers, regardless of their legal order. ALW had the benefit of an in-house Clinical Psychologist to support foster carers, adopters and children through transitions and developmental trauma. There was also work being done for National Adoption Week which was occurring the week of the meeting, with the theme 'identity'. The campaign assets for that had been shared with Brent's Corporate Communications Team for social media activity.

The Chair thanked Debbie for the introduction and invited those present to make contributions, with the following points raised:

The Committee highlighted the small number of approvals for families from a Black or Mixed ethnicity community in the reporting period, and asked if there was any way to increase the number of approvals. Members highlighted the Black Community Action Plan (BCAP), which had BCAP Champions who ALW could link with to increase the number of approved Black and Mixed ethnicity adopter families. Debbie Gabriel agreed that it would be helpful to connect with someone working on the BCAP. She highlighted that the small number of approvals was likely due to the fact it had been a very quiet quarter for approvals. In relation to the 37 approved adopters, 47% were from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic background. Of the adopters waiting for approval, officers would return with the ethnic breakdown at a future meeting.

The Committee asked for the next report to detail the success rate for Special Guardianship Orders.

In relation to the Adoption Support Fund, members asked whether that could be accessed quickly. Debbie Gabriel advised the Committee that officers were under pressure in terms of processing those applications but there was no waiting list as officers prioritised processing applications. Colleagues in other London regions did have a backlog.

The Committee asked about the funding opportunities detailed in the report. they were advised that the bids were going in as part of the wider Adopt London Partnership as that attracted

more money and the resource could then be shared amongst participating boroughs. The funding would be allocated to an early permanence project and a project officer as well as training for councillors and wider staff networks. The bid for a Matching Co-ordinator had been agreed. ALW had submitted an expression of interest for multi-disciplinary teams to grow the psychology offer but had been turned down, so were now exploring other opportunities to fund that.

The Committee asked how the matching process worked. Debbie Gabriel advised members that the child was allocated a Family Finding Social Worker in addition to their Child Social Worker, who worked closely together to look at approved adopters in the Adopt London region to find a match. There was a secure national database where adopters could enter their profiles and look for children to match with that way. It was important that adopters felt a connection with a child and if there was any reason a match did not feel right then it could not proceed, so there was a process of ensuring there was good intelligence about all adopters and children waiting before making a match. The benefit of being able to use a pool of adopters from Adopt London South meant there were more options for matching and matching quicker.

Members recalled that Brent had previously had an in-house adoption panel and asked whether the move to a regional adoption agency had resulted in a loss of the personal intelligence and community feel that the in-house adoption service had. Kelli Eboji (Head of LAC and Permanency, Brent Council) agreed that she had been anxious about the move to a regional adoption model, but some of Brent's adoption workers had TUPE'd over to ALW meaning that intelligence had not been lost. She recalled that she had recently been involved in an introductory visit between a family and baby which had been very well co-ordinated and the family finder had done a very good job. She added that the progress in early permanence over the last 6 months and the growth in knowledge around options for children was being demonstrated.

The Committee asked about adoption breakdowns, for example if a transition was made too quickly and resulted in a breakdown further into the relationship. Debbie Gabriel acknowledged the concern and advised that ALW had now moved to a transitional model that slowed down the introduction between a family and child. If the introduction was done right, and that relationship was supported, the chances of the relationship continuing and enduring through childhood to adulthood were higher. Slowing down that transition process could affect performance indicators but was ultimately the right thing to do for the family, and as a result the number of relationship breakdowns was very small.

RESOLVED:

- i) To note the contents of the report.

11. **Any other urgent business**

None.

The meeting closed at 18:35 pm

Councillor Gwen Grahl
Chair

	<p align="center">Corporate Parenting Committee 1 February 2023</p>
	<p align="center">A Joint Report from London Borough of Brent and Barnardo's</p>
<p align="center">Brent Care Journeys Programme</p>	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local Government Act)	Open
No. of Appendices:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	<p>Kelli Eboji (Acting)Head of Service, Looked After Children and Permanency Children and Young People Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Brent 020 8937 4444</p> <p>Anna Willow Children's Services Manager Barnardo's Anna.willow@barnardos.org.uk 07885 478833</p>

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of activities undertaken by the Brent Care Journeys Programme since the last report (20th July 2021). The report also draws attention to key achievements in 2022 and areas for priority in the remaining years of the partnership (2023 – 25).

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is requested to note, review and comment on the content of this report. This is to ensure that the support provided to Brent's Looked After Children and Care Leavers through the strategic alliance with Barnardo's is delivering the desired impact and outcomes as set out in the partnership agreement.
- 2.2 The Committee is also requested to consider what further support could be provided to the partnership by elected members in order to achieve best outcomes for Brent's children and young people.
- 2.3 Additional to this report, quarterly partnership Boards are attended by senior managers from both agencies to provide strategic steer, support and challenge as required.

