

London Borough of Enfield

Cabinet

Meeting Date 12.10.22

Subject: Annual Corporate Parenting Board Report 2021-2022

Cabinet Member: Cllr Abdul Abdullahi

Executive Director: Tony Theodoulou

Key Decision: N/A

Purpose of Report

1. This report is being presented for Cabinet to note the Corporate Parenting Board governance arrangements and activities in 2021-2022 (Appendix 1) to ensure the services, structures and support that is in place helps looked after children and care leavers to achieve outstanding outcomes.
2. It provides an overview of the Corporate Parenting Board's responsibilities, terms of reference (Appendix 2), key achievements and actions in line with the principles that underpin the core values of being a good corporate parent.
3. The report also provides updates on key priorities set in 2021 and the positive action taken, demonstrating the ambition that is in place for looked after children and care leavers.

Proposal(s)

4. The Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report is being presented to Cabinet to highlight the importance of the corporate parenting role and raise awareness of everyone's responsibilities as corporate parents to looked after children and care leavers.
5. Cabinet is asked to note the successes and challenges that have arisen from corporate parenting activities in the period 2021-2022.
6. Cabinet is asked to commend the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2021-2022 to Council.

Reason for Proposal(s)

7. Noting the Annual Report at Cabinet and Council enables Enfield Council to demonstrate its commitment to be a strong corporate parent for looked after children and care leavers throughout the Council.

Relevance to the Council Plan

8. **Enfield Council Plan Priorities and Empowering Young Enfield Plan**

The Annual Corporate Parenting Board Report (2021-2022) evidences how looked after children and care leavers have been supported by their corporate parents to achieve improved outcomes.

The work undertaken, and outcomes achieved are aligned with the aims and priorities as set out in the Enfield Council Plan. For instance, the annual corporate parenting board report (2021-2022) evidences how looked after children and care leavers have been supported to build upon skills, access positive activities, inspired and empowered to reach their potential, including being supported into apprenticeships and employment enhancing their life long opportunities. Moreover, this report evidences how we have worked with our looked after children, care leavers and their parents/carers, alongside the partnership and all other stakeholders to develop, implement and review robust care planning to protect and keep our children and young people safe.

Background

9. The Corporate Parenting Board has delegated authority on behalf of the Council to act in the best interest of children looked after by the local authority pursuant to Section 22 (Children Act 1989 (CA 1989)), the relevant children (Section 23A (CA 1989)), young people under the age of 25 who are relevant children (Section 23C (1), CA 1989)).
10. The Corporate Parenting Board is chaired by the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and there is cross party membership ensuring political oversight and scrutiny of the effectiveness of the work carried out to help looked after children and care leavers.

Main Considerations for the Council

11. Annual Corporate Parenting Board Report 2021/2022

Corporate Parent

Being a corporate parent is not just the responsibility of the Corporate Parenting Board, everyone has a responsibility to look after our children and young people, and every councillor and council employee has a role to play as the eyes and ears of the community.

Being a corporate parent means doing whatever we can to support children and young people in our care alongside our care leavers, to help them to achieve their full potential to have the best possible outcomes.

Children and young people are looked after for a variety of reasons including abuse, neglect, where the parents are unable to look after their children due to their own complex health needs or behaviours or where there is no parent to care for them.

Corporate Parenting Board Roles and Responsibilities

The corporate parenting board is responsible for ensuring that the council fulfils its role as corporate parents. The corporate parenting board includes

councillors, partner agencies, officers and children in care council (KRATOS) who work together to provide a review and improve the effectiveness of services for looked after children and care leavers. This board is responsible for holding officers to account for the outcomes for looked after children and care leavers.

Overview of Enfield Looked after Children and Care Leavers Statistics

As of 31st March 2022, there were 383 looked after children aged 0-18 of which 217 were male and 166 female. When looking at the breakdown for ethnicity, 177 children and young people were White British/White Other whilst 206 were from different ethnic groups. BAME.

