



## Cabinet

<b>Title</b>	Corporate Parenting Annual Reports
<b>Date of meeting</b>	18 October 2023
<b>Report of</b>	Councillor Pauline CoakleyWebb, Cabinet Member for Family Friendly Barnet
<b>Wards</b>	All
<b>Status</b>	Public
<b>Key</b>	Non-key
<b>Urgent</b>	No
<b>Appendices</b>	<p>Appendix A – Corporate Parenting Annual Report</p> <p>Appendix B – Fostering Annual Report</p> <p>Appendix C – Adopt North London Annual Report</p> <p>Appendix D – Independent Reviewing Service Annual Report</p> <p>Appendix E – Virtual School Annual Report</p> <p>Appendix F – CLCH LAC Health Annual Report</p>
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### Summary

The reports provide an update on activity and performance of Children and Families, Education and Health services for 2022 - 23 to demonstrate the progress that is being made on delivering against Barnet Council's pledge to the children in our care and care experienced young adults.

## Recommendations

1. That Cabinet note the contents of Corporate Parenting Annual Reports
2. That the reports be referred to Council for noting, to ensure understanding of their statutory role as corporate parents and to be aware of progress and challenges for services to children in our care and care experienced young adults

### 1. Reasons for the Recommendations

- 1.1 The services providing care and support to the children in our care and care experienced young adults prepare the annual report that sets out the activity, performance and achievements of services and most importantly of the children and young adults. As corporate parents, the councillors must be kept informed on how the services are meeting the wholistic needs of the children and young adults.
- 1.2 Our children in care and care experienced young adults have over the last year continued to show such impressive motivation and resilience as they face a complex world that is harder than ever to navigate. Our Corporate Parenting responsibilities across the whole council has continued to strengthen over the last year with even more collaboration with colleagues across the council and partner agencies in Education, Health and the voluntary sector. We have seen progress in placement stability despite the significant national challenges in placement sufficiency, permanency planning for our very young children has been more timely with court timescales improving and for our older children work experience projects have expanded. Education outcomes continue to improve despite our children having lost so much learning during the pandemic and our local offer for care experienced young adults demonstrates the partnership working that is delivering on our Independent Living Programmes with Education, Housing, Revenue and benefits, the Live Unlimited Charity and Adult Services. We are very proud of what services have achieved for our children and young adults but that would not be possible without the strength of the child and young person's voice that directs us to develop services and opportunities that respond to them and show that what they say matters.
- 1.3 In June 2021 Ofsted completed a focussed visit looking at service to children in care and highlighted two areas of social work practice that need to improve: Case recording, including the recording of supervision, visits and direct work with children and the rationale for decision-making on placements and the completion and quality of 'All About Me' plans. In response to these recommendations, we have consistently audited case files to identify examples of good practice and highlight where improvement is needed. Team managers and auditors have worked alongside practitioners to ensure that information from the audits inform practice, and the case files effectively represent the excellent practice that teams are producing. The most recent quarterly report shows ongoing improvements and evidence that the audit actions are being used in supervision to reflect on practice.
- 1.4 The Corporate Parenting report sets our progress against the 6 pledges within the Corporate Parenting Strategy
- 1.5 The Fostering report informs on the recruitment activity that is ongoing to increase the number of Barnet foster carers, the support that is in place for our foster carers and initiative being worked on to improve the capacity to ensure that when children cannot remain with their family they are placed locally, in the right place first time.
- 1.6 Legislation requiring local authorities to deliver adoption services through Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) was passed in 2016 in the Education & Adoption Act. London RAA's were

launched in 2019. Adopt London North is a partnership between the six London boroughs of Barnet, Camden, Enfield, Hackney, Haringey, and Islington. The adoption functions of the six boroughs officially became part of Adopt London North on 1st October 2019, hosted by the London Borough of Islington as the lead partner. Adopt London North has responsibility for all adoption led services, delivering these on behalf of the local authorities. These include: • Recruitment and assessment of adoptive parents • Family finding for children in need of adoptive parents • Adoption support to adoptive families, adopted adults, and others impacted by adoption. The annual report provides details on these services for the year 2022/23.

1.7 Every child who is in our care has an independent reviewing officer assigned to them and they work alongside the child, the carers and the professional network to ensure that the child's needs are fully understood, that their care arrangement is appropriate and meets the needs and provides an independent view on the progress of the care planning in place for the child. The report attached gives the overview of this work for the last year. The Independent Reviewing Service is managed within the Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Workforce Development Service to ensure that the Independent Reviewing Officers' (IRO's) input and contribution to social work practice and care planning for children and young people is distinct from case holding service areas. The Head of Service has a direct line of accountability to the Executive Director of Children's Services: they meet regularly to review any practice concerns independently.