3.0 Background of Brent's Partnership with Barnardo's

- 3.1. In July 2018, Barnardo's approached Brent CYP for exploration of a collaboration under a project called 'Barnardo's Care Journeys Programme' (BCJ); to create systemic changes which address national inequalities for children in care and leaving care. It was proposed that this partnership of statutory and voluntary sector bodies could enjoy reciprocal learning and development whilst aiming to improve outcomes for children and young people.
- 3.2. In late 2019, the Council agreed to formally enter a collaboration agreement with Barnardo's to further promote participation and the voice of the children and young people particularly focusing on 19–21 year olds. The formal collaboration agreement was signed off in June 2020. The partnership is 100% funded by Barnardo's until 2025 with in-kind support provided by the local authority.
- 3.3. With collaboration from young people, Brent staff and partners, the programme began with an Inception phase (desk-based research) which was usefully followed up and compared by a local picture of discovery analysis. In partnership with young people, a decision was made that the first focus area for co-design and testing would be the experiences of 'late entrants' to care (young people who come into care age 16 and 17).
- 3.4. The outcome of the first phase of co-design with care leavers was the introduction of a Welcome Pack for all late entrants placed in Semi Independent Accommodation. The provision of a consistent, high-quality pack of essential items is now in Brent's Individual Purchasing Agreement with commissioned housing providers.

4.0 Care Journeys Programme so far

- 4.1 BCJ is a youth led programme which sets its sights on changing the system for looked after children to ensure that care experienced young people (CEYP) reach 'positive destinations'. In this context 'positive destinations' are about working beyond statutory definitions and actively listening to young people to identify their own goals. This, for example, could be to do with being a good parent, maintaining good physical and mental health or living independently.

- 4.2. BCJ prioritises (a) the empowerment of our least heard young people and (b) a relational basis for our work together, with a focus on qualitative outcomes. BCJ has engaged over 200 care experienced young people since June 2020. As well as creating important short term outcomes for this cohort, our aim is to work together to enable the right conditions for change for large numbers of CEYP in the longer term.
- 4.3 BCJ is externally evaluated by the Tavistock Institute of Human Relations. The most recent interim report celebrates the success of BCJ to date:

“Increasingly it appears that, due to the quality of their work with young people, the local authority and other partners see BCJ as a vehicle for gathering and bringing the voice of care experienced young people into professional and strategic spaces.”

“The partnership now offers a full spectrum of possible roles for care-experienced young people, ranging from activity participant, through to paid employee, with opportunities for young people to lead and deliver activities, disseminate project learning and outputs, and become involved in partnership and strategic processes.”¹

- 4.4 The report also confirms that the programme is ‘on track’ whilst heeding advice to consider multiple models of systems change:

“This is in keeping with what the research team would expect to see – isolated, iterative, interventions that address relationships, practice and structures and which, if successful, can be rolled out to other areas. The theory is that a combination of different approaches to improving the system will work together to create a bigger influence on the system overall, working incrementally until a potential tipping point is reached. How well these developments take hold will be followed over the next year.”

- 4.5. BCJ supports a core group of approximately 35 CEYP who define themselves as a ‘change movement’ and have been creatively engaged in a myriad of ways over the course of the past year. A few members have previously been involved with Brent’s Care in Action and Care Leavers in Action groups but, overwhelmingly, these young people are engaging in this voice and influence work for the first time. BCJ– our investments are relationships, commitment, empowerment, opportunity and capability. BCJ currently employs two Brent care leavers and has made conditional offers to three further ‘experts by experience’. Our belief is that this approach will empower a self-sustaining network of support for CEYP in Brent with potential to achieve legacy long beyond the partnership itself. BCJ upskills and develops the potential of these new colleagues so that they may go on to inspire and develop peer led networks which are engaging and helpful to Brent’s growing population of care experienced young people. Furthermore, in 2023 we have ambition for the way in which staff with lived expertise may be at the forefront of learning and development for professional staff in future.

1

5.0. Co-design Activity in 2022

- 5.1. Between January and September 2022, BCJ facilitated a second co-design phase. As referenced above, the first phase engaged care leavers. The second phase maintained its commitment to empowering the system's least powerful voices by convening social care staff (social workers, family support worker, personal advisors etc) together with young people, as united designers for change. There are some key characteristics to this collaboration, namely that 'expertise' is redefined to elevate lived experience, hierarchy is de-constructed so that power is shared, and learning (as opposed to success) is paramount. BCJ therefore share power with these voices because it is understood that only in partnership are we able to achieve the change that we want to see.
- 5.2. Nine staff (from CYPS and a local SIA provider) were supported by BCJ's Service Manager (Anna Willow) and Senior Service Designer (Rhiannon Creasey) to design with nine care experienced young people. Approximately thirty CEYP were involved in the research and testing stages. Barnardo's Visual Designer (Fabienne Thomas) was engaged in the creation of original visual designs as required.
- 5.3. The cohort self-organised into four smaller groups, developing 'How might we..' statements around the problem areas that their primary research had determined. The statements, final prototype descriptions and recommendations to the Board are displayed below. All recommendations have been accepted.

