

Council	 TOWER HAMLETS
21 July 2021	
Report of: James Thomas, Director of Children and Culture	Classification: Unrestricted
Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-2021	

Lead Member	Councillor Asma Begum, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Children, Youth Services and Education
Originating Officer(s)	Richard Baldwin, Divisional Director Children's Social Care
Wards affected	All wards
Strategic Plan Priority / Outcome	People are aspirational, independent and have equal access to opportunities

Executive Summary

The Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020 to 2021 sets out the purpose of the board, how it functions in Tower Hamlets, what has been achieved over the last year and future priorities and challenges. The report includes sections focused on engagement with young people, including their views on key issues and challenges ahead, and the work we do with Foster Carers.

Recommendations:

Council is recommended to:

1. Note the contents of the Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-21

1 REASONS FOR THE DECISIONS

- 1.1 Not applicable.

2 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- 2.1 Not applicable.

3 DETAILS OF THE REPORT

- 3.1 The Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) demonstrates our continuing commitment to the corporate parenting principles and shows how we deliver on them across many partnerships and services. The board meets on a quarterly basis and has representation from Councillors, young people, foster-carers, partner organisations and senior managers from across the Council.
- 3.2 Alongside the Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) the board provides a forum where children and young people in the care of the council have direct access to senior leaders and decision makers to share their views and raise and address issues. The board is able to take a strategic approach to the experiences of children looked after and care leavers and work with partners to continually develop and strengthen practice in relation to our corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 3.3 The annual report includes a section focused on engagement with young people, including how the Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) works with the CPB, plans for the future of the CLICC and key issues for 2021 and onwards from the perspective of the young people.
- 3.4 The CPB Annual Report 2019 – 2020 provides information on a wide range of achievements including:
 - Educational attainment - 53% of CLA in the Virtual School are making expected progress in the core subjects of English/Maths (Spring 2021).
 - Provision of laptops via the DFE scheme for all young people in care (overseen by the Virtual School).
 - Pupil Education Plans (PEP) - 98% of pupils overseen by the Virtual School have had a PEP meeting in the last term.
 - Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) focus groups for Children Looked After (CLA) provided an opportunity to explore their experiences of accessing mental health support whilst they were in care and make recommendations for service improvements.
 - Personal and Professional Development Programme for CLA/CL's was delivered in response to concerns about education, employment and training opportunities following the pandemic.
 - The Fostering Service established a Fostering Therapeutic Service dedicated to working with Tower Hamlets foster carers and social workers to improve the wellbeing of CLA and Children under Special Guardianship orders.
 - The Health of CLA & Care Leavers Steering Group delivered a range of achievements in 2020 which has been focused on improved partnership working among professionals across whole system (Health, Social Care & Education).
- 3.5 The report includes reflections on the Covid 19 emergency as well as providing an overview of recent work and plans for the future. This includes:

- The Children Living in Care Council (CLICC) will continue work to expand membership including the establishment of two other CLICC forums ‘Juniors CLICC – 8 to 12-year olds’ and ‘Teen CLICC – 13 to 17-year olds’.
- Care Leaver Employability Working Group – following a successful application by the CLICC to be a part of the programme this work will aim to share best practise and apply that learning to develop how we work with local employers to provide employment opportunities for young people with care experience.
- Care Leavers App – to be launched in 2021, providing help for young people leaving care by enabling them to access local information and support and advice for their wellbeing.
- Virtual School - supporting Post-16 students into education and employment, including work towards the ambition to be a ‘Virtual College’ and working with staff from the Behaviour and Attendance Service to support vulnerable young people to keep them on course and prevent mid-year drop out.
- Creation of two further Mockingbird Hubs (part of the Fostering Network) – the Mockingbird Programme is aimed at improving the stability of fostering placements and strengthening the relationships between carers, children and young people, fostering services and birth families
- Health of CLA & CL’s Steering Group – goals in 2021 include increasing Children and Young People (CYP) involvement in decision making and initiatives, improving CYP transitions and Queen Mary University of London Integration Workshops to develop service maps and aid service integration spanning housing, health & wellbeing, education, training & employment.

4 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Tower Hamlets Corporate Parenting Board (CPB) is committed to delivering on the corporate parenting principles for all children in care and care leavers. This report provides information about how the board does this through its activities, engagement and plans for the future.

5 OTHER STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This section of the report is used to highlight further specific statutory implications that are either not covered in the main body of the report or are required to be highlighted to ensure decision makers give them proper consideration. Examples of other implications may be:
- Best Value Implications,
 - Consultations,
 - Environmental (including air quality),
 - Risk Management,
 - Crime Reduction,
 - Safeguarding.
 - Data Protection / Privacy Impact Assessment.

5.2 There are no other specific statutory implications.

6 COMMENTS OF THE CHIEF FINANCE OFFICER

6.1 There are no direct financial implications to this report

7 COMMENTS OF LEGAL SERVICES

7.1 Section 1 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 sets out seven principles which local authorities should follow when carrying out functions in relation to children who are or have been looked after by them. Broadly speaking these principles require local authorities to aim to secure the best possible outcome for these children and young people.

7.2 Statutory guidance ‘Applying corporate parenting principles to looked after children and care leavers’ (February 2018) sets out how these principles should be applied.

7.3 Although the creation and maintenance of a Corporate Parenting Board is not a statutory requirement, it is suggested as good practice in the guidance. Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 permits a local authority to do anything which is calculated to facilitate the discharge of any of its functions.

7.4 The matters referred to in this report comply with the above legislation and guidance.

Linked Reports, Appendices and Background Documents

Linked Report

- None

Appendices

- Corporate Parenting Board Annual Report 2020-21

Background Documents – Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Access to Information)(England) Regulations 2012

- NONE

Officer contact details for documents:

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