

**Appendix A**

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<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel</b>
<b>Date</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> November 2013
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Corporate Parenting Annual Report</b>
<b>Report of</b>	Improving outcomes for children
<b>Summary of Report</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> Annual Report November 2013

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<b>Enclosures:</b>	None

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. This report is prepared for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP). It is the first annual report and sets the national and local context, a profile of the children and young people and it details the activities that have contributed to improving outcomes for children and young people for whom Barnet have a duty of care.

## **2. Background**

- 2.1. Corporate parenting is the term used to refer to the collective responsibility of the council to provide the best possible care, protection and opportunity for children and young people in care and leaving care. Effective corporate parenting needs a commitment from all council employees, elected members and partner agencies and requires a collaborative approach. (Barnet Corporate Parenting Strategy April 2010).
- 2.2. The terms 'children in care' or 'looked-after children' refer to all children under the age of 18 for whom the local authority have a duty of care under the provision of The Children Act 1989 via a court order (Care Order Section 31) or with the voluntary agreement of their parents (Section 20). Since December 2012, young people remanded into custody under Section 106 of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishing of Offenders Act (LASPO) 2012 also come into care. Care leavers are supported under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 up to the age of 21 however, support can continue beyond that time if they remain in education.

## **3. National Context**

- 3.1. In 1998 Frank Dobson, as Secretary of State for Health, launched a programme of transformation for Children's Services. He wrote to all councillors underlining their vital role and his message for councillors was to ask themselves "Is this good enough for my child?" The Children and Young Persons Act 2008 highlights the importance of corporate parenting as one of the priority issues for shaping services to children in care.
- 3.2. Good corporate parenting relies upon ownership and leadership at council level, including all senior members of staff from across the council and elected members. To be a good corporate parent requires that all involvement and interventions in the lives of children and young people in care or leaving care, should stand comparison with the care and attention given by any good parent to their own child. This includes enhancing the quality of life as well as keeping children and young people safe.

- 3.3. The Local Government Association published “Questions to ask if you are scrutinising services for looked after children in 2012”:

*“When they are elected, all councillors take on the role of ‘corporate parent’ to children looked after by their local authority. They have a duty to take an interest in the wellbeing and development of those children, as if they were their own. Although the lead member for children’s services has particular responsibilities, the role of corporate parent is carried by all councillors, regardless of their role on the council. Overview and scrutiny offers a key way in which councillors can fulfil this responsibility, by giving them the opportunity to ask searching questions of a range of service providers and assure themselves that children in the care of the local authority are being well looked after.”*

#### **4. Local Context**

- 4.1. Corporate Parenting in Barnet is underpinned by the 2013 Corporate Plan’s strategic objective to “support families and individuals that need it – promoting independence, learning and well being.” The Corporate Plan’s outcome to “create better life chances for children and young people across the borough” is the driver for striving for excellent Corporate Parenting in Barnet.
- 4.2. Barnet’s Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out the structure and principles for corporate parenting in Barnet identifying three levels of responsibility. The Lead Member for Education, Children and Families and the Director of People, who is the statutory Director of Children’s Services, hold the level one specialist responsibility to take the lead to champion the corporate parenting agenda. The level two targeted responsibility for corporate parenting is held by the Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel, the Corporate Management Group and the Children’s Service Managers, officers and partner agencies. The level three universal responsibility for corporate parenting is held by the whole Council, elected members, officers and partner agencies.
- 4.3. In 2012 the Ofsted inspection of safeguarding and looked after children, found the overall effectiveness of services for looked after children, young people and care leavers to be good. It found that the council and partners provide effective management and leadership, including through elected members, to secure a wide range of services across the borough to meet the diverse needs of the looked after population.

They stated:

*“the council and partners demonstrate good ambition and prioritisation for looked after children and care leavers leading to good outcomes overall. Corporate parenting arrangements are established and elected members are committed to raising levels of aspiration and attainment. The inclusion of young people within the corporate parenting board is also ensuring that the voices of looked after children are being represented. The board is rigorous in highlighting that all council departments are responsible for corporate parenting.”*

## **5. Barnet’s Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel (CPAP)**

- 5.1. CPAP is chaired by the council’s Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families and has cross party membership. There are 8 members of the panel. In May 2013 at the Annual Council Meeting there was a change in the Chair of the Panel and there were some changes to the membership of the Panel. The terms of reference, which were endorsed by the Panel, state that the role of the Panel is to:

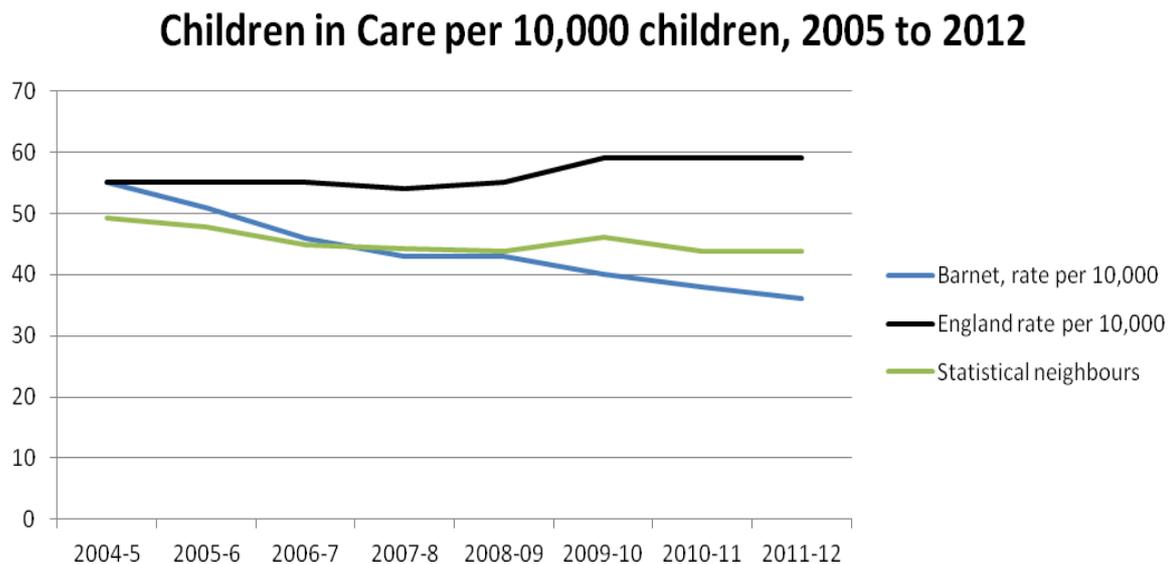
*‘...support the London Borough of Barnet’s Corporate Parenting Strategy and... assist the council and its partners in being a better parent to children and young people in care and care leavers. The Panel will ensure that the whole council and its partner agencies have a joint commitment to corporate parenting in order to achieve continuing improvements to outcomes for children in care and care leavers.’*