'How might we...' statement	Description of prototype (which was tested)	Recommendations to the Board (based on data collected from testing)
How might we reduce the rate of staff turn over at Brent Local Authority?	<p>Enhance staff retention (by targeting wellbeing and job satisfaction) by developing a pilot of activities between staff and YP, developing bonds.</p> <p>Every child in care should have social/relational time with their PA/social worker – every 3 months</p>	<p>Run a 6 week pilot</p> <p>Attribute across six social work teams (A – F), allocating low, medium and high budgets to teams in pairs.</p> <p>Communicate with teams</p> <p>Develop guidance on how staff can claim expenses so they can participate in the chosen activity.</p> <p>Monitor, evaluate and review.</p>
How might we create a greater feeling of family, care and love for young people in semi-	Provide a clear induction into care with resources which use:	Develop the prototype created as a tool for all Brent's semi-independent

<p>independent accommodation, especially UASC?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple, clear language that young people will understand, avoiding or explaining 'jargon' • Infographics to explain the structure of the multi-disciplinary team, their roles and responsibilities • Different language versions for people whose first language is not English • Modern tools that young people relate to – possibly digitally in a format that works on mobile phones or other devices; this also allows for the inclusion of biographies of professionals, short how-to videos, etc. 	<p>providers. Provide in a range of languages.</p> <p>Monitor and review implementation to ensure that SIA residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better understand multi-agency roles and responsibilities • Understand the purpose of each part of the process they are in, thus engaging them more effectively. <p>Provide second iteration as a tool for all providers at point of commissioning.</p> <p>Monitor, gather feedback and review.</p>
<p>How might we support young people and the networks around them to form connections which can sustain beyond care?</p>	<p>Support every looked after young person to form connections which can sustain beyond care through the provision of a creative memory journals/boxes.</p>	<p>Review and agree second iteration of contents of pack to be given to CiC.</p> <p>Ensure quality of products remains high in accordance with feedback during testing.</p> <p>NB Consider CYP with additional needs and how some packs may need to be individualised. Explore this in further testing.</p> <p>Create a simple information leaflet which explains the purpose of the box to each CYP. Make this available in different languages.</p>

		<p>Encourage practice which periodically draws upon the memory journals as a discussion point.</p> <p>Test the impact of Memory Journals as a way of CYP having a voice at Looked After reviews.</p> <p>Monitor, gather feedback and review.</p>
How might we better support parents' needs, in order to empower them to support the children's needs, and keep families together?	The introduction of new resources which have been created with young people during pre-birth assessments.	<p>Introduce these resources into the practice of social workers supporting pre-birth and early life, eg CP conference.</p> <p>Consider further targeted support for care leaver parents as a group with particular strengths and challenges (e.g. a specialist mentor, a buddy system, a support group).</p>

5.4 Implementation and monitoring of this co-design phase will be managed at quarterly Board meetings, as well as integration into the Voice and Influence sub-group of the Local Partnership meeting. Monitoring will focus on further testing, refining and learning about systemic change.

6.0 Youth led communications and campaigns in 2022

6.1 The Live Exhibition “*Dear Social Services*” (performed at Kiln Theatre in October) was the work of a newly created young company of care experienced young people. They came together to experiment with a range of expressive art forms, to find meaningful ways to speak to the people around them. Opportunities included poetry (a copy of which all we hope all CPC members have received), film², monologue, movement³, sound and visual art. The programme was open to all care experienced young people accommodated in the borough and access was via a couple of introductory taster sessions.

² https://www.dropbox.com/sh/gblsw7f1naf1sx7/AADklk2z_g4qKIQyPDVj1aUza?dl=0

³ [\(2\) Post | Feed | LinkedIn](#)

The purpose of this event was to think about communities in the borough as strong places of hope and support. Our young people told us that they feel “second rate” and like they are “hiding in plain sight”, so this was their opportunity to begin an important conversation in their borough. They co-designed original pieces of art and directed professional artists to perform their work. Aspects of this performance were repeated at Brent’s CYPS conference in December 2022, so we estimate that, in total, the campaign has reached approximately 400 corporate parents.

- 6.2 In addition to campaign work, BCJ’s young people have taken strides in terms of being able to communicate our purpose, mission and vision through the creation of a short promotional film and by publishing some blogs which express their insights. Both the film and blogs can be found on our website www.weshinebright.co.uk. We also share regular communications on Instagram (#carejourneyswsbt).

7.0 Progress regarding youth led networks and peer to peer support

- 7.1 At the beginning of 2022, five Brent care leavers were offered bespoke ‘design thinking’ group training and 1:1 coaching with specialist, external agency Deepr (www.deepr.cc). From this approach to investing in the capability of ‘experts by experience’ we have seen the BCJ Power Groups emerge. Our Power Groups are spaces for CEYP, designed and facilitated by CEYP. Over the course of 2022 we have tested groups which support physical fitness, support beyond the age of 25, enjoyment of reading, mental wellbeing through creativity and parenthood as a care leaver; the last two of which are currently active (‘Therapart’ and ‘Parent Power’).
- 7.2 In 2023 we hope to design and test a further Power Group (‘Brothers’) on the basis that our cohort of unaccompanied boys is growing in number and influence. BCJ now includes a group of young men who are forging networks and connections from a place of isolation, amongst whom we often witness an expression of brotherhood and solidarity.
- 7.3 The BCJ Movement (the young people at the core of our outreach and activity) has resiliently survived challenges presented by the pandemic and associated resource challenges. As we look ahead to 2023, we hope to embed its function and potential by facilitating social, networking and support opportunities twice a month. Additionally, we are working with Eat Club for terms one and two ([We are Eat Club - Improving young Londoners food futures \(eat-club.org\)](http://www.eat-club.org)) to enable independence through education regarding nutrition and cookery.