When considering the types of placement that our children and young people are placed in, 240 of our children and young people were placed with foster carers, 48 with family and friends' carers, 48 were in semi-independent accommodation and 19 were in residential homes, young offenders' institutes some were placed with their parent/s or with their prospective adoptive parent/s,

Children in Care Council (KRATOS)

KRATOS is Enfield's Children in Care Council. The role of KRATOS is to bring young people in care and care leavers together, helping to provide feedback on service delivery, consult on strategies and policies and influence and shape strategic decision making. Between 2018-2021 looked after children and care leavers were consulted and through co-production shaped services by being involved with fifteen plans, strategies and projects. For example, KRATOS were involved in co-production of a contextual safeguarding film for Enfield children. Two care leavers have achieved level 2 youth qualification. KRATOS took part in National care leavers week and were consulted on the Empowering Young Enfield Plan and were part of the group that presented this plan to overview and scrutiny.

Key Achievements

There are many key achievements and service delivery remains of high quality despite the challenges of the covid-19 pandemic.

For instances, 74% our young people are in education, employment and training in comparison to the national average of 70%. We are proud that 96% of our looked after children have a completed personal education plan and we have not had any permanent exclusions over the last 5 years.

Enfield is one of the few boroughs that have an 18+ psychologist who offers emotional wellbeing and mental health support to our care leavers. We are proud that 60% of our children and young people are placed with in-house carers which is better than our statistical neighbours.

We have continued to achieve improved placement stability for our looked after children and young people, for instance 9% of our looked after children and young people have had 3 or more placements compared to 9.7% for our statistical neighbours and 11% nationally.

Enfield had 17 newly approved foster carers in 2022 which is the highest across the consortium boroughs.

Views and feedback of our children, young people and care leavers is critical to our continuous improvement journey. For example, a survey of care leavers told us that 97% of our care leavers felt 'well supported by their worker'.

Updates against priorities set in 2021 and where we are now

The loft conversion and additional bedroom grant policy is now in place, six potential loft conversion/additional bedroom applications are currently being progressed with feasibility assessments to increase the number of in-house foster carers and to help keep larger sibling groups of looked after children together.

We are now working with our private housing partners Gateway to provide properties for our 18+ care leavers to help them take firm steps to living independently. The first property has been set up and going through planning.

A joint protocol between the youth justice service and social care is now in place to strengthen joint working and shared care planning for those looked after children known to the youth justice system. This protocol is now part of our day to day good practice.

We have an additional missing persons coordinator which strengthens a timely response to where children and young people have been missing whereby we are able to provide appropriate support and intervention to prevent further missing episodes.

The 18+ psychologist saw 56 care leavers and had 67 consultations with social workers.

In line with the DfE priorities at a national level, one of our priorities was to ensure our looked after children and young people attended schools during lockdown. Our looked after children and young people had the highest attendance across all London boroughs during lockdown. At the end of the academic year, we had the 13th best school attendance in England.

Safeguarding Implications

12. This report highlights the work undertaken by corporate parents evidencing how they have fulfilled their duties in supporting our looked after children and care leavers to achieve their full potential whilst safeguarding them.
13. Robust checks and balances are in place whereby the corporate parenting board has the right membership at political and strategic level to be able to offer objectivity and appropriate scrutiny. The reports presented to corporate parenting board demonstrate identification of safeguarding concerns and potential risks alongside planned actions, timescales and review arrangements. For example, the annual local authority designated officer (LADO) report provides an overview of the number of allegations made against those in a position of trust in relation to looked after children and young people alongside the outcome of investigations and actions taken. Moreover, the corporate parenting board has oversight of how many looked after children and young people have had a missing episode and what safeguarding measures have been put into place to address and reduce such risk factors. There is a strong partnership across Social Care and Health, for instance the LAC health team is co-located within the Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service, which includes the Designated LAC Nurses and Clinical Lead for CAMHS alongside a Psychiatrist and Psychologists. This multi-agency professional approach supports timely responses to ensure appropriate and safe management of identified safeguarding concerns in line with NHS clinical governance.
14. There is good communication and strong commitment across the partnership as safeguarding is everyone's responsibility.

