

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE BI-ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS, FEBRUARY 2016**Key Decision No. CS MS19****CABINET MEETING DATE (2015/16)****29 February 2016****COUNCIL MEETING DATE (2015/16)****2 March 2016****CLASSIFICATION:****Open****If exempt, the reason will be listed in the main body of this report.****WARD(S) AFFECTED****All Wards****CABINET MEMBER****Cllr Bramble****Children's Services****KEY DECISION****Yes****REASON****Affects Two or More Wards****CORPORATE DIRECTOR****Anne Canning Director of Children's Services**

1. CABINET MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION

I have requested this report from the Corporate Director for Children and Young People's Services. It is the ninth bi-annual report from the service. My role as Lead Member for Children's Services requires me to ensure that the Local Authority fulfils its legal responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in Hackney. As such, I wish to ensure that services with the important mandate of protecting Hackney's most vulnerable children and young people from risk of harm are understood across all areas of the Council. In addition this report is also important given the influential part Hackney Children's Social Care is being asked to play in supporting the development of national social work reform and revisions to the statutory guidance on safeguarding children. Case studies and direct quotes from children and young people are included in the report to help Members get a better picture of the services provided.

2. CORPORATE DIRECTOR'S INTRODUCTION

Children's services in Hackney work in partnership to protect children and keep them safe from harm and help them thrive. Children's Social Care is the key service designed to protect children by working with families to support safe and effective parenting where children are at risk of significant harm. Where it is not possible for children to be safely cared for within their family network, the local authority will look after those children. This bi-annual report provides Members with oversight of activities within Children's Social Care including performance updates and information about key service developments including information about child sexual exploitation, missing children and adoption. Information on the Service's work with children and young people through Hackney Gets Heard (Hackney's Children in Care Council) is included in the report as well as feedback from children and young people throughout the report.

3. RECOMMENDATION(S)

Cabinet is asked to:

- **Endorse the report.**
- **Take note of information held within the report.**
- **Recommend this report to Council.**

Council is recommended to:

- **Note the report.**

4. REASONS FOR DECISION

The report is for information and endorsement only.

5. DETAILS OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable

6. BACKGROUND

This report summarises progress against priority areas for the service.

6.1 Policy Context

This report summarises progress against priority areas for the service.

6.2 Equality Impact Assessment

There are no new decisions within the report that require an Equality Impact Assessment.

6.3 Sustainability

There are no issues within the report that impact on the physical and social environment.

6.4 Consultations

The report does not contain any issues or decisions that require consultation.

6.5 Risk Assessment

There are no proposals for action that require a risk assessment.

7. COMMENTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND RESOURCES

The Children's Social Care (CSC) bi-annual report provides an update on the current position on CSC services and includes an overview of financial performance.

The Children's Social Care gross budget including recharges totals £45.9m for 2015/16 and forms part of the overall budget of the Children and Young People's Service of £57.6m. The forecast outturn 2015/16 as at the end of October 2015 for Children's Social Care is £319k overspend against budget after the planned use of reserves. There has been a requirement to draw down from the Commissioning Reserve since 2012/13 due to the increased number of children in care and the shortage of in-house foster carers. Forecast draw down for 2015/16 is £1,274k.

The increase in commissioning costs has been driven by an increase in the number of looked after children since 2011/12, although this has remained steady throughout 2015/16. There has also been a change in the profile of fostering placements with a greater proportion of fostered children now placed with independent foster agencies (IFAs) due to a shortfall of in-house foster carers. The marginal cost of an IFA placement is significantly greater than that of an in-house placement. These pressures have been recognised by the Corporate Director of Finance and Resources and total growth of £1.6m was included in the base budget across 2012/13 and 2013/14 with a further £1m added in 2015/16.

There is also pressure from an increase in the number of young people placed in semi-independent accommodation in both the 16-18 and the 18+ age categories.