- 5.2. At the CPAP meeting on 4 September 2012, the Panel made the decision to reshape the governance and to formalise the link between the Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Panel agreed that establishing a formal reporting mechanism would increase the focus of the Panel on outcomes. Issues that can be addressed by CPAP can be expedited in a timely way and more complex issues that would benefit from wider engagement with non-executive members and the public could be referred to the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration in a formal committee setting.
- 5.3. The Panel meets on a quarterly basis. Members agree the forward plan and the agenda for each meeting reflects items of interest, there are also regular items to be reported annually. This encourages flexibility so that where topics of specific interest arise these can be placed on the plan and addressed and considered in a timely way.

## 6. Profile of children in care

6.1. Barnet had 310 children and young people in care as at 31 March 2013. As a rate per 10,000 children aged 0-17, this was 37, which is notably less than the national average (60). See Figure 1 and Table 1 comparing Barnet's children in care rate per 10, 000 children with statistical neighbours between 2005 and 2012.

6.2. **Figure 1: Comparison of the rates of children in care per 1000 of Barnet's closest statistical neighbours**



6.3. **Table 1: Rates of children in care per 10,000 at 2011/12 for Barnet's closest statistical neighbours. Data for 2012/13 is not yet published.**

Statistical Neighbour*	Children in care per 10,000
Merton	30
Redbridge	31
Sutton	35
Barnet	36
Kingston	38
Hounslow	56
Hillingdon	58
Reading	71
Average	44

\*DfE Children's Services Statistical Neighbour Benchmarking Tool

6.4. Of the children in care at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2013:

- 126 are female (41%)
- 180 are male (59%)
- 177 (57%) belong to an ethnic group other than white
- 41 (13%) is the largest single ethnic group, which is black British African

## 7. Children's Placements

7.1. The importance of providing a safe and stable placement for children in care and care leavers is vital to maximising their full potential and a key part of corporate parenting. When children and young people become looked-after, the local authority always consider familial networks and will place them with their own family members, if there are no suitable family or friends then placements will be made with foster carers or within residential children's home. The decision for where to place is based on the child's individual needs. There is a matching process and consideration is given to the wishes and feelings of the child and their parents.

7.2. Table 2 reflects the different types of placements. The table differentiates between internal and external placements. Internal foster care and internal residential care denote that these providers are approved, supervised and regulated by Barnet, whereas external foster carers and residential homes are from the 'independent' sector. As placements are made in accordance with the child's needs, Barnet use a mixture of internal and external providers.

**Table 2: Numbers of Barnet CiC in different placement types**

<b>No of CiC as at 19/11/ 2013</b>	310
<b>No of CiC in internal fostering</b>	115 internal fostering
<b>No of CiC in internal residential</b>	12
<b>No of CiC in external fostering</b>	90 external fostering
<b>No of CiC in external residential</b>	36
<b>No of CiC living in Barnet</b>	102 from Barnet
<b>No of children in Remand placements</b>	3
<b>No of young people in Secure</b>	0*
<b>Kinship placements (Reg 24)</b>	18
<b>CiC placed at home</b>	5

\*There has been 1 Secure placement in this financial year.

- 7.3. Every child in care has a care plan. This is reviewed independently at a Looked After Review (LAR) and is chaired by an Independent Reviewing Officer within the first month. Looked After Reviews are then held at regular intervals with a remit of ensuring that the Local Authority is fulfilling its duty to enacting the plan. The Looked After Review process monitors and oversees the child's journey in care, ensuring that there are robust and clear plans that are being followed in a timely way. Recommendations are made at each review and at the second review the issue of permanence is discussed and agreed if the child cannot be reunified at home.
- 7.4. Since 2010 there has been a raft of revisions to guidance's relating to care planning and duties on the Local Authority. Volume 2: Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 specifies the requirements for care plans, including health and education plans, placement decision and case reviews. It consolidates previous regulations and guidance, providing a central source of reference for local authority to work with looked-after children.
- 7.5. Table 3 shows the stability of children who have been looked after continuously for at least a one year period. They do not reflect the total number of children that have been looked after within one year, when taken into account these figures add between 100 and 130 children that come in and out of care. Therefore, Children's Services can work with 450 children in care in any given year. It also depicts the percentage of Barnet children in care who have had three or more placements in any year. These include planned moves and moves to adoptive and permanent placements. It also shows the numbers and percentages of children under the age of 16 who have remained in the same placement for at least 2 ½ years.