8.0 Evaluation and Impact

- 8.1 BCJ is externally evaluated by the Tavistock Institute for Human Relations (TIHR).
- 8.2 In 2023, the TIHR will produce ‘learning digests’ to support our focus on learning as opposed to preconceived outcomes. January and February 2023 offer opportunities for 1:1 research interviews for young people and focus groups for professional collaborators.

9.0. Future areas for Development and Priorities for 2023

- 9.1 As the project is approaching the final two years of partnership, the priorities are determined by what has been learnt so far in relation to impact and outcomes for Brent's Looked After Children and Care Leavers as well as identifying future learning opportunities.
- 9.2 Although not an exhaustive list of planned operational activity, core projects in the year ahead are summarised as:

Project	Goal
1. The Power Groups	<p>To continue to gather evidence regarding the benefits of youth led service design and delivery, which will inform future direction (focus and investment) for Brent LA and Barnardo's UK in future.</p> <p>Significant employment opportunities for CEYP (as APWs) in whom we invest and support increased capability so that, in turn, they might enable the lives of their peers.</p>
2. The BCJ Movement	<p>An active and successful BCJ Movement offering social connection, networking and capacity building opportunities for a core group of CEYP; a collective of CEYP who grow in momentum to create a change for other CEYP in Brent; a space which challenges loneliness and isolation through the development of youth led pilots and groups for others to attend.</p> <p>A Movement which increases in strength and sustainability to challenge the passive nature of common participatory practice; a forum which meets reliably and develops as a space with CEYP can depend upon; a network which develops informal partnerships with other local organisations to deliver common purpose with consolidated resource.</p>
3. Continuous and Reciprocal Learning	<p>A partnership where deconstructed approaches to power elicit insightful and incisive learning; an approach to learning which is both formal and informal, and where learning creates demonstrable attitudinal shifts to professional structures, culture and practice. A well-</p>

	<p>resourced way of working whereby professional expertise sits alongside lived expertise to produce excellent outcomes.</p> <p>Significant employment opportunities for CEYP (as APWs) in whom we invest and support increased capability, whilst enabling them to design and produce learning for professionals who interact within the system for CEYP.</p>
4. Communication: Messaging and advocacy	<p>Delivery of communications for a range of key audiences which are relevant, effective and accessible; communications which share the mission, vision, ambition and systemic impact of BCJ. Communications which are creative and operate according to models which enable youth voice with dignity and strength.</p> <p>Messaging which, in particular, considers CEYP as a key audience. A team where skilled understanding of advocacy is broad – whereby we are able to advocate at large for CEYP, but also with and for CEYP on an individual basis.</p>
5. The legacy of codesign and coproduction	<p>Oversight, monitoring and accountability for the two codesign phases (21 and 22); integrating into Brent’s V&I Partnership structure to ensure that youth led change is delivered and that opportunity for coproduction is instilled.</p>

Report sign-off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director Children and Young People

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 Brent	Corporate Parenting Committee 1 February 2023
	Report from the Strategic Director of Children and Young People
Brent Fostering Service Quarterly Monitoring Report Quarter 3: 1 October 2022 to 31 December 2022	

Wards Affected:	All
Key or Non-Key Decision:	N/A
Open or Part/Fully Exempt: (If exempt, please highlight relevant paragraph of Part 1, Schedule 12A of 1972 Local	Open
No. of Appendices:	N/A
Background Papers:	N/A
Contact Officer(s): (Name, Title, Contact Details)	<p>Elena Muller Service Manager, Looked After Children and Permanency elena.muller@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Kelli Eboji Acting Head of Service for Looked After Children and Permanency Kelli.eboji@brent.gov.uk</p> <p>Zafer Yilkan, Interim Director, Integration and Improved Outcomes Zafer.Yilkan@brent.gov.uk</p>

1.0 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information to the Council's Corporate Parenting Committee about the general management of the in-house fostering

service and its ambition to achieve good outcomes for Looked After Children by Brent Council. This is in accordance with standard 25.7 of the Fostering National Minimum Standards (2011).

- 1.2 This report details the quarter 3 activity of Brent's fostering service from the 1st of October 2022 to the 31st of December 2022.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 The Corporate Parenting Committee is requested to review and comment on the contents of this report. This is to provide evidence that the management of the fostering service is being monitored, reviewed and challenged in order to promote good outcomes for Brent Looked After Children.

3.0 Background

3.1 Service Priorities

3.1.1 The in-house fostering function is positioned within the LAC and Permanency Service (LACPS) of the Children and Young People's Department. The service is focusing on the following priority areas in 2022/23:

- To have a greater focus on recruitment, assessment and approval of new carers with the view to achieve a net gain of 5 new carers as set out in the Marketing and Recruitment Strategy 2022-23 by the end of the financial year
- To enhance the support offer to Brent's foster carers and kinship carers, by providing therapeutic services to support placement stability
- To enhance the training and development program for carers to include a permanent, ongoing mix of virtual and direct delivery of courses and seminars
- To continue improving the stability of children by providing more local and in-house placement options, minimising change of social workers and placements
- To develop collaborative partnerships with neighbouring authorities to recruit and retain more foster carers.
- To recruit, train and retain foster carers that offer emergency placements to children and young people who come into care in unplanned circumstances

3.2 Staffing Arrangements

3.2.1 The Fostering Support and Assessment Team consists of 10 supervising social workers, one Team Manager, one Interim Deputy Team Manager and one Marketing and Recruitment Officer (MRO) post.

