CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23rd July 2019
in Committee Room 2, Newham Town Hall, East Ham, E6 2RP

Present: Councilors Carleene Lee-Phakoe (Chair), Mumtaz Khan, Julianne Marriott, Sarah Ruiz and Aisha Siddiqah

Chris Chalmers (Head of Corporate Parenting), Steve Chaplin (Service Manager, Safeguarding Leaving Care), Gemma Cheney (Newham CAMHS), Rev. Dr. Chigor Chike (Church and Faith Groups), Beverley Halligan (Head of Social Work Improvement), Samantha Martin (Designated Nurse, Safeguarding Children), Terry Reynolds (Director of Education and Skills Commissioning) and Carla Tiramani (Youth Offending Service).

The meeting commenced at 4.30 p.m. and closed at 6.24 p.m.

1. Apologies for Absence

No apologies for absence had been received prior to the meeting. The following apologies for absence were intimated at the meeting:

Maura Banda, (Interim Service Manager); Deborah Clarke, (Lead Nurse, Children in Care, East London); Kim Evans (St Angela’s Ursuline School) and Michelle Edwards (Head of Youth Offending), with Carla Tiramani representing.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received from Board Members.

3. Minutes of the Last Meeting

RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting of the Board, held on 21 May 2019, be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

Minute No.5 (Update Report on the Leaving Care Service Improvement Planning)

That, at Line 4 to Paragraph 7 (Page 3 to the printed Agenda), the words “had actually responded to the survey” be added after “41%” and that the words “of those that had taken part in the Bright Spots survey”, be deleted.
4. **Young People's Report/Agenda (Standing Item)**

The Chair welcomed to the meeting, Gabriel Olan, Belu Kaur, Hawa Tifou and John Talmey as the Borough’s young people representatives, who wished to update the Board on the development of the Care Leavers’ Hub and a recent trip to Santiago in Spain where young people had attended and wished to share their experiences.

**Oversees’ Trip**

The Board was pleased to note that the trip to Spain had been a resounding success. For some young people, this had been the first time they had travelled outside of London or had travelled on an aeroplane until now. They said the entire experience had been very exhilarating and that they had managed to openly speak with persons next to them on the trip. They added that being on the trip had changed them a lot as persons and had let them become themselves. They said that, fatigue and blisters aside, it had taught them respect and had been truly something amazing, that also taught them who they were and what they might do next.

Gabriel Olan had returned as a helper this year and whilst he had been unsure what to expect, it did, he said, change him personally as it had given him a lot of time to reflect on his life.

The Council’s Service Manager (Leaving Care Service) said he would speak with the Charity that had provided the opportunity for young people to go on the trip to see if it was planning to stage the trip again next year. He said that he would explore ways in which funds could be raised to help to send more young people next year.

Members said that they, as corporate parents, would welcome sharing the young people’s experiences, looking at photographs etc.

The Chair asked what the Board could do to help. In response, the Board was asked to try and assist in any way it could by trying to engage all areas within the Council and to join resources to enable as many young people as possible to enjoy these opportunities. Councillor Ruiz said that this would be raised with the Mayor the following day.

In response to a question as to whether stakeholders had been working with young people to promote their experiences (e.g. making videos, producing related articles for the Newham Magazine etc.), the Council’s Service Manager (Leaving Care Service) said that he would be happy to create a slideshow if the young people were happy to share their experiences in this way. He said that he intended to host an event and invite Board Members to it, at which, the slideshow could be screened and experiences and views shared.

The Chair welcomed this and reaffirmed her commitment to making sure that young persons’ voices would be heard.
Care Leavers’ Hub

The young people agreed that they were really keen to have a space they could call their own, where they could meet people in a safe environment and have access to services.

John Talmey, young person, thanked the Council for finding such a place with lots of potential (455 Barking Road) and hoped that young people would make the most of the equipment and furniture in place there.

The Hub was in need of decorating and it was agreed that this should lie with the young people to decorate it in a way that was to their liking. It was noted that the Council was to visit the Hub and to clear out any of the furniture and equipment that was not needed; to repair the ceiling there and to paint it white for the young people to decorate it as they saw fit.