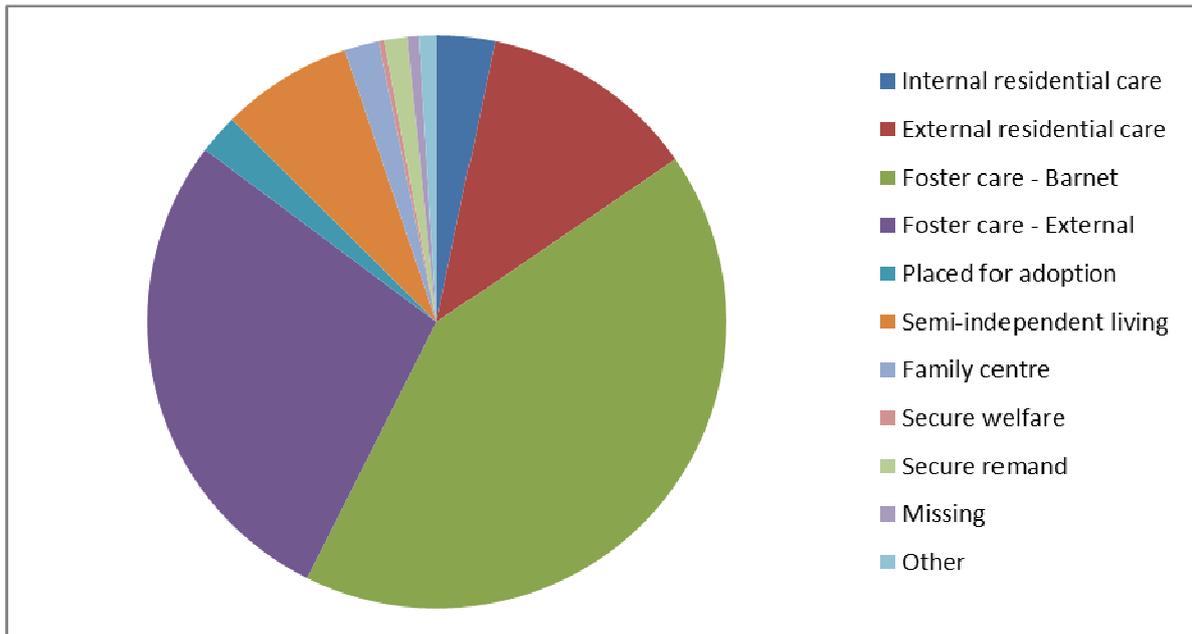
**Table 3: Placement Stability of CiC between 2007 – Present**

Year	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Number of CiC	345	330	330	310	305	298	306
% 3 moves or more	13.2%	11.9%	9.5%	10%	6.3%	4%	11.7%
Stability 2.5 years CiC	105 of 145 (70%)	85 of 140 (60%)	85 of 135 (64%)	86 of 25 (64%)	80 of 120 (67%)	88 of 140 (63%)	83 of 137 (61%)

7.6. In order to ensure efficiency and value for money from the independent sector Barnet have joined the West London Alliance (WLA). This is a partnership between 9 London boroughs who use their collective buying power to drive down costs and attract discounts on cost and volume.

Figure 2 shows a representation of where all Barnet's children are placed as at August 2013.

**Figure 2: Placement distribution of Barnet CiC as at August 2013**



## 8. Corporate Parenting Team

8.1. Barnet's corporate parenting team is a multidisciplinary team based in Social Care. The Team supports and promotes the interests and needs of Barnet children in care and care leavers placed in and out of Barnet. The structure of the team ensures that there is a holistic approach. The team comprises of workers from education, health and participation.

## 9. Health

9.1. The health team work to ensure that all looked after children and young people are physically, mentally, emotionally and sexually healthy. They co-ordinate initial health assessment, within four weeks; review health assessments are completed by the nurses and are undertaken twice yearly for under-five's and annually for children over the age of five. These are organised at a time and venue suitable to the child/young person.

9.2. The health team complete strength and difficulty questionnaires (SDQ) with children in care and their carers at the health review; these give a measure of emotional health. Table 4 shows the average SDQ score in Barnet over the past three years. The health team follows up with social workers any scores that are considered a concern and will explore what is required if CAMHS and other appropriate therapeutic support services are not already in place.

**Table 4: SDQ Statistics for Barnet's Children in Care aged 4 to 16 looked after for a year or more 2010, 2011, 2012**

	Total number of eligible children	Number of eligible children with an SDQ score	Percentage of eligible children for whom an SDQ score was submitted	Average score per child	Percentage of eligible children with an SDQ score considered:		
					Normal	Borderline	Concern
2010	180	170	92	14.5	44	13	43
2011	170	165	98	14.8	44	13	43
2012	155	155	99	13.9	51	12	37

9.3. The health team provides health advice to professionals within social care and assist with specialist referrals in and out of borough. Barnet's Young People Drug and Alcohol project, YPDAS provided by the Tavistock and Portman, offer services to all Barnet's children and prioritise children in care. The Designated Nurse works closely with Barnet's Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) for Looked after Children discussing and progressing referrals to the service. The CAMHS team work with Barnet's children in care, foster carers and offer regular consultation to social workers and the two children's homes in Barnet. The Designated Nurse for children in care compiles and presents an annual report to CPAP. A recent pre audit of services in Barnet commended the health team on their first class service. Table 5 illustrates the health outcomes for Barnet's children in care in 2012 compared with all London and all England.

**Table 5: Health Statistics for Barnet’s Children in Care who had been looked after for at least twelve as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

	Total number of Children Looked After	Number of children whose immunisations were up to date	Number of children who had their teeth checked by a dentist	Number of children who had their annual health assessment	Number of children aged 5 or younger	% of these children whose development assessments were up to date
Barnet	200	175 (87.5%)	165 (82.5%)	195 (97.5%)	15	15 (100%)
All London	6980	83.5	84	92	1080	87%
All England	46590	83	82	86	9430	80%

## 10. Schools

10.1. Barnet has 122 schools, comprising 4 nursery schools, 89 primary schools, 22 secondary schools, 4 special schools and 3 pupil referral units. There are 17 academies in Barnet (15 secondary and two primary), and there are two Free Schools. 97 looked after children (53%) are educated in Barnet schools.

