

CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE BI-ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERS, OCTOBER 2016**KEY DECISION NO. CACH M99****CABINET MEETING DATE 2016/17****11 OCTOBER 2016****COUNCIL MEETING DATE 2016/17****26 OCTOBER 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****GROUP DIRECTOR****Anne Canning (Acting) Group Director**

1. CABINET MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION

I have requested this report from the Group Director for Children, Adults and Community Health. It is the tenth 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. 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. GROUP 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. The report also includes information on Young Hackney, the Council's early help, prevention and diversion service for children and young people aged 6-19 years old and up to 25 years if the young person has a special education need or disability. 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 GROUP DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND CORPORATE RESOURCES

7.1 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.

7.2 The Children's Social Care net budget including recharges totals £46m for 2016/17 and forms part of the overall budget of the Children and Young People's Service of £56.3m. The forecast outturn for 2016/17 as at the end of July 2016 for Children and Young People's Services is a nil variance 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 lack of suitable shortage of in-house foster carers. The forecast drawdown for 2016/17 is £2.4m.

- 7.3 The increase in commissioning costs has been driven by an increase in the number of looked after children since 2011/12, and this trend looks to continue through 2016/17. There is a continuation with a greater proportion of children being placed with independent foster agencies (IFAs) due to a lack of suitable in-house foster carers. The marginal cost of an IFA placement is significantly greater than that of an in-house placement. There has been a significant increase in Residential Placements since 2015 adding considerable budget pressures with an average annual unit cost of £195k. 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. These pressures have been recognised by the Group Director Finance & Corporate Resources with a total growth of £3.1m included in the base budget between 2012/13 to 2016/17.
- 7.4 The Children in Need Service and Youth Justice Service is forecasting an overspend arising from a significant number of vacant posts being covered by agency staff. Disabled Children Services is forecasting a £9k overspend after the use of reserves of £250k, mainly driven by an increase in home care commissioning costs and expenditure on direct payments to carers, offset by underspends in the short breaks budgets.
- 7.5 Children's Social Care has continued to make significant contributions to the efficiency agenda of the Council. Over the previous six years the services have delivered £7.8m savings with further £2.3m being delivered in 2016/17 across Children's Social Care 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 DIRECTOR OF LEGAL

- 8.1 The report to Cabinet sets out how Children and Young People's Services in Hackney are undertaking its statutory functions towards children, young people and their families in the local authority area.
- 8.2 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.
- 8.3 Further challenges to note could be the implications of the Immigration Act 2016 which may result in an increased number of families approaching Children's Services if the provisions of this far reaching act applies to them. A number of families who may not have immigration status and have children may be affected and in turn approach Children's Services for financial assistance.

- 8.4 The use of Section 20 Children Act 1989 and the provision of accommodation is also a growth area that the service will need to focus on in light of recent judgements in the courts.
- 8.5 Further consideration should also be given to the Childcare Act 2016 which is an Act to make provision about free childcare for young children of working parents and about the publication of information about childcare and related matters by local authorities in England. The Secretary of State may make regulations affecting local authorities relating to the provision and terms of any free childcare and other duties under the Act. The Act also amends the Childcare Act 2006 and requires local authorities to publish information about childcare and related matters.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Children's Social Care Bi-Annual Report to Members, October 2016.

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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