

Corporate Parent Committee

Thursday 8th December 2016 at 7:00pm

Horizons Centre, Hanwell

PRESENT: Councillors Bell (Chair), Aslam, Dhimi, Gulaid, Midha, Millican, Rai, Sharma

ALSO PRESENT: Judith Finlay (Executive Director, Children, Adults and Public Health), Bridie McDonagh (Head of Behaviour Strategy and Inclusion & Virtual School Head LAC), Marcella Phelan (Assistant Director, Planning, Commissioning and Partnerships), Carol Yates (Operations Manager, Leaving Care and Looked After Children), Debbie Gabriel (Operations Manager, Children's Placement Services), Colin James (Marketing Co-ordinator, Fostering Recruitment & Assessment Team), Gary Odle (Project Manager, Horizons Centre), Cheryl Campbell (Deputy Manager, Horizons Centre), Sharon Scott (Interim Operations Manager, Locality Team), Jude Fraser (LAC 16/Post Education Project Worker, Horizons Centre), Sian Hender (Early Years Teacher/Caseworker for Looked After Children), Sundeep Gill (Post-16 Teacher, Virtual School), Justin Morley (Head of Legal Social Care and Education), Joseph Anstee (Democratic Services Officer), Young Persons Representatives.

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Carolyn Fair.

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 13th October 2016

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2016 be agreed as a true and correct record.

6. Update from Junior Council (Verbal Update)

A & J, Young People Representatives and Junior Council members, introduced this item. The new Junior Council had its first meetings in October and November. The Junior Council would be working with the 'Who Cares? Trust' magazine, and had invited the editor to visit Horizons, as they had done in the previous year. This would be a good opportunity for the Junior Council

to present their new memory folders and other ideas for the magazine. The Committee was told that the 'Who Cares? Trust' had rebranded and from November was called 'Become'. The Junior Council had produced a survey about the magazine and sent it out to Ealing's young people aged 7 to 11, and was looking forward to working on the magazine.

The Committee thanked A & J for their excellent presentation.

7. Feedback from the Junior Horizons ShoutOut Council

Cheryl Campbell (Deputy Manager, Horizons Centre) introduced this item, and introduced the new Junior Horizons ShoutOut Council. N, a Young Persons representative, told the Committee that the Junior HSC had launched on 3rd December, having recruited members during the October half-term. Their first session had looked at improving LAC Reviews. The Junior HSC had done a quiz to find out young people's likes and dislikes about the reviews. The feedback suggested young people wanted more focused meetings, to only focus on 'comfortable' issues, and to get more help preparing for their reviews. The Junior HSC recommended that young people were more involved in the planning and agenda of their reviews, that more child-friendly notes were produced, and the young person should decide the attendance. The Junior HSC felt that LAC reviews often overran, and could be shorter if there was more planning done beforehand, and less repetition. Officers thanked the Junior HSC for their work and wanted to know more about their views. The recommendations made could be discussed with IROs at the next quarterly meeting.

The Committee thanked N for her presentation and the Junior HSC for their good work so far.

8. My Education Mentors Project Update (Verbal Update)

Z, a Young Persons Representative and Lead Mentor, introduced this item along with P, a Mentor. Z had done a lot of work in her role as Lead Mentor, and had attended a presentation skills workshop with broadcaster Rob Butler, who she wanted to invite to Horizons for a Mentors Project session. Z had attended a Designated Teachers Network meeting in November, and given a presentation. She would also be doing outreach work at a school. Mentors wanted to promote the Project more through foster carers. Z had done some visits to promote the Project, including to the Court and Fostering & Adoption Teams at Perceval House.

The Mentors Project had started the year with a launch party. The launch party had an international theme. Z gave a presentation and there was a 'Speed Mentoring' session for everybody to learn as much as they could about each other. There had also been a session with a Halloween Treasure Hunt, a Team cooking session, a session making DIY Vision Boards for mentees to decorate, and more. This week the Project had their Christmas Party, with a meal, presents and cards, and were going ice skating in the next week. Sessions planned for the next term included a sports session, a visit to Brunel University and a photography workshop.

Bridie McDonagh (Head of Behaviour Strategy and Inclusion & Virtual School Head LAC) told the Committee that the Designated Teachers Network meeting had been very positive with lots of great feedback. Z had raised some important issues and her contribution had been greatly appreciated. Z told the Committee that her main recommendation had been for more Post 16 support at schools, such as help with making applications and CVs.

The Committee thanked Z and P for their hard work on the Mentors Project and for their great presentation.