3.2.2 The Kinship Care Team consists of 8 social workers, one Team Manager and one Practice Consultant Social Worker.

3.2.3 The workload in the teams continues to be at manageable levels as new kinship and foster carers are assessed, approved, and allocated to supervising social workers to ensure ongoing support.

4.0 Placement Activity

4.1 The total number of looked after children as at 31st Dec- 2022 was 323, which is a decrease by 11 children from Q2 of 2022-2023 and an increase of 11 children from the same period in 2021 (312 children)

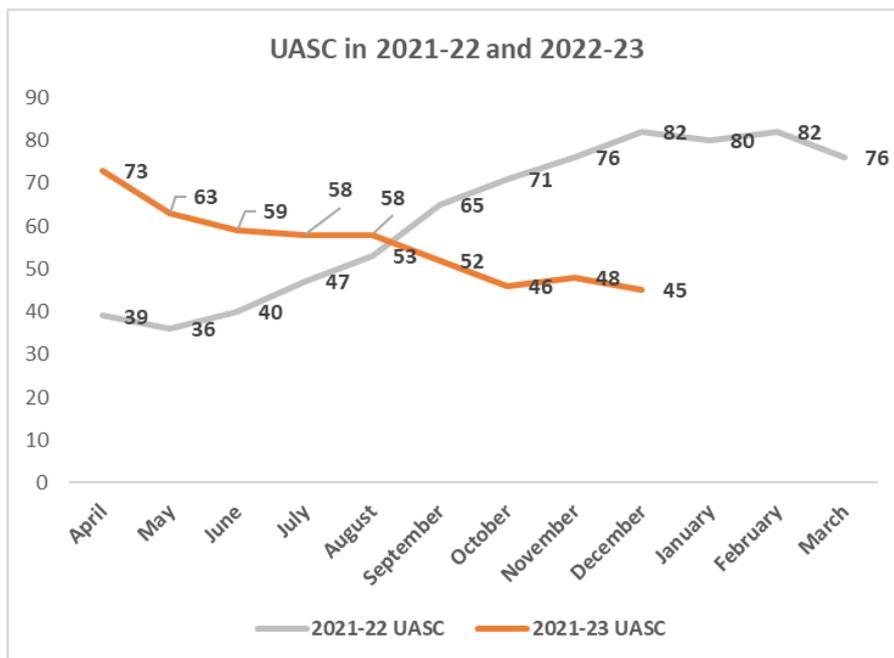
4.2 The corporate performance targets for 2022/2023 are as below:

- Percentage of looked after children placed with in-house (Brent) foster carers – annual target 25% - the actual percentage as of 31st Dec- 2022 was 18.6% (60 children), a decrease by 0.3% the previous quarter Q2

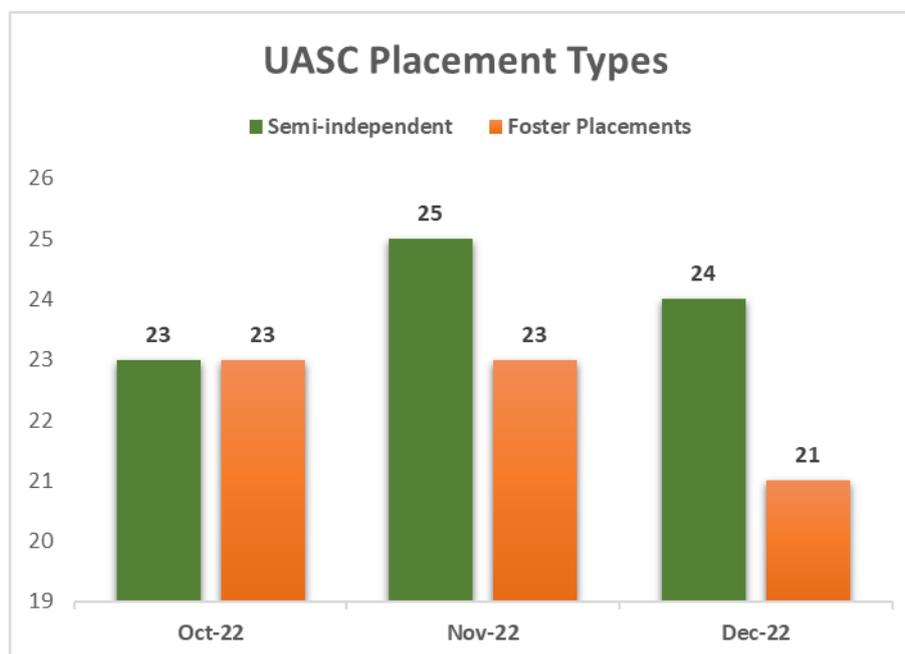
of 2022/2023, 18.9% (63 children).

