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EXECUTIVE

Wednesday 11 July 2018

Please see the attached report marked "to follow" on the agenda.

- 5 PROGRESS IN IMPLEMENTING CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENTS -
UPDATE FROM DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
EDUCATION, CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES**

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Copies of the documents referred to above can be obtained from
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Report No. London Borough of Bromley

PART ONE - PUBLIC

Decision Maker: EXECUTIVE

Date: 11 July 2018

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Executive Non-Key

Title: UPDATE FROM DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, CARE AND HEALTH SERVICES

Contact Officer: Ade Adetosoye OBE, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director, Education, Care and Health Services
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Chief Officer: Ade Adetosoye OBE, Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director, Education, Care and Health Services

Ward: ALL

1. Reason for report

1.1 This report is a written update from the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director, Education, Care and Health Services to the Executive in relation to children's services:

1. Corporate parenting opportunities to engage with looked after children and care leavers
2. Leaving Care review by Mark Riddell MBE, Department for Education
3. Ofsted monitoring visit on 12-13 June 2018

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Members of the Executive are invited to note the contents of the report

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: The full content of this report impacts on the needs of vulnerable children and the required actions necessary to improve the services delivered.
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Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People Excellent Council
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Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable:
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre:
 4. Total current budget for this head: £
 5. Source of funding:
-

Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional):
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours:
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: Statutory Requirement:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
-

Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications:
-

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): 311 children looked after, 218 care leavers aged 17 to 25.
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Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments:

3. COMMENTARY

The following report sets out the key updates in relation to improving children's services:

1. Corporate parenting opportunities to engage with looked after children and care leavers
2. Leaving Care review by Mark Riddell MBE, Department for Education
3. Ofsted monitoring visit on 12-13 June 2018

Corporate parenting opportunities to engage with looked after children and care leavers

Corporate parenting refers to the collective responsibility of all elected members, council officers and partner agencies in Bromley for the children and young people in our care aged 0 to 18 years and leaving our care. This includes extended responsibilities for the educational achievement of children who were previously looked after and care leavers up to 25 years.

The Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven principles to guide our practice and decision making as corporate parents:

1. Act in the best interests of children and young people and promote their physical health and mental wellbeing
2. Encourage children and young people to express their views, wishes and feelings
3. Take into account their views, wishes and feelings when designing and delivering services
4. Help children and young people gain access to, and make the best use of, services provided by us and our partners
5. Promote high aspirations and enable them to achieve the best outcomes
6. Ensure their safety and provide stability in their home lives
7. Prepare them effectively for adulthood and living independently.

Profile of Bromley looked after children

We currently look after 311 children, which is the higher than previous years. However, we are below the national average in terms of the rate of children in care per 10,000 (42 per 10,000 in Bromley compared to the national average of 68).

100% of our looked after children have an allocated social worker and 93% have an up-to-date care plan. Of the 7% without a care plan, it is mainly due to a number of issues, including custody.

Profile of Bromley care leavers

Bromley have responsibility for 218 care leavers aged 17 to 25 years. These are young people who were in care for at least 13 weeks between their 14th and 16th birthday, and at least 1 day after they turned 16, who have now left care. Of these 218, 185 are open to the Leaving Care Team. Some young people are receiving services from Adults Social Care and there are a few with whom we are no longer in touch.

Corporate parenting opportunities

At the Education, Children and Families induction session on 10 May, the LinCC and the Care Leavers Forum delivered a joint presentation providing an overview of their experiences in and leaving care, as well as the positive impact of receiving support and services from Bromley Council. The session was attended by over 30 Members and the induction pack and slides from the session were circulated to all Members.

Following the induction session, there were some further requests for practical guidance for Members, officers and partners on how to be more effective corporate parents.