The Children in Need Service has continued to experience a pressure on its Section 17 budget in 2015/16, mainly resulting from increased accommodation costs and providing regular support to families. 2015/16 has also seen increased usage of secure remand centres by the Youth Justice Service (YJ) and an increase in demand for complex care packages within Disabled Children Services (DCS). The resulting overspends in YJ & DCS are £594k and £869k respectively.

Notwithstanding ongoing and emerging pressures, Children's Social Care has continued to make significant contributions to the efficiency agenda of the Council. Over 2013/14 and 2014/15 the service delivered a further £1,184k of reductions (in addition to £6.3m of savings delivered between 2009/10 and 2012/13) from measures such as realignment of management and administrative support and further development of the service. In 2015/16, £350k of efficiency savings were made in respect of streamlining the business support structure and for 2016/17 the service is on course to successfully complete the first tranche of the 1CYPS transformation. This is delivering £2,350k across CSC and involves re-configuring the 'front door' of the service whilst innovatively aligning resources to where they will have maximum impact across other areas such as Young Hackney, Youth Justice Services and Family Support, preventing the escalation to statutory need.

8. COMMENTS OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL, HR AND REGULATORY SERVICES

The report to Cabinet sets out how Children and Young People's Services in Hackney are undertaking its statutory functions towards children and young people in the local authority area.

There continues to be a number of external challenges which face local authority Children and Young People's Services nationwide, however the report clearly sets out the challenges and how they have been addressed in the London Borough of Hackney.

There continue to be a number of high profile judgements in the family courts which have had a significant impact on the way in which the local authority plans for cases where the care plan is for removal in the short term and also for adoption. With the increase in judgements of this type the local authority must be aware of the further increase in external assessments and plans for adoption which are being challenged. The department continue to receive legal briefings on the decisions and are aware of the legal implications, so that prior to issuing cases the necessary work is undertaken to ensure that care plans reflect the thought and decision making as required by the court and are referred to above.

The Children and Families Act 2014 introduces a system of support which extends from birth to 25, while the Care Act 2014 deals with anyone over the age of 18. This means there will be a group of young people aged 18-25 who will be entitled to support through both pieces of legislation. The two Acts also have the same emphasis on outcomes, personalisation, and the integration of services. The Children and Families Act focuses on putting children and young people at the heart of planning and decision making through co-production and person-centred practice. It emphasises the importance of engaging young people and their families in all processes from developing and planning, particularly in relation to the Local Offer and Education, Health and Care Plans, and also in the commissioning of services and strategic decision making.

The Education and Adoption Bill 2015 has been introduced in parliament and is now being considered in the House of Lords. The Bill is concerned to make provision about schools in England that are causing concern, including provision about their conversion into Academies and about intervention powers; and to make provision about joint arrangements for carrying out local authority adoption functions in England. This has been addressed in this report to members.

Female Genital Mutilation is also a key consideration for CYPS, it has been a specific criminal offence since the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 came into force on 16 September 1985. The 1985 Act was replaced by the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003. The Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) Act came into force on 3 March 2004 and was amended by sections 70 to 75 Serious Crime Act 2015. Consideration of this and how it impacts on the work of the department has also been outlined in this report. The Council must be aware of the five key legislative changes on FGM were introduced into the Serious Crime Act 2015.

A new section 5B of the 2003 Act (when the section is implemented) places a duty on persons who work in a 'regulated profession' in England and Wales, namely healthcare professionals, teachers and social care workers, to notify the police when, in the course of their work, they discover that an act of FGM appears to have been carried out on a girl who is under 18 or being subjected to FGM. An order can be made to protect either a girl or woman at risk of FGM.

The Prevent duty is also addressed in the report as it gives rise to a duty to protect children from radicalisation. The DfE has published guidance on this which this authority is aware of in light of the Counter-Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and the arising obligations on the authority in respect of those to whom a statutory duty applies.

APPENDICES

Children's Social Care Bi-Annual Report to Members, February 2016

EXEMPT

Open

BACKGROUND PAPERS

In accordance with The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) England Regulations 2012 publication of Background Papers used in the preparation of reports is required

None

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