9. Feedback from the Horizons ShoutOut Forum (Verbal Update)

Gary Odle (Project Manager, Horizons Centre) introduced this item. The Members of the HSC were all currently employed or at University. As part of the follow-on from work looking at IROs and LAC Reviews, the HSC had consulted young people in placements and visited places like Centrepont, to collect the views of young people who might not use Horizons or other facilities as much. The HSC had done some filming and made a short film. The Committee was shown a short film interviewing three young people from around the Borough, who discussed some of their concerns such as housing, their personal experiences, and what they thought could be improved about workers and services.

Housing continued to be a challenging issue, as there was high demand and a small supply and limited resources, but it was important to remember that not all solutions were good ones. Officers continued to work with the Housing department and others to find solutions. More work could be done to prepare young people for the challenge of finding appropriate accommodation to be clearer in explaining the process and its difficulties. More work in advance of Leaving Care with birth families could also be beneficial. Some Care Leavers were gravitating towards their birth families as an alternative to moving to places far away from London. A number of Social Workers had been trained by the NSPCC's Reunification Service. There was still a lot of support available to Ealing's Care Leavers and great work done by Leaving Care workers.

10. Fostering Recruitment (Verbal Update)

Colin James (Marketing Co-ordinator, Fostering Recruitment & Assessment Team) introduced this item. The department was targeting the recruitment of 28 new foster carers a year, a relatively high target. Ealing and its neighbours were operating in a competitive environment but Ealing offered excellent support and training to new foster carers. Currently recruitment was done through traditional media such as the local press, Around Ealing, newsletters and other print, social media, a Foster Care Fortnight in May/June, events including summer carnivals, Community outreach, the new microsite and word of mouth campaigns. The new microsite was a work in progress.

The current branding for the fostering service was well received and had won an award in previous years but needed freshening up. The new branding needed to be fresh, clear, to stand out and to translate onto various media and materials. After sending a brief to three agencies, TMP Magnet were

chosen and concepts were created. The Committee was shown draft versions of a general fostering advert, a teenage fostering advert, an adoption advert and a Family Link advert. A soft launch was planned for early in the New Year. The department could widen its outreach with the new materials, and hoped to target various community groups. A strategy would be devised to reach as many people with the new campaign as possible.

11. Report on the Education of Looked After Children

Bridie McDonagh (Head of Behaviour Strategy and Inclusion & Virtual School Head LAC) introduced this report, informing Members of the details for Post 16 education results for the academic year 2015-16 and providing information on the current year 12 and 13 year groups as well as confirming University entrance routes and places, and reporting on the October 2016 half-term education activities. The report focussed on the Post 16 group.

In the 2015-16 there were a total of 10 students who graduated from University, up from 7 the previous year. These students had studied a variety of courses, and pass rates were good. A breakdown of courses and results was set out on page 19 of the agenda. In the same year there were 46 students studying at University at 29 different Universities. This was an increase on previous years. The trends for first year students were set out on pages 22 and 23 of the agenda. A breakdown of 2015 graduates and their outcomes were set out on page 25. The majority had been successful in gaining graduate positions or continuing further study.

The numbers of students in education in Year 12 in 2015-16 had slightly decreased compared to the previous year, at 47 or 65%, with 17 or 24% not in education, employment or training (NEET). Most young people in education chose colleges over schools. The types of courses taken were set out on page 26, and pass rates were high. The numbers of students in education in Year 13 in 2015-16 had increased compared to the previous year, at 47 or 67%, with 18 or 26% that were NEET. Practical courses were popular amongst this group, and nine were studying A-Levels, up from 2 the previous year.

Information on the current Year 12 and 13 cohorts was set out on page 29. In Year 12, 35 were in education and 11 young people were NEET. There was a large cohort of 86 in the current Year 13. Of these young people, 60 were in education, 6 were in training and 20 were NEET. BTECs and A-Levels remained popular. There were some strong candidates currently going through, and support work was set out at the end of the report. There were 12 students identified for University entry in 2017 and these students would be supported. All 16-18 year olds had Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and foster carers and social workers were trained to support these young people in their studies.