A number of suggestions for upcoming events and opportunities are listed below:

- 1. Attending Corporate Parenting Fun Day:** The Council will be hosting a family BBQ with activities on Sunday 29 July at the Civic Centre. This will be an opportunity to meet informally with our children looked after and care leavers, create a sense of a corporate family, and promote a positive care identity for our children looked after. The key contact for further information is Melissa Bob-Amara, Active Involvement Officer: Melissa.bob-amara@bromley.gov.uk.
- 2. Attending Corporate Parenting Board:** Members are encouraged to attend the Corporate Parenting Board to review reports and scrutinise the effectiveness of all services which impact on the experience and wellbeing of our children looked after and care leavers.

The Corporate Parenting Board is co-chaired by Councillor Fortune, Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the LinCC, meaning our people are able to play an influential role in the priorities, decisions and services delivered by the corporate parenting network.

The Board meets every two months and the next meetings are on 13 September and 29 November.

- 3. Meeting the Living in Care Council (LinCC) and Care Leavers Forum:** the LinCC and Care Leavers Forum meet on a monthly basis and they welcome the opportunity for corporate parents to engage with them directly at meetings and learn more about their individual experiences of care.
- 4. Attending Health Training Day for Foster Carers:** The LAC health nursing team are organising a health day for foster carers in September, which will be a good opportunity for corporate parents to learn more about the health and wellbeing needs of children in care.
- 5. Attending Children's Social Care Practice Weeks:** in 2018/19, we will be rolling out Practice Weeks across each division of Education, Care and Health Services (ECHS), providing members and staff with the opportunity to shadow and observe frontline social workers. Members are encouraged to participate in the Practice Weeks and learn more about the different teams in children social care in order to scrutinise service delivery more effectively.

Leaving Care Review

On 7 – 8 June Mark Riddell MBE, the National Implementation Advisor for care leavers, came to Bromley Council to review our progress in implementing the new duties of the Children and Social Work Act 2017, including:

- Our development of a local offer of support for care leavers
- Our Personal Adviser services for all care leavers up to the age of 25
- Whether we are meeting our special responsibilities as ‘corporate parents’ as set out in the Act
- Whether we have implemented actions to address Ofsted recommendations to improve our care leaver service

Mark Riddell reported that he was impressed by the ambitious and aspirational leadership and management approach to supporting care leavers, noting a real sense of passion and commitment across the service to improve our offer of support.

Ofsted monitoring visit on 12-13 June 2018

The seventh and final Ofsted monitoring visit took place on 12 – 13 June 2018. The focus for the visit was on vulnerabilities, particularly looking at our identification and response to vulnerable adolescents and response to children and young people at risk of CSE, going missing, gangs, radicalisation and FGM.

In a letter published on 5 July that summarised the findings of the visit, the inspectors recognised that Bromley is making significant progress in identifying risks to vulnerable adolescents and improving services to safeguard them.

There were a number of key areas of progress praised by Ofsted from the visit:

- Effective and well established multi-agency processes led by the Bromley Safeguarding Children Board are in place to identify vulnerable adolescents at risk of CSE and going missing. This has resulted in a reduction in the number of young people going missing from home, care and school.
- Social workers and key workers in the youth offending service know their young people well and are tenacious in building a rapport with them even when they are hard to engage. This enables confident and sensitive challenge and support to young people. Reduced caseloads are further enabling social workers and key workers to engage in high quality direct work.
- The multi-agency Atlas unit, which is co-located with MASH, has strengthened partnership working. This enables access to key information from partners to identify and appropriately contextualise risks, resulting in suitable and timely decisions at the front door.
- Return home interviews are undertaken more frequently and in a timely manner, even when young people go missing. Themes collected from return home interviews are used to address emerging concerns and have resulted in effective targeted intervention, such as training for local businesses to raise their awareness and improve their response to those

at risk of CSE. The installation of close circuit cameras in parks where young people have said they congregate when missing is a further example.

- Senior managers and elected members have strong oversight of those most at risk through effective performance reporting and the creation of a 'problem profile' for the area. This enables the appropriate prioritisation of action and resources.
- The local authority commissions a range of services to support vulnerable adolescents based on a clear understanding of local need and which are valued by young people and their families.