The young people asked if some guidance from a supervisor would be welcomed and the Chair said that efforts would be made to source an interior designer who could provide some practical help and tips to the young people.

In conclusion, the Board asked if some “then and now” photographs could be taken to show how the Hub had been developed and that attention be given, in time, to the naming of the Hub.

The Chair asked that if Members of the Youth Forum had any questions for the Board, that these be forwarded for answering before the Forum next met.

5. Update on Corporate Parenting Charter Development

The Board considered a report, for information, which advised that the Charter was progressing, with scoping well under way. It was noted that the work which had been undertaken earlier in the year with the Board’s Sub-Group, together with discussions with social work staff and the points arising from the last meeting of the Board, were also included. It was also noted that the school holidays would make it easier to schedule focus groups for young people as it was their views that would shape the core objectives within the Charter.

The report focussed largely on the outcomes sought for looked after children (LAC). The Council’s Head of Corporate Parenting said that the Care Leaver Offer, which set out the Council’s offer to care leavers would soon be published on the Council’s website (by 1 August 2019).

The Offer, covered a range of support issues from finances, education and employment through to housing options and there would be a formal launch of the Offer and that this would be notified to all Newham Care Leavers, in hard copy, over the next two weeks. It was reported that,
following this, feedback on implementation would be sought and a review undertaken after the first six months post-launch to gauge its effectiveness and to consider any amendments which may arise from this.

The Head of Corporate Parenting said that a Strategic Lead had been appointed to lead on the Charter, which would have five key objectives, to keep it focussed. She said that considerable consultation would be carried out, including with partners and foster carers. She said that the heart of it had to be the views of young people. In conclusion, she said that the final version of the Charter would be available from late September 2019.

**ACTION:** The action, which appeared in the minutes of the last meeting of the Board (Minute No.6 – Corporate Parenting Charter Development Report) had not been carried out.

1. That action referred to a “revised plan considered by the Sub-Group” when, in fact, it ought to have been recorded as a “note of a discussion.”

2. That the note of discussion be distributed to all Members of the Board.

6. **Overview of the Looked After Children Improvement Plan**

The Board considered a report, for information, which advised that a comprehensive improvement plan for Children’s Services had been developed in response to the judgement and findings of Newham’s Ofsted inspection in February 2019.

The Council’s Head of Corporate Parenting recognised that the Improvement Plan was a very lengthy document since it included the whole of Children’s Services. She then updated Board Members on some of the key issues within the Plan, as follows:

In respect of permanence, she said that getting it right brought so much positivity to young people in later life. She added that regular visits to Looked after Children (LAC) could be reduced after a year but, for now, Newham had been aiming for six-weekly visits but so long as these were regular enough then a young person could build up a relationship with the carer.

In respect of health, she said that assessments were going well, and were on time but wondered whether the Board could do more around improving mental health amongst children as opposed to just measuring what it was. She added that this was now the opportunity to get things right and to take a more holistic view of the issue.

The Head of Corporate Parenting recognised that the Council needed to get better at listening to young people and children; what was needed for the life story work of care leavers.
In respect of children with disabilities, the Head of Corporate Parenting said that the Council was forging better links with children with disabilities and was starting to do more joined-up working.

With regard to fostering, the Head of Corporate Parenting advised the Board that there were 119 fostering in Newham and there was always room for more.

In respect of partnership and engagement, the Head of Corporate Parenting said that it was good to see young people at the meeting and actively playing their part in the process. She added that an under 16s event would be staged in the autumn.

With regard to transition at age 18, the Head of Corporate Parenting said there remained a lot more work to be done, involving working with fostering colleagues and other providers.

7. Discussion re Membership of Corporate Parenting Board

The Board discussed its membership and how this could be reviewed to include the most appropriate people from the most relevant organisations to enhance the work and meetings of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Chair, the Head of Corporate Parenting and the Clerk to the Board, meet to discuss and review the membership of the Board and that this be reported back to the next meeting of the Board.