Jude Fraser (LAC 16/Post Education Project Worker, Horizons Centre) gave the Committee some information on students who were NEET. Some were NEET because they had become parents, some due to mental health issues, some due to a history of offending and some due to disengagement, and

there were a number of issues related to this. There was a WLA initiative being piloted to provide more employment support and guidance for young people who were NEET. Young people could work with the Horizons Connexions service to get an assessment of their needs. Support was also available from the Department of Work and Pensions. A scheme by the John Lyons Charity was also being piloted with 8 London boroughs. Ealing also provided in-house support through its Pathways and Eco-Talent schemes.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

12. Department of Education Innovation Programme – Brighter Futures

Marcella Phelan (Assistant Director, Planning, Commissioning and Partnerships) introduced this report, updating Members on the progress in implementing the Brighter Futures programme between September 2016 and December 2016. This included feedback on the programme from the recent Ofsted Safeguarding Inspection and plans to extend the programme from April 2017. The programme was at a key stage and had proved a successful model so far. Feedback had been good, and many families and young people preferred the new ways of working. The programme was at a critical phase of its rollout, and further funding had been secured to help with this. An implementation update was set out on pages 36 and 37 of the agenda. A consultation was ongoing but it was anticipated that wider proposals would be implemented from April 2017. The numbers of LAC had decreased to date from 371 to 357, due to targeted work and successful interventions. This included 8 refugee children that had been brought to Ealing from Calais. The Chair thanked officers for all their help and work towards providing care for refugee children.

RESOLVED:

That Members note the report and continue to review progress on the Brighter Futures programme during 2016/17.

13. IRO Annual Report

Carol Yates (Operations Manager, Leaving Care and Looked After Children) introduced this report, briefing the Committee on the processes and data in relation to the Statutory Reviews of Looked After Children in Ealing in 2015-16. The first part of the report dealt with the statutory requirements of the Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) system. In the last year, 97% of LAC Reviews had been carried out on time, with participation by the children themselves at 97.6%. Ofsted feedback on Ealing's IRO service had been positive, but had also picked up on some possible improvements. In the 2015-16 year, there had been 36 formal disputes that IROs had in relation to planning for children. Of the 36 issues, 29 were resolved via the first stage of escalation, and the remaining 7 were resolved after being referred up to the next stage, to the Operations Manager. Young people themselves had raised some suggestions for improvement, along with suggestions from the IROs, and an Action Plan for making improvements had been produced.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

14. Health Report

Carol Yates introduced this report, briefing the Committee on the performance of Looked After Children's health outcomes in 2015-16. The first part of the report set out the staff involved in supporting the health of Looked After Children. A key element of supporting health was the Health Passport that was kept for each young person in Ealing, and a copy of which was given to every young person leaving care. The passports were designed with the help of young people. Ealing's LAC Medical Adviser had helped with all of them, as it was considered more appropriate for a health professional to put health records together.

The number of immunisations completed had increased compared to the previous year, although dental checks were an area for improvement. There was an issue with 16 and 17 year olds not being registered with a dentist, but a suitable dentist had been found and it was hoped that this area would now improve. The Brighter Futures programme was also expected to contribute to improvements in LAC Health over the next few years. Some key areas of improvement for the 2016-17 year were set out on page 16 of the report. These included the use of HAP plans, guidance for key workers and carers, and the consent form process. Lots of progress was already being made in these areas. A Patient Survey had recently been completed which had proved very positive. There had been a reduction in teenage pregnancies. More understanding of child sexual exploitation and sexual health had contributed to this. The Family Nurse Partnership had also been instrumental in supporting those who fell pregnant. A more specific report on teenage pregnancies and sexual health could be brought back to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

15. Social Services Complaints Report on Looked After Children

Judith Finlay introduced this report, providing information on complaints for Looked After children for the period 1st April 2016 to 29th November 2016. During the period there were 12 Stage 1 complaints made by or in respect of Looked After Children. Of the 12 complaints made, 8 were not upheld, 2 were partly upheld with remedial actions agreed, and 2 were upheld. All complaints received were responded to within the required timescales. There were no complaints that proceeded to a Stage 2 Complaint or Stage 3 Complaint Review during this reporting period.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

16. Management Information Summary – Looked After Children

Judith Finlay introduced this report, providing a brief analysis on the April 2016 – September 2016 performance (2016/17 year) for children looked after (CLA) and care leavers. As at 30th September 2016, 358 children and young people were looked after by Ealing, this had fallen by 12 since April 2016, but was an increase of 4 from the same time last year. Reasonable progress was being made on all indicators. Performance had been satisfying during the period April 2016 – September 2016.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

17. Date of the Next Meeting

The next meeting had been rescheduled and would take place on Thursday 27th April 2017.

The Chair wished everyone in attendance and everyone involved with the Horizons Centre a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Chair..... (Councillor Julian Bell)

The meeting ended at 9:00pm.