Public Health Implications

15. Enfield children's social care has a strong partnership with health services, which includes the co-location of health professionals (Designated LAC Nurses, CAMHS clinicians) whereby together we are able to support young people to 'start life well', ensure that they are safe, thrive, access the right services at the right time and meet their health needs. This coordinated approach evidences joint working and service planning across social care and health when providing services to looked after children.
16. The Corporate Parenting Board members include health colleagues (Designated Doctor, Designated LAC Nurse, Head of Children and Young People Strategic Commissioning (Integrated Care Board)) to ensure strong joint-up working promoting the physical and mental health wellbeing of looked after children and care leavers.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal

17. An Equality Impact Assessment has been carried out for the Annual Corporate Parenting Board Report 2021-2022. This report provides progress against the priorities set in 2021.
18. It should be noted that the partners we engage with are required to assist us in meeting our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

19. There are no environmental implications. However, the improved use of technology has enabled us to become paperless, reduce the need for travel and increase modes of communication with the younger generation.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

20. There is no statutory requirement for this report to be published.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

21. The Annual Corporate Parenting Board Report helps Enfield Council to demonstrate how it fulfils its corporate parenting role and responsibilities. It will also mitigate reputational risk, demonstrating openness and transparency about how we have undertaken our corporate parenting duties.

Financial Implications

22. There will be no additional costs as a result of this report.

Legal Implications

23. *The Children Act 2004 s10 requires each Local authority in England and Wales to make arrangements to promote cooperation between the Local authority and each of its relevant partners.*

Corporate parenting principles for English local authorities

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 No 1 sets out what the Corporate parenting principles are:-

(1) A local authority in England must, in carrying out functions in relation to the children and young people mentioned in subsection (2), have regard to the need—

(a) to act in the best interests, and promote the physical and mental health and well-being, of those children and young people;

(b) to encourage those children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings;

(c) to take into account the views, wishes and feelings of those children and young people;

(d) to help those children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by the local authority and its relevant partners;

(e) to promote high aspirations, and seek to secure the best outcomes, for those children and young people;

(f) for those children and young people to be safe, and for stability in their home lives, relationships and education or work;

(g) to prepare those children and young people for adulthood and independent living.

(2) The children and young people mentioned in this subsection are—

(a) children who are looked after by a local authority, within the meaning given by [section 22\(1\)](#) of the Children Act 1989;

(b) relevant children within the meaning given by section 23A(2) of that Act;

(c) persons aged under 25 who are former relevant children within the meaning given by section 23C(1) of that Act.

(3) In this section—

“local authority in England” means—

(a) a county council in England;

(b) a district council;

(c) a London borough council;

(d) the Common Council of the City of London (in their capacity as a local authority);

(e) the Council of the Isles of Scilly;

(f) a combined authority established under [section 103](#) of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009;

“relevant partners”, in relation to a local authority, has the meaning given by [section 10\(4\)](#) of the Children Act 2004.

(4) A local authority in England must have regard to any guidance given by the Secretary of State as to the performance of the duty under subsection (1).

The report purports to confirm the Local authority has fulfilled the duties imposed on it by the above acts.

Workforce Implications

24. A strong workforce is essential to delivering excellent services. There are ongoing recruitment and retention issues relating to children's social workers both at local and national level. We have implemented a variety of strategic actions to address recruitment and retention challenges, achieve workforce stability and ensure succession planning.
25. Cultural conversations have happened across the workforce to gauge an understanding of what is working well alongside what needs to change for next steps to be identified.
26. Social workers are offered a 4 consecutive weeks sabbatical leave after 3 years of continuous service with Enfield Council. Enfield Council has supported an increased number of social work apprenticeships alongside recruiting newly qualified social workers and supporting them with their Assisted Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). We have increased our intake of North London Step-Up to Social Work students' placements from 4 to 8.
27. Enfield Children and Family Services has recruited 20 international social workers who have arrived and are now working for Enfield Council.
28. As part of succession planning, a bespoke 10-week induction programme was developed and delivered to service managers who had stepped up from team management positions. This is now being adapted for middle managers to identify the leaders of the future and help with succession planning.

Property Implications

29. None

Other Implications

30. None

Options Considered

31. None

Conclusions

32. All those in the Council who are corporate parents are aware of their roles and responsibilities ensuring that Enfield achieves outstanding outcomes and improves the life chances of looked after children and care leavers.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Appendix 2

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:

None