- Percentage of looked after children placed with a relative or family friend – annual target 20% - the actual percentage as of 31st Dec- 2022 was 15.8% (51 children), similar to Q2 of 2022/2023 (15.6%, 52 children)
- Percentage of looked after children placed with independent fostering agencies – annual target 25% - the actual percentage as of 31st Dec- 2022 was 30.7% (99 children); an increase of 2% from Q2 of 2022/2023 (28.7%, 96 children)
- Percentage of looked after children overall within foster placements – annual target 70% - the actual percentage as of 31st Dec- 2022 was 65% (210 children), similar to Q2 of 2022/2023 which was 64.7% (216 children). This is primarily related to older children and young people becoming newly looked after and the increase in the number of 16 and 17-year-old UASC who were placed in semi-independent accommodation.
- There were 61 looked after children (16 and 17 years old) in semi-independent accommodation (residential accommodation not subject to Children’s Home Regulations) as at 31st Dec- 2022, which represents 18.9% of all looked after children. This is a decrease of 1.5% from the end of Q2, 2022/2023 (20.4%, 68 children).

4.3 As of 31st Dec- 2022, there were 45 Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) under the age of 18 years, a decrease of 7 UASC (52 UASC in Q2 2022-23). The decrease is attributable to the number of UASC turning 18 and those dispersed into the National Transfer Scheme.



- 4.4 The number of UASC placed in semi-independent accommodation is 24, fewer than at the end of Q2, 2022-23 (27 UASC), none in residential children's home and 21 UASC placed in foster placements, 4 UASC fewer than Q2 (25 UASC).



5 Recruitment and Assessment of new foster carers

- 5.1 The recruitment of new foster carers takes place both online and offline, relying on paid and organic campaigns. In relation to online recruitment, the service has run an intense promotional activity on Facebook and Google. In regard to the recruitment activity which takes place offline, there has been a fostering advert in the Brent Magazine and the MRO completed work on a TV campaign. The monthly fostering information evenings have taken place online via Zoom, which enabled greater attendance and participation. The attendees reported that they found online meetings more convenient and saves them travelling time. In November 2022, the service held a morning information event, which did not turn out to be as successful as the virtual evening ones.
- 5.2 The Google Search and Facebook campaigns have generated a total of 113 users attending to the campaign landing page where they can find out more information about fostering for Brent Council. Out of the 113, 34 started to complete the Contact Form, however only 4 eventually submitted a completed enquiry. All fully completed enquiries were followed up and spoken to by the duty social worker.
- 5.3 On 20 December 2022, the service launched its first TV advert since 2017, through Sky Media. Results of the TV campaign are expected in the next reporting period. The feedback received so far shows that the campaign is reaching the intended primary target group which is Brent women aged 35-55 years old.

- 5.4 In the reporting period, the fostering team recorded 26 information evening sign ups and 13 enquiries. Of these: 2 were recommended for initial visit and the remaining 11 were sadly unsuccessful for various reasons such as unsuitable accommodation, availability, interest in fostering with private agencies, needing more time to decide, or are interested in adoption only. The enquirers who are interested in fostering, but have not decided, will be contacted by the service and encouraged to apply.
- 5.5 Of the 8 assessments reported in the last quarter, 3 applicants were approved by the fostering panel as foster carers in November and December 2022. 5 are in stage 2, of which 2 are on hold for personal reasons. During this reporting period, there were:
- 2 Initial visits in progress
 - No assessment in stage 1
 - 5 assessments in stage 2
- 5.6 Brent Kinship Care service supports Localities and Care Planning Teams to identify and assess friends and family members for children who are unable to live with their birth parents. Brent is committed to keeping children in their local community and living with people familiar to them whenever it is possible and safe to do so. In Q3, 6 Connected Person carers were presented to the Fostering Panel to be approved as Short Term foster carers for named children. The Kinship Care team also completed 12 Special Guardianship Assessments which were presented to Court to support Special Guardianship Order applications in this period.

6 Fostering Panel

- 6.1 The LACPS has a Fostering Panel constituted in accordance with Regulation 23 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011. The service maintains a diverse and highly experienced central list of panel members that includes an elected member. The panel chair and vice chair are independent people with professional and personal experience of fostering and panel members include those with personal experience of the fostering system, including care experienced panel members and one independent panel member who was brought up in a kinship placement. Current demand requires three panels to be held every two months.
- 6.2 The functions of the fostering panel are to consider:
- Each application and to recommend whether a person is suitable to be a foster carer or Connected Person(s) (Family and Friends foster carer) and the terms of their approval;
 - The first annual review of each approved carer and any other review as requested by the service, including those of a Standards of Care issue and those exploring any allegations made;
 - The termination of approval or change of terms of approval of a foster carer; and
 - The long-term fostering matches of all children below the age of 12.

- 6.3 During this period, 6 panels were held with 21 cases presented of which:
- 6 were recommended for approval as short term connected persons
 - 5 were recommended for approval as short term carers
 - 3 carers were re-approved as part of their 3 yearly annual review
 - 2 carers were re-approved as part of their 1st annual review
 - 2 carers were re-approved as long term carers
 - 2 carers were re-approved with change of approval numbers
 - 6 carers fostering approval/status were terminated

All the recommendations made by the panel were ratified by the Agency Decision Maker (ADM).