## 11. The Virtual School for Children in Care

11.1. The Virtual School is a concept. It has accountability for all children in care to Barnet who are of statutory school age and treats them as if they are in one organisation. The Virtual School has a staff team that is led by the Head Teacher and their function is to track and monitor educational attainment and set targets to improve academic success.

11.2. Success in education in the broadest sense is one of the main resilience and protective factors to give children and young people so they can thrive and reach their potential in life. The Virtual School works to narrow the gap between outcomes for Barnet’s children in care and care leavers and the general population; to raise attainment and accelerate rates of progress; to promote inclusion, ensure effective planning and action and develop community links to promote the cohesion of the network around the child in care.

11.3. The Virtual School ensures that all children have access to a school placement or alternative education provision; it monitors pupil progress and

provides advice, resources, training and interventions to children and young people, social workers, designated teachers and carers. The Advisory Teacher leads on the PEP Action Plan to ensure all children in care have a high quality, timely Personal Education Plan that forms part of the child's Care Plan.

11.4. Table 6 shows the Barnet schools attended.

**Table 6: Profile of Children in Care and their school placements November 2013**

<b>No of CiC in Virtual School</b>	182
<b>Total Primary Schools CiC</b>	57*
<b>Primary Schools In Borough</b>	41
<b>Primary Schools OOB</b>	16
<b>Total Secondary Schools CiC</b>	125
<b>Secondary Schools In Borough</b>	56
<b>Secondary Schools OOB</b>	68
<b>No Secondary School</b>	2**

\* 1 of which has no school as abroad on SGO

\*\* Both children are missing

11.5. The Virtual School have developed new projects this year to support Children in Care in their education such as a Monday night homework club at Woodhouse Road Young Peoples Centre, Project 8/9 and the Grasvenor Project.

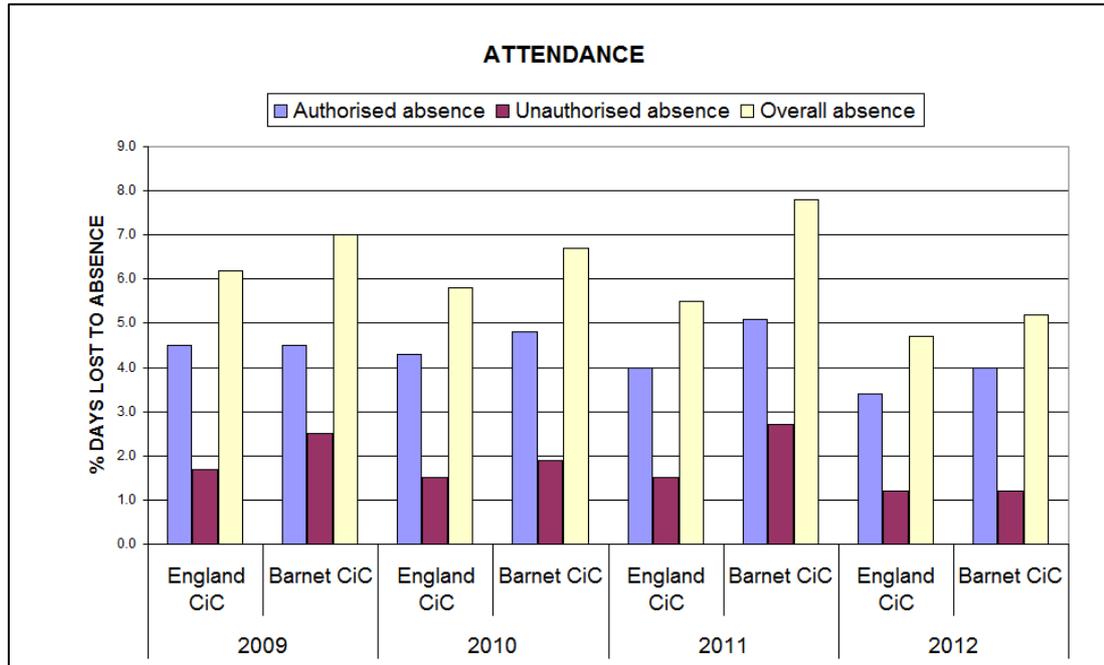
11.6. Project 8/9 is offered to all children in care in key stage 3 who are able to access Canada Villas outside of school hours in the summer term. It is designed to develop relationships with key stage 3 pupils and their carers and understand further what their needs are. It allows all participants to get to know each other and experience educational opportunities which may not otherwise have been offered to them. Last year the young people went to the theatre, for lunch, canoeing, and were offered the opportunity to produce and record music, had a BBQ which everyone contributed to and went camping.

11.7. The Grasvenor Project is run in 2 schools in Barnet and offers support to children in care who are experiencing difficulty in their educational provision for whatever reason including low self-esteem, low confidence, emotional difficulty and those at risk of exclusion from school. There are currently 6 young people on the project and it has worked with 13 young people in the year who are no longer on the project. Each participant is offered the

opportunity to attend the school one day each week for a minimum of a term. They keep a journal of their weekly participation and there are regular reviews of progress. Each child in care is offered a Lead Mentor in the school who works closely with them to address and identify any areas of concern. Lead Learning Mentors report back each week to the Virtual School on the events of the day. Children in care leave the project when they are ready to and when they are no longer experiencing the difficulty in school.