Ofsted also highlighted some areas to consider for improvement:

- While effective management oversight was evident on all cases and all social workers interviewed commented that supervision was regular and helpful, the quality of supervision can be variable. This means that some social workers are not getting sufficient guidance to complete and prioritise their work.
- In a small number of cases, there is a delay in timely access to commissioned support services due to waiting lists.

As Bromley has now completed the cycle of monitoring visits, we are now awaiting a re-inspection of our children social care services within the next six months.

Appendix 1: Ofsted monitoring visit letter

IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

The full content of this report impacts on needs of vulnerable children and the required actions necessary to improve the services delivered.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The recommendations in this report align with the Building a Better Bromley Key Priorities for 2016-2018 to be ambitious for all our children and young people though:

- Fulfilling our duty of care to ensure the health, wellbeing and achievements of our vulnerable children
- Provide the best possible service to deliver appropriate support to all children and young people

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

6. PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

N/A

8. PROCUREMENT IMPLICATIONS

N/A

Non-Applicable Sections:	Financial/Personnel/Legal/Procurement
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	

5 July 2018

Ade Adetosoye
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Dear Ade

Monitoring visit of Bromley local authority children's services

This letter summarises the findings of the monitoring visit to Bromley children's services on 12 and 13 June 2018. The visit is the seventh and final monitoring visit since the local authority was judged inadequate in June 2016. The inspectors were Marcie Taylor, Her Majesty's Inspector, and Alison Smale, Her Majesty's Inspector.

The local authority is making significant progress in identifying risks to vulnerable adolescents and improving services to safeguard them.

Areas covered by the visit

During the course of this visit, inspectors reviewed the progress made in the area of vulnerable adolescents, particularly:

- the effectiveness of initial and ongoing multi-agency identification and response to risk, relating to those who go missing, or those who are at risk of child sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation and gang affiliation
- the commissioning, access, timeliness and effectiveness of interventions and services to support young people to protect them from harm
- the quality and timeliness of management oversight, decision-making and the focus on the young person in the quality of recording
- social work capacity and caseloads.

A range of evidence was considered during the visit, including electronic case records, discussions with social workers and their managers and other supporting documentation. In addition, inspectors observed multi-agency meetings, including the daily multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) meeting and the multi-agency missing, exploitation and gang affiliation panel (MEGA).

Overview

The local authority and partners are working well to improve practice and outcomes for vulnerable adolescents. Strong multi-agency commitment is evidenced by dedicated resources, and results in a good understanding and response. Effective collaboration is making a difference and increasing the resilience of these young people as well as improving their circumstances.

Strong commitment from strategic partners and senior leaders in the council has resulted in strengthened and effective collaboration. This is leading to more timely and appropriate action to reduce risk and provide effective help and support. This is improving the outcomes for most of this group of highly vulnerable young people with complex needs. Services are commissioned based on a good understanding of young people's needs, and where appropriate, informed by their views. There is effective management oversight of assessments of risk and safety plans. The steady reduction in caseloads is enabling creative and impactful direct work that is reducing risk.

Findings and evaluation of progress

The processes in place to identify vulnerable adolescents at risk of child sexual exploitation and those who go missing are well established. The Bromley safeguarding children board oversees this work effectively and has led the development of a wider consideration of risks to include serious youth violence, gang affiliation, and those at risk of criminal exploitation and radicalisation. Following a review of the multi-agency sexual exploitation panel (MASE), the local authority established the weekly MEGA panel, with full cooperation from partner agencies. This panel brings together all the information and risks known about vulnerable adolescents and is leading to a more coordinated, effective and wider multi-agency response. The panel includes youth offending workers, targeted youth support and the probation service. Critical links and distinctions between those at risk of criminal exploitation and those who are involved in crime are emerging. Inspectors observed the work of the MEGA panel, which considered 16 young people. Inspectors observed an effective multi-agency focus to reduce risk, including good cross-authority and cross-agency liaison. This has led to clear actions with timescales, the progress of which is followed up at subsequent panels.

