

Decision Maker: CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND FAMILIES PDS COMMITTEE

Date: 30 January 2020

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: CORPORATE PARENTING ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

Contact Officer: Cathy Lloyd Williams, Head of Care and Care Leavers
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Chief Officer: Director of Children's Social Care

Ward: All Wards

1. Reason for report

The report being presented to the committee is the annual corporate parenting report which captures all activity that has been undertaken by the council to support the lives of children in our care and young people transitioning from care to independent living over the financial year March 2018-March 2019.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee note and endorse the ongoing work to be undertaken by Officers.

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Not Applicable:
 2. BBB Priority: Children and Young People:
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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:
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Personnel

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

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable:
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Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: N/A
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Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected):
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Ward Councillor Views

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

3. COMMENTARY

The annual corporate parenting report needs to be read alongside the reports of the other services working with Looked After Children in Bromley; namely the Virtual School the IRO (independent reviewing officer's report) and the Fostering and Adoption Annual Report.

The report sets out the legal duty of the local authority to not only actively promote the welfare of children in our care but also to understand their aspirations and in conjunction with our partner agencies do everything we can to support them achieve their potential as any good parent would.

Priority One: Having a Say. Bromley has a strong Living in Care Council (Lincc) and an active Care Leaver Forum called Change for Care Leavers. The group is supported by the Active Involvement worker Melissa Bob Amara. Members routinely sit on staff recruitment panels and the young people presented at the recent staff conference. Lincc/ CFCL also offers a programme of social events and residential trips. In addition 97% of our young people attended their CLA review and contributed to their care planning. Bromley also commissioned CORAM to run a survey to all Care Leavers with 92% saying they had a trusted adult they could lean on.

Given the success of the active involvement programme in 2019 we have expanded the team with two new workers that Melissa will manage so we can offer more group work and a wider programme of engagement.

Priority Two: Support Stability and Security. Nationally 10% children have experienced three or more placement moves within 12 months. In 2018-2019 in Bromley 9.5 % of children had experienced this level of disruption and only 57% of children had been in the same placement for over 2 years which is behind national average of 69%. However practice around planning for permanence has improved over 2018-19 and Bromley has seen a 52% increase in children being placed with special guardians. We also have a 33% of care leavers choosing to 'stay put' in their foster placements which is above national average.

This will need continued attention and we have established a stability taskforce in December 2019 to ensure better joint planning with fostering and commissioning teams for young people with additional needs. Currently the number of children with three or more placements has dropped to 4%

Priority Three: Health and Wellbeing. 91% of our young people received a health assessment by specialist nurses on an annual basis. Some older young people have declined but CLA health team have introduced email summaries to young people including electronic links to relevant services. Bromley my time continued to offer free leisure passes to young people under 18.

Given the additional vulnerability of children in care to mental health difficulty during 2019-2020 there is additional work to strengthen our relationship with CAMHS and an introduction of clinical consultation for front line social work staff on a regular basis.

Priority Four: Education Training and Employment. 91% of our looked after children were making progress at expected level in school. This is partly due to a strong joint working with the Virtual school. 93% of our children had three meetings between social workers and school to monitor and review their educational progress over the academic year. The introduction of the 16 plus transition project saw 91% of our children progress to a secure post 16 education provision.

Whilst Bromley had 38% NEET post 18 in 2018-2019 this is less than national average of 39% and it is hoped that with social enterprise I Aspire providing progression coaches for the NEET cohort and more successful post 16 transition planning this should improve over 2019-2020. Current figures for Nov 2019 show 35% NEET.

Priority Five: Transitions and Independence. In 2018-2019 90% of care leavers had a clear pathway plan developed with the support of their young person’s advisor. 81% of young people aged 19-21 were in suitable accommodation and the Leaving Care Team developed a protocol with the DWP to ensure young people weren’t sanctioned if they were a care leaver.

The Leaving Care Service continues to strive to make improvements. Currently 85% of our young people are in suitable accommodation in addition to improvements in NEET figures. In October 2019 we held our annual care leavers celebration where 32 young people received an award for personal or educational achievements. We made contact with all young people between age 21-25 reminding them of the local offer for care leavers and over 30 re engaged up to Nov 2019 demonstrating improved engagement with the service.

We are able to demonstrate ongoing positive change in service delivery for children in care and care leavers. The service will be entirely permanently staffed by end of Jan 2020 to enable these positive changes to become embedded.

4. IMPACT ON VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

Looked after children are amongst the most vulnerable people in our community. Educational Outcomes for Looked after children nationally fall significantly behind their peers. Care leavers are more likely to become NEET (not in education employment or training) or experience street homeless and mental health difficulties than their peers due to adverse childhood experiences. Given the vulnerability of this cohort the work of the Care and Care leavers teams are essential in driving positive changes to change outcomes for this group of young people.

Bromley has a lower rate than national average of children in care per 10,000 people in the general population, but in line with national trends there has been a year on year increase. Bromley had 348 children in care by March 2019 compared to 310 in March 2018. The main reasons for children being received into care is due to abuse or neglect.

Bromley also has a duty to support young people who have been in care up to the age of 25 as set out in the Leaving Care Act2 2000. In March 2019 we were actively supporting 193 care leavers.

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| Non-Applicable Sections: | Financial Implications, Personnel Implications, Legal Implications, Procurement Implications |
| Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer) | [Title of document and date] |