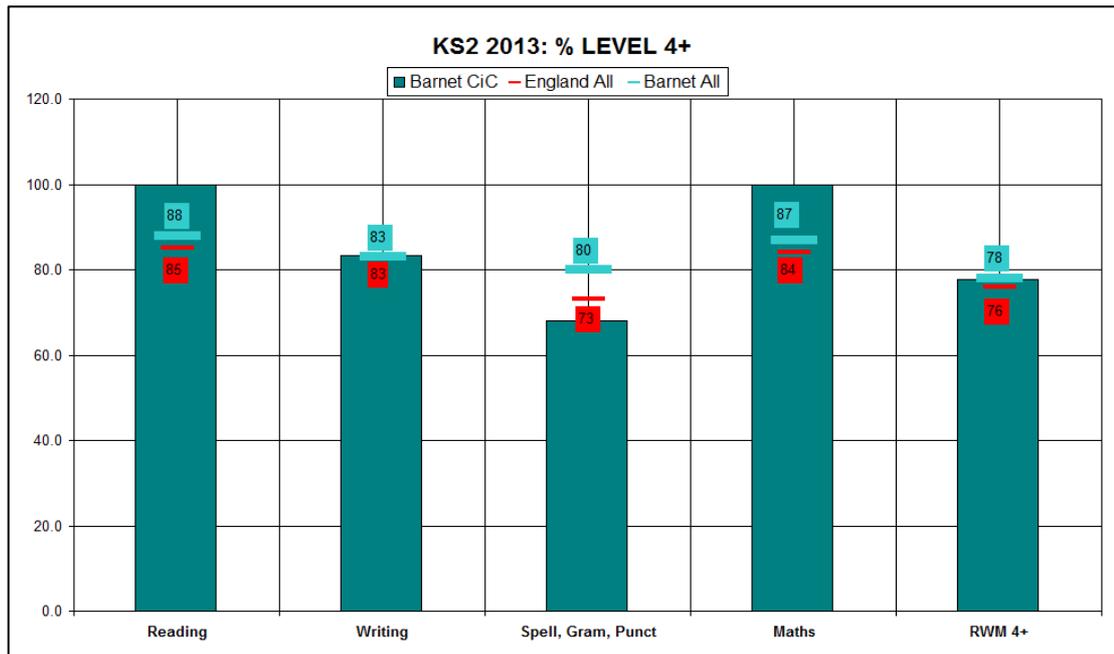
- 11.8. At the November 2012 CPAP meeting a presentation was given on education outcomes for 'looked after children'. The Head of the Virtual School outlined the barriers to learning children in care can face and the range of interventions to raise educational attainment the Virtual School offers to pupils attending schools in and outside of Barnet at each key stage.
- 11.9. Figure 3 compares absence rates attendance data for children in care in Barnet with the national statistics. This indicates that Barnet's children in care's attendance has improved in 2012 and are now in line with national rates.

**Figure 3: School absences for children in care in Barnet and nationally between 2009-2012.**



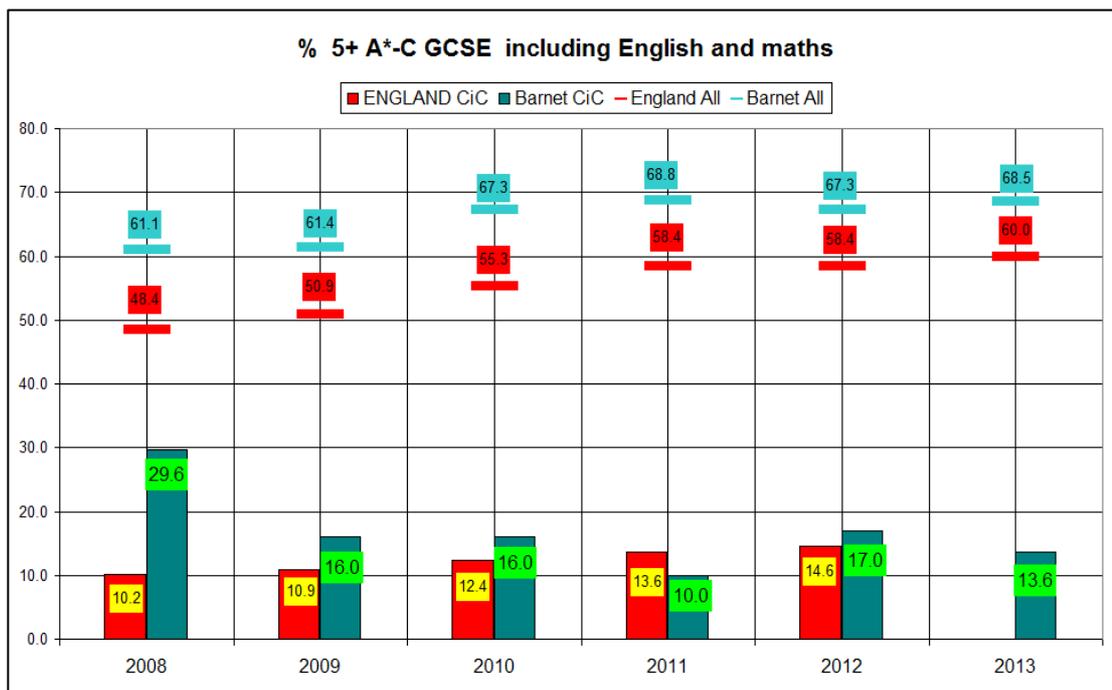
- 11.10. Figure 4 shows the number of children in care for a year or more in key stage 2 who have attained a level 4+ in key stage 2. These excellent results encompass a very small cohort.