Multi-agency practice for young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and those who go missing is effective. Risks are identified, and impact is evident in reducing risk, as seen in a reduction in the numbers of young people who go missing from home or care and school. Such work is also effective in improving relationships within families and ensuring that there is appropriate engagement in education. Thresholds are appropriately and consistently applied, and emerging risk is quickly recognised and responded to in most cases. Strategy meetings are used well to share information effectively and to make safeguarding decisions when necessary to reduce risk. Risks are identified in safety plans, which are increasingly undertaken with the input of young people. The local authority is streamlining and aligning risk

assessment documentation to improve the holistic assessment of risk to include risk associated with serious youth violence and gang affiliation.

Social workers and key workers in the youth offending service know the young people with whom they work well and focus on understanding their lived experience. They are tenacious in building rapport with young people even when they are hard to engage. This enables confident and sensitive challenge and support for young people. This also encourages and facilitates change, as young people develop a greater understanding of their risky behaviours and implement safer strategies. Inspectors saw evidence of clearly recorded direct work with young people that is imaginative and is used to inform safety planning. This includes young people actively involved in developing their own safety plans using posters and booklets. Reducing caseloads in line with standards set by the local authority is resulting in greater capacity for high quality direct work.

Management oversight was evident in all cases seen during this visit and all social workers described supervision as regular and helpful. The quality of supervision varies. In better examples, supervision is reflective and systematically reviews the progress of decisions previously agreed. However, in some cases, actions arising from supervision are insufficiently specific, achievable or targeted and lack clear timescales for actions to progress plans. This does not give social workers clear guidance for completing and prioritising their work.

The multi-agency 'Atlas' unit is instrumental in strengthening key relationships across the partnership. It is now co-located within the MASH and includes a representative from the youth offending service. The single point of contact (SPOC) at each agency enables access to key information in identifying risks so that suitable and timely decisions can be made at the front door. This includes early consideration of wider contextualised risk. Inspectors saw evidence at the daily MASH meeting of confident and sensitive understanding and response to potential risk, including that of radicalisation and female genital mutilation.

Return home interviews are undertaken increasingly and in a timely manner when young people go missing. They are undertaken by dedicated workers based in the 'Atlas' unit. The number of young people participating in these interviews is increasing and the workers demonstrate tenacity and imagination in engaging with young people to understand their issues. Social workers make clear recommendations that are included in updated plans that are used as contributions to core groups, child in need meetings and child looked after reviews. Themes are captured by the data analyst and are used effectively to address emerging concerns. For example, a 'mystery shopping' exercise, led by the police, uses police cadets as young people to attempt to check in to local hotels and bed and breakfast establishments. The lack of challenge by the businesses, discussed in subsequent debriefing sessions, led to eight out of 10 businesses attending training to raise their awareness and improve their response to those at risk of child sexual exploitation. The installation of close circuit cameras in parks where young people have said they congregate when missing is a further example.

The data analyst produces reports for the children's social care performance digest, gathered from the MEGA panel and return home interviews. This compiled information on individual young people, associates, demographics and trends, informs a 'problem profile' for the area. This ensures that senior managers and elected members have effective oversight of those most at risk and enables appropriate prioritisation of action and resources.

The local authority has carefully considered the commissioning of services to support vulnerable adolescents, with a clear understanding of local need. A range of services, such as family therapy, are available, with evidence that these are valued by families. In a small number of cases, delay in timely access to support is because of long waiting lists. Between January and March 2018, a worker commissioned from Barnardo's provided individual, intensive, systemic direct work to 17 young people at risk of child sexual exploitation as well as to three families. This support is highly valued by young people and families, who report positively about being 'listened to in a non-judgemental way'. Specialist foster carers or residential placements are commissioned for young people who need it. This includes effective multi-agency support for those placed out of area.

Yours sincerely

Marcie Taylor
Her Majesty's Inspector