7.0 Training and Support for Foster Carers:

- 7.1 The CYP Learning and Development Team within the Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Service continues to offer learning opportunities and training for new and experienced foster carers and special guardians using a mix of delivery methods comprising of face-to-face, online virtual and E-Learning. There is evidence of steady increase in the carers take up of the training offer. Feedback is sought after each training and carers overwhelmingly continue to express a preference for online training. The carers attended face to face First Aid training in the last quarter and a further two face-to-face sessions have been organized in the next quarter. Moving forward, the plan is to continue towards more balanced hybrid training sessions from April 2023, by progressively increasing the number of face-to-face sessions, towards a target of 50/ 50 split for all facilitated training being either face-to-face, or online virtual sessions.
- 7.2 In the last quarter in addition to the First Aid training, the service facilitated 8 learning sessions for carers. These included Safeguarding and Safer Caring; Understanding Adolescent Exploitation; Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR); Men in Foster Care, Oral Health of children in care, and Identifying and Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties. The carers provided feedback on the training and some of the feedback as follows:-

"I do miss training taking place face to face as you get to share experiences with other carers. It also a good way of getting to know other carers. With saying that online takes away the need to leave home making it sometimes easy if you have a busy schedule."

"It helped to remind me that even if it's a small niggle of uncertainty still record and log and use S.S.W as sounding board also doctor therapist teachers friends and most importantly communication with young person". (Learning from Child Safeguarding Practice Review (CSPR feedback))

"Having a child in placement with speech and language support it reminded me how important it is to be aware of the language they are using . It encourages me to be aware of my communication with her and the benefits that she can gain from different forms of communication, playing games, speaking with age appropriate language and active listening". (Identifying and Supporting Children with Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties feedback)

- 7.3 The service continues to provide all carers access to learning opportunities at any time of the day, evenings and weekends, through access to an E-Learning online courses package. The E-Learning courses cover a wide range of topics including: Core Knowledge and Values, Safeguarding and Child Protection Skills, Therapeutic Care, Supporting Adolescence, Working with Looked after Children (Fostering, Residential Care and Adoption), Understanding Trauma and Promoting Positive Behaviour, Working in Health and Social Care, Working with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs, and Children Safe Online. There has been a steady increase in the carers engagement with this method of learning. In this current quarter, 45 E-Learning courses were completed; this is an 87.5% increase from end of Q2 of 2022/2023. Compared to 55.2% the same Q3 period in 2021/2022.
- 7.4 In addition to the Brent Fostering Training calendar 2022-23, carers are also able to access training via the Brent Safeguarding Partnership multi-agency learning and development catalogue, with some carers consistently utilising this resource.

8.0 Support from Supervising Social Workers (SSW)

- 8.1 One of the main priorities continues to be the retention of foster carers. We know from the feedback received during the annual reviews and Fostering Panel that our carers value the support they receive, and this continues to be the primary reason why carers remain committed to Brent.
- 8.2 To keep foster carers engaged and informed, the fostering service provides a monthly newsletter and facilitates foster carer support groups. The carers find the support group helpful and informative.
- 8.3 The monthly foster carer support group continues to be facilitated virtually as foster carers have expressed that it is their preferred option.
- 8.4 The month of October 2022 was 'Sons and Daughters of Foster carers' event. This is a one-month long event taking place every year in October. Initiated by The Fostering Network, it has become very popular as it shines a light on the unsung heroes of fostering - the birth children. Brent Fostering joined the celebrations with a special message from the Head of Service, certificates of appreciation and gift vouchers for all birth children under 18 years of age.
- 8.5 In October 2022, the service marked Kinship Care Awareness Week. Brent Kinship Fostering celebrated the achievements of its kinship carers during different events where kinship carers could learn more about their role as well as how to access support. The Corporate Director, CYP, joined the campaign and helped raise awareness through an interview with one of our kinship carers focusing on kinship in Brent.

9.0 Monitoring – reviews, allegations, complaints:

- 9.1 During this quarter, there were no complaints or allegations made by or against any Brent foster carers.
- 9.2 There have been 20 annual reviews of foster carers in this reporting period.

10.0 Service Development

10.1 Website Development

10.1.1 The fostering website is fully optimised to support recruitment. For the digital marketing campaign, there is a dedicated landing page that has been optimised for conversions. This means that users clicking through from the Facebook and Google ads can easily contact the service or submit their expression of interest. For those who are not ready to foster, there is a button which allows them to subscribe to the fostering newsletter - thus keeping all prospective applicants engaged.

10.2 West London Fostering Collaboration Project

10.2.1 The CPC has regularly been updated about the progress of this piece of work. The work continued until March 2022 and, due to the end of year budget setting period affecting other local authorities involved and local elections taking place, the work has now been put on hold until the end of the financial year.

10.2.2 Brent will continue to champion a joint working approach to recruiting, preparing and assessing foster carers with neighbouring Local Authorities.

10.2.3 Over the next few months, the service is working with Adopt London West and volunteers to plan a series of events to engage the Brent kinship community and involve kinship carers and their children in decision-making processes, policy development and service provision by promoting open dialogue between those experts by experience and professionals delivering services and support.

10.3 Enhanced Support and Resources for Brent Carers

10.3.1 One of our main priorities has continued to be the enhancement of the support offer to Brent's foster carers and kinship carers, by including a therapeutic element to support placement stability.

10.3.2 The Anna Freud National Centre for Children and Families via our Brent WEST service has been providing a targeted mental health and emotional wellbeing service for vulnerable children and young people in Brent as well as delivering consultations and indirect intervention programs supporting foster carers and kinship carers such as Reflective Support Groups. These groups are open to all of our carers, and they provide an opportunity to meet with a mental health professional, reflect on the care they provide, prevent placement breakdowns, improve the relationship with their looked after children, upskill the carers and

reduce the number of additional professionals in the life of our Looked After Children.