**Figure 4: % of Barnet Children in Key Stage 2 achieving Level 4 + in 2013 in key subjects with comparison to national attainment figures**



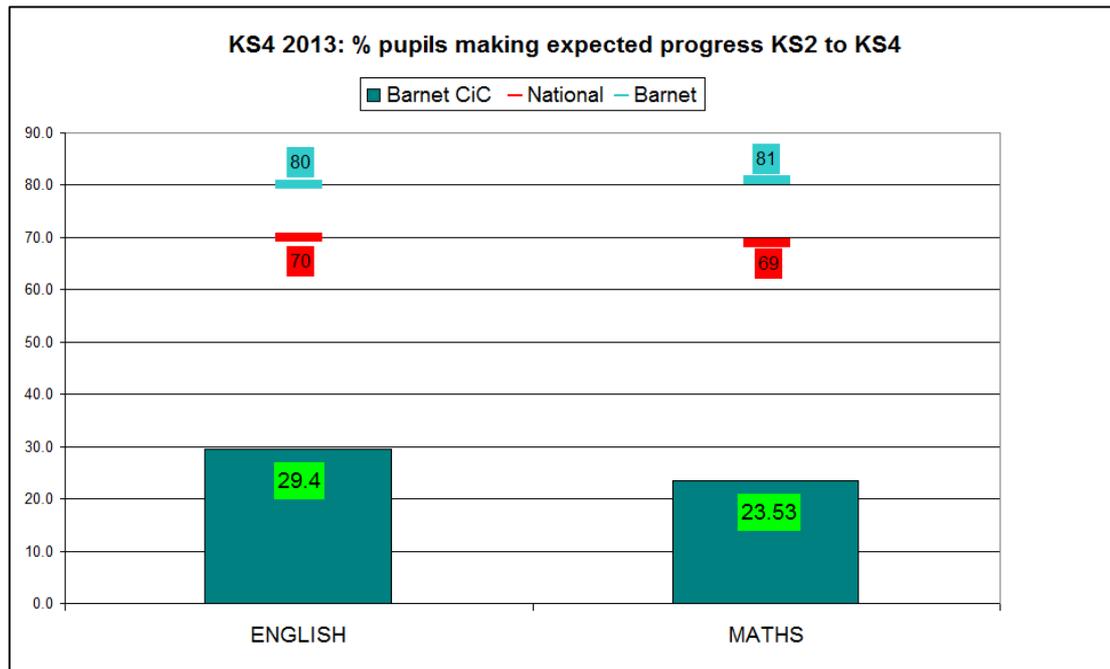
11.11. Figure 5 shows the percentage of Barnet's children in care for a year or more achieving 5+ A\* - C GCSE including English and Maths compared with all England children in care, all Barnet pupils, and all England pupils.

**Figure 5: Barnet and national statistics for % of all children and children in care achieving 5 A\*-C GCSE grades including Maths and English**



11.12. Figure 6 illustrates the percentage of children in care making the expected progress from key stage 2 to key stage 4 compared with all Barnet pupils and all England pupils highlighting the achievement gap that needs to be narrowed.

**Figure 6: % of Barnet children and children in care making the expected progress between Key Stage 2 and 4 in English and Maths with comparison to national progress figures**



11.13. The Educational Psychologist from Barnet's Virtual School presented a report on special education needs at the September 2013 Panel. The changes for SEN in the new Children and Families Bill 2013 were discussed and the introduction of the Education, Health and Care Plan to replace a Statement.

11.14. The Education Champions Scheme 2013 was launched in November 2013. The scheme involves matching social workers who hold responsibilities for children in Year 6 and Year 9. The Education Champions are from the most senior managers in Barnet Council and partners, their remit is to question and critically appraise the work undertaken with children in order to raise their educational attainment. The scheme represents corporate parenting in action and will be evaluated at the end of the academic year to inform the development of the scheme.

## **12. Participation**

- 12.1. Children and young people are at the centre of Corporate Parenting and hearing their voice, knowing their rights, having fun, encouraging their participation, and ensuring its impact on service delivery are key components of participation work in Barnet. Children in care and care leavers in Barnet are making a significant contribution to surveys, consultations and focus groups on a local, regional and national level.
- 12.2. Barnet's Children in Care Council is called the Role Model Army (RMA) and was set up in 2010 for young people in care and leaving care aged 14 upwards. There are currently 17 members of the RMA. The RMA meets fortnightly on a Thursday evening and is supported by the participation officer, a targeted youth worker and a social worker. The Junior Role Model Army (JRMA) was set up in October 2012 for children in care aged 8 to 13 years. There are currently 10 members of the JRMA. The JRMA meets monthly on a Saturday and is supported by the participation officer, a social worker and a member of the RMA. Both groups have very committed memberships that include children and young people placed out of borough. Currently there are discussions with the RMA and Participation Officer for the Independent Reviewing Officers to regularly join their sessions to improve partnership working and communication.
- 12.3. At the respective sessions there are a variety of activities and the children and young people talk and plan how things can be made better for children and young people in and leaving care. Both groups are visited by councillors, senior managers and officers for discussions and consultations, to ensure the voice of children in care is at the centre of service planning and delivery in Barnet. Representatives of RMA are regularly invited to the Children in Care and Leaving Care Service meeting to work together with social workers improving services for children in care and care leavers.
- 12.4. In March 2012 the CPAP reviewed its terms of reference and extended an open invitation to the Role Model Army (RMA, Barnet's Children in Care Council) to participate in Panel meetings. All CPAP papers are now sent to the Role Model Army representatives on CPAP ahead of the meetings and have a slot at the beginning of every meeting. The Participation Officer has attended all 5 meetings, in the year, to support the RMA representatives and ensure that key information is fed back to the RMA, when they are unable to attend. The RMA have 2 representatives on CPAP and in the 5 CPAP meetings between September 2012 and September 2013 the RMA have attended 2 and provided a film for all Councillors about Barnet's Care in September 2012 and a film for the May 2013 panel.

