

Corporate Parent Committee

Thursday 27th June 2019 at 7:00pm

Horizons Centre, Hanwell

PRESENT: Councillors: Bell (Chair), Johnson (Vice-Chair), Cox, Driscoll, Rooney, Sharma and Millican.

ALSO PRESENT: Judith Finlay (Executive Director, Children, Adults and Public Health), Carolyn Fair (Director, Children and Families), Debbie Gabriel (Head of Service, Safeguarding & Support), Bridie McDonagh (Virtual School Head Teacher), Charles Barnard (Head of Early Years and SAFE 0-18, Planning Commissioning & Partnerships), Ian Jenkins (Planning, Commissioning and Partnerships), Gary Odle (Horizons Project Care Leavers Manager), Jude Fraser (Children and Families, Senior Management Team (SMT), Horizons Centre), Sue Tarry (Behaviour and Inclusion Team), Cornelia Harding (Democratic Services Officer) and Young Persons Representatives.

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

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Midha and Sian Hender.

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

Minutes of the Meeting held on Thursday 21st March 2019

RESOLVED: That, the minutes of the meeting held on Thursday 21st March 2019 be agreed as a true and correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were none.

7. Update from Junior Council (Verbal Update)

Representatives from the Junior Council took it in turns to update the Committee. They informed the Committee, as they had done at the last meeting, that the theme for Junior Council meetings this year has been ‘transitions.’ The aim of this is to help students in school transition from Year 6 to Year 7.

The young people reported that as part of the transitions theme, they had participated in the Stage Exchange over nine days which had involved them being mascots and flagbearers at an England game.

Young people in Year 6 often have concerns in going to Year 7 and beyond. The young people have also participated in advice sessions with former Junior Council members on times of change in their lives, such as leaving primary school, getting lost and making new friends. A rap song has been created to express the young people’s thoughts and feelings on this theme.

As part of the provision for guidance on ‘transition’ the children have also worked with the Virtual School to create a booklet. It was anticipated that the booklet will ready by 9th July so that it could go out to schools in the 2019/2020 academic year.

The young people in Junior Council had also participated in various learning and enrichment exercises including:

- Special friend cupcakes, with ingredients such as: empathy, support, compliments, giving encouragement, respecting privacy, kindness, etc.
- Visiting a farm in Wales which was 4 hours away. The children spent four days on the farm and had the experience of cooking fresh food and being close to nature.
- Tuition from six formers and tutors at Harrow School; hopefully this will become a longer-term project.

RESOLVED:

The Corporate Parent Committee noted the update.

8. Feedback from Horizons Shout-Out Council (HSC) (Verbal feedback)

The vice-chair of the HSC said the HSC was continuing to work with Carol Yates about council tax exemption and they will report back with any updates at the next meeting.

The HSC vice-chair introduced a new member of the team at the Horizons Centre – Jeevan Matharu, to the Committee. Jeevan is a new support worker

who will liaise between Ealing Council and the children and young people. Jeevan said one of the projects she has been working on is securing the discounted Leisure Pass for children, young people and carers. The proposed cost would be £2 for children and young people and £5.35 for adults.

Jeevan would also be supporting young people with applying for council tax support through the council website. Other activities she has in mind include cooking classes, day trips and cultural activities. Jeevan said she is keen on sharing good practice and on building links across networks, for example by partnership working with Hounslow Council.

Jeevan also wanted to look at 'safe parenting' schemes and encourage children and carers to attend pan-London Children in Care meetings.

The chair of the HSC said at the start of this financial year they had also been looking at their vision for the year. The HSC chair then asked the Committee to split into three groups, with each group working as a team to answer questions posed by the HSC and moderated by a member of the HSC. The groups discussed questions around improving the HSC and the Corporate Parent Committee and activities for LBE Looked After Children.

Engagement in Education Training & Employment

Gary Odle, Horizons Centre Manager, and Jude Fraser Post-16 Project Worker delivered a presentation on the Education, Employment and Training Services provided at the Horizons Centre and strategies for engaging NEETs in employment, training and education.