10.3.3 The task and finish group set up in September 2022 has been looking at developing an in-house specialist support service aimed at strengthening placement stability, training and supporting carers who would like to become specialist and therapeutic carers. This task and finish group will continue to meet monthly over the next few months and regular updates will be provided.

Report sign off:

Nigel Chapman

Corporate Director Children and Young People

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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RESPONDING TO THE HEALTH NEEDS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN BRENT 13TH JANUARY 2023

Julia Blankson- Named Nurse for Looked After Children- Brent
Ileen Ashitey- Interim Designated Nurse for Looked After Children -ICB

The CCG transitioned to the new Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the Integrated Care Systems (ICS), on the 1st of July 2022.

This includes the boroughs of: Brent, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster

This model will facilitate joined up working between organisations, to ensure the consistency of safeguarding and LAC work.

The development of a single draft service specification for LAC services across NWL ICB.

The implementation of a NWL set of KPIs across the eight 8 boroughs .

THE TEAM IN LAC HEALTH

Designated Nurse- Interim in place 0.6 WTE ICB

Designated Doctor-To be appointed ICB

Named Doctor- Recruitment in progress

Paediatric Consultants (X2) for LAC, EHCP, CDC and Safeguarding.

Medical Advisor for Adoption and Fostering – Temporary bank work till permanent recruitment is in place.

Named Nurse – 1 WTE in position

Specialist LAC Nurses- 2 WTE in position and recruitment in progress for an additional 1 WTE.

LAC administrators- 2 WTE - 1 on long term sick leave

Specialist Mental Health LAC Nurse, employed by CNWL Trust to support OOB placements, who works closely with LAC health provider team and social care.

STATUTORY DUTIES

Initial health assessments (IHA) and care plans undertaken face to face.

Review health assessments (RHA) and care plans: undertaken face to face or virtual or telephone. Under 5's seen 6 monthly, 5-18 years seen annually and care leavers summaries provided.

Infectious disease screening continue to be completed for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

Infection control measures and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used as indicated, once Covid 19 regulations were relaxed.

Adoption for children and medical advice for adult health fostering .

PARTNERSHIP WORK

The LAC Health Team contribute towards integrated working through diverse meetings and panels. Meetings are held virtually but moving towards face-to-face.

Combined Health Sub-group/Joint Health & Social Care LAC Quality Assurance Group meetings- bimonthly. Terms of reference currently under review.

Health and social care LAC meetings-monthly.

Local Partnership Meetings- bimonthly.

Strategy and professional meetings.

Tri-partite panels- Named Nurse to review access to the meeting.

Panels – Entry to Care Panel, Exploitation and Violence and Vulnerability Panels EVVP (incorporating sexual exploitation and missing children) and Residential Panels.

CARE LEAVERS

Health resource booklet

This continues to be distributed by Social Care alongside the final care leavers summary health assessment reports completed by the LAC Nurses.

Health Assessment Reports and Pathway

The care leavers summary health assessments, reports and pathway is currently under review.

Audit

A number of audits are planned for 2023, eg:
Implementation of the health care plan recommendations for LAC and hearing the voice of care leavers

UASC

Health Assessment Reports and Pathway

The UASC health assessments, reports and pathway is currently under review.

Audit

A number of audits are planned for 2023, eg: UASC data including their health needs and hearing the voice of UASC.

WHAT IS WORKING WELL

Ongoing communication between LAC social care and LAC health.

Ongoing notifications of LAC changes from social care to health.

Health has distributed an updated IHA and RHA including adoption and fostering request process pathways for both health and social care to work from.

Health continue to provide training, email reminders to social care.

Significant improvements in the number of late, rejected and no BAAFs from social care (from approx. 70% high concern to 10 % concern).

Significant improvements in the number of appointments attended for assessments to be undertaken per month (currently ranging between 83-100%) due to improved timely BAAFs received and rebooking of appointments from non-attendances within the week.

CHALLENGES

Review of the support services required for the emotional and mental wellbeing of LAC.

Waiting times for CAMHs affecting all partners working with LAC

Continuous work with social care on the receipt of age-appropriate IHA and RHA CoramBAAF forms in a timely and manner and for this to be maintained.

To maintain full complement of the LAC health team in order to manage the impact of the increased demands of the LAC service.

Out of borough LAC (outside of the M25) – IHA and RHA continue to be delayed due to issues beyond our control, eg: capacity issues.

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IMPROVEMENTS- HEALTHY SMILES: COMMUNITY DENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

Initially a pilot referral mechanism for access to dental care for LAC who cannot be treated in local dental services. The service is now extended for an unknown period of time at this stage.

Referral criteria for healthy smiles service:

Uncooperative child, severe anxiety, complex medical history, UASC, physical or learning disability and behavioural needs.

Areas covered:

5 geographical areas by providers from Whittington, Kent, CLCH, Bromley and Kings services.

Information has been disseminated to Social Care and foster carers.

To date, the service has had a favourable outcome for LAC in addressing their dental health needs, especially those with complex needs and difficulty with obtaining a dentist.

LAC health team will be obtaining the data from the Healthy Smiles service and report at a later date.