1.8 The Virtual School is the key educational advocacy service for all children in care (CIC), whether educated in Barnet or placed out of authority. The focus of our statutory duty is to improve educational outcomes through challenging and supporting schools, academies, and specialist settings to ensure that CIC:

- Attend school on a full-time basis.
- Receive the best possible opportunities as learners by accessing mainstream education or where appropriate specialist or alternative provisions and through attending schools which are judged to be at least good in Ofsted inspections.
- Maintain at least expected rates of progress relative to their starting points on becoming looked after.
- Close the achievement gap with their peers

Consistent progress is being made to improve the educational outcomes and the report informs on these achievements across the academic year of 2022/23.

1.9 The Looked After Children Health team is a jointly commissioned serviced between Barnet Family Services and the ICB. The report attached sets out the activity and outcomes of the provider CLCH for 2022/23. The report reviews the delivery of health services to Barnet's children in care, and discusses achievements made for the year in accordance with statutory guidance, as well as service improvements and plans for further developments. It reviews performance indicators and summarises the data in relation to Initial and Review health assessments, indicating where assessments have not been achieved and provides rationale for this.

## **2. Alternative Options Considered and Not Recommended**

None

<b>3. Post Decision Implementation</b>
None
<b>4. Corporate Priorities, Performance and Other Considerations</b>
<p><b>Corporate Plan</b></p> <p>4.1 Corporate parenting services to children in care and care experienced young adults that keeps children safe from harm and enables them to thrive into adulthood is part of the council’s Family Friendly vision ‘where children and young people have the best start in life with the best education, the right support and safeguarding when they need it, and the right tools to live their lives successfully into adulthood’.</p> <p><b>Corporate Performance / Outcome Measures</b></p> <p>4.2 Not applicable for this report</p> <p><b>Sustainability</b></p> <p>4.3 Not applicable for this report</p> <p><b>Corporate Parenting</b></p> <p>4.4 In line with Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Council has a duty to consider Corporate Parenting Principles in decision-making across the Council. The outcomes and priorities in the refreshed Corporate Plan, Barnet 2024, reflect the Council’s commitment to the Corporate Parenting duty to ensure the most vulnerable are protected and the needs of children are considered in everything that the Council does.</p> <p><b>Risk Management</b></p> <p>4.5 Not applicable for this report</p> <p><b>Insight</b></p> <p>4.6 Not applicable for this report</p> <p><b>Social Value</b></p> <p>4.7 Not applicable for this report</p>
<b>5. Resource Implications (Finance and Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT and Property)</b>
None
<b>6. Legal Implications and Constitution References</b>
<p>6.1 (legal)</p> <p>6.1 Under the Council’s Constitution, Part 2D the terms of reference states that Cabinet is responsible for the following functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Development of proposals for the budget (including the capital and revenue budgets, the fixing of the Council Tax Base, and the level of Council Tax) and the financial strategy for the Council;</li> </ul>

- Monitoring the implementation of the budget and financial strategy;
- Recommending major new policies (and amendments to existing policies) to the Council for approval as part of the Council's Policy Framework and implementing those approved by Council;
- Approving policies that are not part of the policy framework;
- Management of the Council's Capital Programme;

## **7. Consultation**

No consultation required for this report

## **8. Equalities and Diversity**

8.1 Decision makers should have due regard to the public sector equality duty in making their decisions. The equalities duties are continuing duties they are not duties to secure a particular outcome. The equalities impact will be revisited on each of the proposals as they are developed. Consideration of the duties should precede the decision. It is important that Cabinet has regard to the statutory grounds in the light of all available material such as consultation responses. The statutory grounds of the public sector equality duty are found at section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 and are as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- a) Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are connected to that characteristic;
- b) Take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of persons who do not share it;
- c) Encourage persons who share a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

The steps involved in meeting the needs of disabled persons that are different from the needs of persons who are not disabled include, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities.

Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to:

- a) Tackle prejudice, and
- b) Promote understanding.

Compliance with the duties in this section may involve treating some persons more favourably than others; but that is not to be taken as permitting conduct that would otherwise be prohibited by or under this Act. The relevant protected characteristics are:

- a) Age
- b) Disability
- c) Gender reassignment
- d) Pregnancy and maternity
- e) Race
- f) Religion or belief
- g) Sex
- h) Sexual orientation
- i) Marriage and civil partnership

## **9. Background Papers**

None