Gary and Jude outlined that the activities, workshops, courses and initiatives delivered at the Horizons Centre are aimed at encouraging participation in education and employment, therefore improving outcomes for young people in care. They also recounted the roles of the teams based at Horizons and services offered at the Centre including:

- Building Community
- One-stop Shop
- Life skills workshops
- Education provision
- Work placements
- Engagement offer

Gary and Jude further highlighted the fact that they work in partnership with the Performance team to collate figures for indicator 147/8 and submit them

the Department for Education. Gary indicated that they meet with the performance team quarterly to review engagement, scrutinise reports and subsequently undertake intensive casework working to engage NEETS in positive activities and identify barriers to engagement. The performance indicator focused on measures the engagement of young people aged (17 to 21 years old) in education, employment and training.

Last year 2017/18 the performance indicator identified 63% of care leavers were engaged in education, employment and training

The cumulative prospective figure for young people engaged in education & training for 2018/19 is 68%.

At this point, Ian Jenkins informed the Committee that young people on remand between the ages of 15 and 17 become eligible for the Leaving Care Service up to age 25. Mr Jenkins said in the last year Ealing Council had had 5 such young people.

Furthermore, there had been a spike in the number of Looked After young people who were NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). Some of the key indicators for this were late entrants to care, and young people who were ESOL students leaving care after one year – possibly to seek employment.

Mention was made of the Southwark Judgement, which imposed a duty on local authorities to provide accommodation and support to homeless 16- and 17-year-olds as this now required the LBE to carry out an assessment to determine their vulnerability.

Gary and Jude also spoke about some of the achievements of the Horizons Centre and actions going forward such as:

- Forming an Engagement Steering Group – this would include Bridie McDonagh, Angela Healy, Gary Odle, Jude Fraser and others. One of the roles of this steering group would be to scrutinise the figures quarterly and to try and identify any indicators or patterns.
- Employment partnership working with Hounslow Council through Jeevan Matharu (Horizons Participation Officer).
- Development of Employment Opportunities and links to West London work-based initiative group.
- The Horizons Centre now had a parenting program which was ready to be rolled out.

Councillor Bell suggested that the Corporate Parent Committee could in future target its efforts towards Councillors better to get them more involved.

The Committee requested that the slides from Gary's presentation be circulated to them after the meeting.

RESOLVED:

The Corporate Parent Committee noted the feedback from the Horizons Shout-Out Council and Gary Odle's presentation on Engagement in Education Training & Employment.

9. Report on the Education of Looked After Children – June 2019 and Virtual School Head Teacher's Report Sept 2017 – July 2018
(Agenda Items 9 and 14)

Bridie McDonagh (Virtual School Head Teacher) presented both these reports. She said the current cohort of LAC children at Key Stage 2 was a larger cohort than last year. 68% of children at this level had been entered for their SATS. 27% of children had not been entered for their SATS due to a mixture of social, emotional and learning needs.

Bridie informed the panel that the Virtual School Head had a statutory duty to report to the Council.

Bridie said that last year six young people had achieved between 92 and 99 in their SATS. The national expectation is 100. Bridie explained that some children do struggle in year 7.

Bridie clarified that despite this a lot of progress had been made on the social, emotional and educational engagement of the Council's LAC. This type of progress was not measured by national indicators.

Bridie reported that there had been a 94.3% attendance record for LAC. Some children had underlying attachment needs, and/or cultural and emotional needs. She said the Virtual School have introduced an attendance report to try and manage this better.

Bridie said the LAC Virtual School figures included adopted children and children with Special Guardianship Orders.

Bridie informed the Committee that she had attended various training courses for heads and governors through the LAC Designated Teachers' Network. She also referred to the summary of the Virtual School Enrichment Program for 2017-2018 contained within her Virtual School Head Teacher's annual report which was part of the IRO Annual Report (Agenda Item and 11). This Enrichment program was available to the Council's LAC that were living in borough as well as those living out of borough. Bridie said setting out and reporting on this information was part of the statutory requirement.