### **13. Good outcomes from participation**

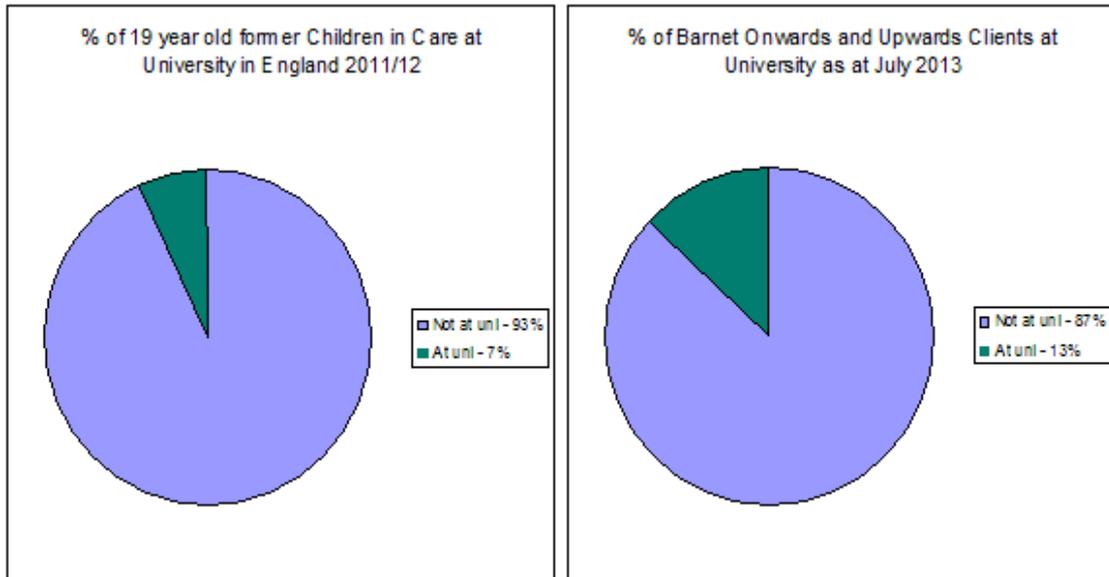
- 13.1. The RMA chose to focus the Barnet's Care 2 film on three priority areas that they felt had the greatest impact upon the health and well being of children and young people in Barnet's care. The three key areas were: emotional wellbeing, education and transition. The film 'Our Voice' the Junior RMA created was shown at the May 2013 Panel and described their journeys in care, their aspirations for the future and some of their experiences and wishes and feelings in care. Both films have been used for training with CPAP, Children Services staff and Barnet foster carers.
- 13.2. Members of the RMA have also been involved in the staff interview processes on a regular basis. They have undertaken the 'Total Respect' training and are delivering this to other workers and social care professionals.
- 13.3. The September 2012 CPAP was informed of the plan to develop a Barnet Pledge, using the views obtained at Barnet's first 'Speak Out Day' for children in care and care leavers, and the information from the pledge survey and consultations with the RMA and Junior RMA. 'Speak Out Day' was held in August 2012 at Tottenham Hotspurs Football Stadium. The Barnet pledge is now incorporated in the Welcome Pack for children in care and has been sent out to all children in care and care leavers and their social workers. The RMA is leading on plans to review the Barnet pledge at the next Speak Out Day in Barnet in March 2014.
- 13.4. Barnet celebrates the achievements of all their children in care and care leavers at an annual Achievement Day. There were two Achievements Days this year, one in October 2012 and one in August 2013. This is a very important day in Barnet where children and young people come together with their carers, social workers, the Mayor, councillors, Children's Service staff, senior managers, and partner agencies to enjoy activities, eat together and participate in a ceremony where each child's achievement for the year is acknowledged with a certificate. The Mayor of Barnet sends birthday cards to all children and young people in care which were designed by children and young people at Achievements Day.

## 14. Leaving Care Service

- 14.1. In September 2012 a presentation was given by Barnet's Service Manager for Children in Care and Care Leavers to CPAP highlighting the proposed changes to the Leaving Care Service. Barnet's leaving care service was restructured in November 2012 and set up as a social work practice, launched with a new name Onwards and Upwards, in December 2012. In September 2013 the Business Manager for the Onwards and Upwards Service presented a report of the new service. In response to this presentation CPAP requested that the Cabinet Member for Children, School and Families invite the Senior Housing Allocation Officer and the Cabinet Member for Housing to the next meeting (November 2013) to discuss the housing needs of care leavers and the housing options available to care leavers in Barnet.
- 14.2. The team works with care leavers over 18 and prepares young people 16 and 17 years old for moving into independence. The leaving care service is delivered from Woodhouse Road Young People's Centre and provides individual work with young people and a range of drop ins offering general advice, health advice, and education employment and training advice. At any one time the leaving care service works with over 200 care leavers.
- 14.3. At the September 2013 Panel the targeted youth worker for 16+ young people in care and leaving care presented an overview of young people in care, 16+, and care leavers' progress, destinations and interventions. The targeted youth worker has developed links across Barnet Council, and with other organisations such as charities, colleges and training providers to increase the offer to young people to support them into Education, Employment and Training. Barnet has referred 46 young people to the E18hteen Project, a 3 year partnership with the Virtual Schools of Haringey, Enfield and Waltham Forest and Tottenham Hotspur Football Club aimed at keeping 16+ care leavers in, or getting them back into, education, employment and training. The project offers each young person a mentor and a range of opportunities for education, training, sports participation and volunteering. 25 Barnet young people engaged with the project and young people involved have reported feeling both physically and emotionally better and the project having a positive impact on their employability and social network. Barnet is planning to continue this partnership with E18ghteen Phase II starting in January 2013.
- 14.4. The statistics for young people in care in Education, Employment and Training, (EET) in Year 12 in Barnet reflect favourably against the most recently reported statistics for England (2011/12). **83%** of CIC in England were EET in Year 12 at the start of academic year 2012/13 compared with

**88%** of Barnet young people in care. At the end of Year 12, **87%** of Barnet clients are still EET.

- 14.5. Barnet's care leavers compare favourably with the most recently published national data for England (2012/13). 13% of Barnet care leavers are at university, compared with 7% of leaving care young people in England, in the academic year 2011/12 at the point of turning 19.



