

Corporate Parent Committee

Thursday 19th October 2017 at 7:00pm

Horizons Centre, Hanwell

PRESENT: Councillors Bell (Chair), Aslam, Millican, and Rai.

ALSO PRESENT: Marcella Phelan (Assistant Director, Planning, Commissioning and Partnerships), Carol Yates (Operations Manager, Leaving Care and Looked After Children), Carolyn Fair (Director, Children and Families), Debbie Gabriel (Head of Childrens Placements and Support), Bridie McDonagh (Virtual School Head Teacher), Gary Odle (Project Manager, Horizons Centre), Shelia Lock (Ealing Safeguarding Children Board and Ealing Safeguarding Adults Board Independent Chair), Janine Jenkinson (Democratic Services Officer) and Young Persons Representatives.

**Please note attendance is based on those that have signed the attendance sheet.

1. Apologies for Absence

An apology for absence had been received in advance of the meeting from Judith Finlay (Executive Director, Children, Adults and Public Health).

2. Urgent Matters

There were none.

3. Matters to be Considered in Private

There were none.

4. Declarations of Interest

There were none.

5. Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 July 2017

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 July 2017 be agreed as a true and correct record.

6. Update from Junior Council (Verbal Update)

K, a Young People Representative, provided an update on the summer activities held. K explained that the residential trip had been a great opportunity to take part in activities; including bush craft and jet-skiing and it had been enjoyable getting everyone together.

Bridie McDonagh (Head Teacher, Ealing Virtual School) explained that there were currently three boys and two girls involved in the Council. The first session held had considered what the Council would do in the forthcoming year. There had been some discussion regarding letter box parcels and consideration as to how children used these. It was suggested that the

Council could discuss education and how A Level and university students could be supported.

7. Update from Corporate Kids Club (Verbal Update)

The Committee was informed that the Kids Club had been researching information to produce a newsletter. The first issue would focus on health, and provide information about emotional health, including tips to overcome stress positively. A copy of the newsletter would be circulated at the next Committee meeting.

A and F, Young People Representatives, told the Committee they had been undertaking some research in relation to the issue of Council Tax and care leavers, including the range of schemes operated by other local authorities. A and F explained the financial difficulties faced by care leavers as they transitioned into adulthood, and moved to independent living. It was noted that in Scotland care leavers were exempt from paying Council Tax until they were 25. Members were informed of the difficulties care leavers faced to raise a deposit to rent their first property.

Marcella Phelan (Assistant Director, Planning, Commissioning and Partnerships) explained that the government had undertaken a consultation on proposals to extend the right of young people leaving care to request help and financial assistance from a local authority up to the age of 25. The Corporate Kids Club would be submitting comments on the consultation. Further information would be reported at the next Committee meeting.

The Committee thanked A and F for their update.

8. Horizons Summer Report 2017

The Summer 2017 programme had offered a wide range of activities for Ealing Looked After Children and Care Leavers, Young People at Risk, Foster Carers and the siblings and friends of the young people. The Summer programme had been run over a four week period from 1- 24 August and for two days a week the programme included: puppet workshops, a Kew Gardens visit, a two night residential, and a foster family trip to Brighton beach.

R, T and N, Young People Representatives, explained to the Committee the activities they had been involved with and how much they had enjoyed taking part.

RESOLVED: That the Committee note the wide range of informative, exciting activities provided for Looked After Children through Horizons during Summer 2017.

9. My Education Mentors Project Update (Verbal Update)

L, a Young People Representatives and mentor, introduced this item. L explained that the project model had recently been changed. The new model

aimed to be more flexible and to reach more young people. The mentoring sessions had gone from being weekly to monthly sessions. One to one sessions were available, and an anonymous questions box had been set up to enable children to submit questions. L explained that mentors went through a four week training period, in advance of becoming a mentor. During the training mentors explored what the role of mentor entailed, potential questions that could be asked, and issues relating to safeguarding. In reply to a question about how the project reached young people that lived out of borough, L explained that live web sessions were held, Skype could be used and young people were able to text questions to mentors. In relation to publicity, L explained that flyers were circulated and foster carers were told about the project.

Bridie McDonagh advised the Committee that the project would be reviewed as it developed.

The Committee thanked L for the update.

The Young People Representatives and Shelia Lock left at this point in the meeting.

10. Report on the Education of Looked After Children

Bridie McDonagh introduced the report, and provided an analysis of the educational achievement of Ealing's Looked After Children and care leavers for the academic year 2016-17.

In Year 2, at the end of Key Stage 1 there were six children. Three of the six children attended schools in Ealing, and of those, two out of three children had reached an expected level for their age in Reading, Writing and Maths. The three other children had achieved expected in Reading, but below expected in Maths and Writing. The achievements were as expected and there were no concerns raised.

Children in Key Stage 2 had performed better than expected. 14 of the 20 children in the cohort had been entered for their SATs, compared to 83% last year. Of the 14 children entered for their SATs, 11 children had been expected to achieve a national average score of 100 in their reading tasks. However, 13 children had actually achieved the national average score of 100 or above, and 4 of the children achieved a reading score of over 110, which was a really good achievement. The Committee was advised that a combination of targeted support from the virtual school, working alongside schools and carers had contributed to the successful outcome.

At the end of the academic year 2016-17, there were 32 Key Stage 4 students. Students had achieved in a variety of GCSE subjects. There were a significant number of unaccompanied minors/asylum seekers, 7 in total in this cohort.

Bridie McDonagh, explained that last year the virtual school intervention strategy had highlighted the need to further target support to ensure all students, including those living out of the borough had the most appropriate intervention package, irrespective of where in the country they lived. Through setting aspirational targets, advising and consulting with social workers and the virtual school teacher attending as many Personal Education Plans as possible, this had proved to be successful. The continuation of the virtual school's rigorous tracking of progress data along with working closely with schools had proved extremely successful.

In 2017, there had been a total of 9 students who graduated from University, 7 with first degrees and two who had graduated on Post Graduate Courses. The number of graduates in 2017 was consistent in numbers compared to graduates from 2016.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

11. Social Services Complaints Report on Looked After Children – July to September 2017

Marcella Phelan (Assistant Director Children and Families) introduced the report, which provided information regarding complaints for Looked After Children for the period 1 July – 30 September 2017. It was noted that Appendix 1 of the report had not been included in the agenda.

During the period there had been two Stage 1 complaints, both of which had not been upheld. Both complaints received had been responded to within the required timescales. There were no complaints that had proceeded to Stage 2 Complaint or Stage 3 Complaint Review during the reporting period.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

12. Management Information Summary – Children Looked After

Carolyn Fair (Director, Children and Families) introduced the report and provided a brief analysis on the April 2017 to August 2017 performance for Children Looked After and care leavers. As at 31 August, there were 338 children and young people looked after by Ealing, compared with 361 at the same time last year. This represented one of the lowest number of children looked after in 10 years.

At the end of August 2017, there were 251 children and young people subject of a Child Protection (CP) plan. CP population was around 226 at the beginning of the financial year coming down to 200 at the end of June. The number had increased steadily since, rising to the current level in August. The recent increase was attributed to large number of registrations with 42 new plans in the month of August; the highest monthly registrations for at least two years. New registrations had consisted of large sibling groups. The CP population remained one of the lowest in five years.

Councillor Rai asked if it was possible to find out the level of traffic on the foster carers page on the Council's website. Carolyn Fair agreed to report this information the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

13. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting was scheduled for Thursday 14 December 2017.

Chair..... (Councillor Julian Bell)

The meeting ended at 8:00 p m.