RESOLVED:

The Corporate Parent Committee noted:

- **the report on the Education of Looked After Children – June 2019 and**
- **the Virtual School, Ealing LAC and Care Leaver's – Head Teacher's Annual Report Sept 2017 – July 2018.**

10. My Education Mentors Project

(Agenda Item 10)

The My Education Mentors Project were not in attendance at this evening's Corporate Parent Committee meeting.

11. Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) Annual Report for the period April 2018 to March 2019

(Agenda Item 11)

Judith Finlay spoke briefly about this report. She made particular note of the sections entitled 'IRO Escalation' and 'Update on Areas for Development Identified in the Previous IRO Annual Report'. The Committee noted the actions to be taken to progress the measures and KPIs identified by the IRO.

RESOLVED:

The Corporate Parent Committee noted:

- **the Independent Reviewing Officer's Annual Report April 2018 – March 2019**

12. Ealing LAC Exclusion – Summary & Comparison

(Agenda Item 12)

Bridie highlighted that there had been a reduction of 13% in the number of students excluded for a fixed term, from 30 students in 2016-2017 to 26 students in 2017-2018. This amounted to a decrease of 32.5 days LAC were excluded in 2017-18 (224 days, a decrease from 256.5 days in 2016-17).

Councillor Millican enquired what pathways were open to young people once they were excluded.

The Committee were informed that there were measures in place such as the Pathways Program. This encouraged a level of competitiveness for example 2 LAC were compared to one non-LAC. It was acknowledged at the meeting that more pre-apprenticeship programs were needed.

13. Social Services Complaints Report on Looked After Children

(Agenda Item 13)

Judith Finlay spoke to Heather Dickie's report.

Five complaints had been received in the period January 2019 to March 2019. Four of the complaints received were responded to within the required timescales. One response was not sent within the required 10 day timescale. Four of the complaints were not upheld. One complaint was upheld.

RESOLVED:

The Corporate Parent Committee noted the report.

*Due to administrative constraints, two reports had unfortunately been missed off the agenda for this meeting. It was noted that the **Management Information Summary – Children Looked After**, was one such report. It had been listed on the agenda however the report itself had not been included. The Committee accepted an apology from officers and a verbal update on this report was to be provided to the Chair, Julian Bell. The report was also uploaded onto CMIS post-meeting.*

The other report missed off the agenda was the Report on Looked After Children (LAC) and Youth Offending. The Committee agreed that this report could be tabled at the meeting and presented by the report author. This report was therefore taken as Agenda Item 15. Officers again apologised to the Committee for this and the report was uploaded onto CMIS post-meeting.

14. Report on Looked After Children (LAC) and Youth Offending
(Agenda Item 15)

Ian Jenkins informed the Committee that the Criminal Justice System was facing support and financial constraints.

There had been a recent spike in the number of LAC coming into contact with the justice system. 18 young people had been remanded in custody last year. This had included a 14 year old for whom the service could not find a successful placement and who had been sectioned under the Mental Health Act. Another young person had been tried for murder.

Mr Jenkins informed the panel that remand costs had gone up by £20.00 a night per person.

Ian Jenkins then outlined the pastoral support that the Ealing Council team currently offered when a young person had been arrested. He said that within 24-48 hours, Gary or Jude visited them in custody. The team would then continue to engage with the youth justice system on the young person's behalf. Ian Jenkins said that this service was offered to all LAC remanded in Ealing, not just LBE LAC. The young people would then eventually be filtered through to their respective boroughs.

In response to some questions from the Committee, Ian Jenkins said that of the 18 children that had been remanded in custody last year, 17 had been

boys, of these 14 had been Black/Black British and 3 had been Asian. The remainder was a White girl.

Ian Jenkins stated that the LBE Youth Justice team go all over the country to care for LBE offenders.

Councillor Bell brought the meeting to a close by saying that he hoped that the service would continue to work as a team to tackle some of those challenges and make a positive impact.

RESOLVED:

The Corporate Parent Committee noted the tabled report and verbal presentation on LAC and Youth Offending.

15. Date of Next Meeting

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 17th October 2019.

Chair..... (Councillor Julian Bell)

The meeting ended at 8:30pm