There are currently 27 young people at university with cases open to the Onwards and Upwards team.

## 15. Fostering

- 15.1. The fostering and adoption function provide specialist and different services; both services are essential and integral to the work that we do with our children. The two services are highly regulated and they have been subject to separate inspections, however Ofsted's newly implemented inspection of Children's Services regime will incorporate their findings on fostering and adoption services into their overall inspection framework.
- 15.2. The fostering service consists of three teams the recruitment and training team, support and development team and kinship and permanence team. The service was inspected by Ofsted on 6.11.12 and the overall effectiveness was judged to be good. At the time of the inspection there were 111 fostering households and they were caring for 128 children, including kinship placements. There has been a reduction in the total number of fostering households, and in July 2013 there were 103 fostering households. There were 10 new approvals of 'recruited carers' over the last

two years, however there were also 11 households ended through resignations or de-registrations.

- 15.3. Kinship placements under Regulation 24 of the Fostering Regulations (Volume 4) 2010 defines that family and friends carers are assessed, regulated and supported in the same way as other approved foster carers. Unless they have undertaken the training they would not be approved to take other unrelated looked after children. Therefore, when the child leaves their care they are no longer foster carers.

Ofsted stated that,

*“The service sustains fostering placements very well through high quality of support and supervision”, “There are effective procedures and practices to ensure the assessment process of foster carers is robust and the service is successful in its efforts to retain approved foster carers”. “Leadership and management of the fostering service are strong”.*

- 15.4. The Fostering Development Group undertake regular analysis and an overview of the service, which includes prospective carers, vacancies, placements and the use of external fostering placements. There is a drive to increase the number of in house foster carers as they tend to be local to Barnet, they are supported, monitored and supervised by Barnet social workers. ‘IMPOWER’ is a fostering recruitment project and Barnet have commissioned them to work with us to increase our bank of in house foster carers.

## **16. Adoption**

- 16.1. The Service Manager presented the adoption report to CPAP on 7.5.13 which including the adoption scorecard. The adoption scorecard measures the average time between a child entering care and moving in with their adoptive family, the average time between the local authority receiving a Placement Order and deciding on a match, and children who wait less than 21 months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family. Following the publishing of the Adoption scorecard, which showed an increase of 91 days on the previous submission, the DfE suggested a diagnostic assessment which was accepted. A report was produced in January 2013 and found that the adoption service was making good and timely decisions for children.
- 16.2. Barnet are a member of the North London Adoption and Fostering Consortium, which is a partnership with 5 other local authorities. This is very beneficial to the development of the service and meets government’s

agenda to increase the number of adoptions and speed up the adoption process. A joint recruitment team has been set up to increase the number of prospective adopters. The team is working to the new regulations and assessing 'fostering to adopt' placements. Barnet has received a one off payment from the Adoption Reform Grant which is to assist in improving timely recruitment for prospective adopters.

- 16.3. One of the functions of the adoption team is 'permanency planning'. Routes to permanence can be through long term fostering with the same carers, Residence Orders, Special Guardianship Orders and Adoption. Following the Family Justice Review a Court Manager has been appointed for one year to track, monitor and quality assure cases that are before the family courts. The purpose is to reduce delays in care proceedings to ensure that permanence for children is concluded in a timely way. The Project works with both Enfield and Haringey as all three boroughs share the same court.

## **17. Commissioned services that support children in care**

- 17.1. There are a range of services commissioned to deliver bespoke services for children in care and care leavers.
- The Childrens Rights and Advocacy Service are commissioned from Barnardos to provide independent advocates for children and young people who are looked after by Barnet.
  - The Independent Visitors Scheme was commissioned from CommUNITY Barnet to provide independent visitors for twelve children in care. This locally based service was unable to meet the needs of children and young people placed far out of Barnet so this will be re-tendered; until such time independent visitors are spot purchased.
  - Welfare Call is a specialist company that provides daily attendance data and termly progress data for the Virtual School.
  - The Letterbox Club is commissioned from the Booktrust and provides children and young people in care from eight to thirteen with 6 monthly parcel of selected books and educational resources posted to each child's home.
  - The Virtual School identifies pupils for tuition; this is commissioned from a range of tuition agencies.
  - Children in care over 11 years and care leavers engaged in education are provided with laptops; these are supplied and serviced by Barnet Schools IT Service.

## **18. Summary**

- 18.1. There is a whole range of activities undertaken with children and young people throughout their journey in care. Corporate parenting works best when the whole council and its partner agencies understand their duties and responsibilities to our children and young people and are committed to improving the outcomes for our children. The Corporate Parenting Strategy sets out the principles and values that underpin our work. It is essential that we have aspirations for our children and that we set high expectations for ourselves as corporate parents to ensure that every opportunity is offered to our children in care and young people. Barnet is listening to our children and young people and they are involved in the design and delivery of the services. Our children and young people show a huge commitment and engagement to improve services. Corporate parenting is embedded in Barnet and there are good structures in place. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Panel plays a key role in leading, challenging and strengthening the work that we undertake in Barnet to improve the life chances for our children.
- 18.2. Future actions are addressed in the CPAP forward agenda

Dated: 22/11/2013