



Children and Families Service 2017-18 Full Year Report to Members

Key Decision No. CACH P33

CABINET MEETING DATE (2018/19)

29 October 2018

CLASSIFICATION:

Open

WARD(S) AFFECTED

All Wards

CABINET MEMBER

Cllr Bramble

Deputy Mayor

KEY DECISION

Yes

REASON

Affects Two or More Wards

GROUP DIRECTOR

[Click Here](#) Group Director Children Adults & Community Health

1. CABINET MEMBER'S INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** I have requested this report from the Group Director for Children, Adults and Community Health Directorate. 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. The Children and Families' Service 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 full year report provides Members with oversight of activities within the Children and Families' Service including performance updates and information about key service developments and information about vulnerable adolescents 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 Youth Care Council (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

This annual report covers the period 2017/18. The outturn for 2017/18 for Children and Families Service on a net budget of £56m was a breakeven position after use of grants and reserves of £4.3m including a drawdown on the Commissioning Reserve of £1.8m. 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 a shortage of in-house foster carers.

Bringing the financial position up to date, for 2018/19, against a net budget of £58m the Children and Families Service is forecasting an overspend of £474k

(as at August 2018) after an assumed use of reserves and drawdown of grant of £5.8m, including full use of the Commissioning Activity Reserve of £3m.

The sustained pressure on Children's Services budgets is a position that is not unique to Hackney, as shown by the results of a recent survey on Children's Social Care spend carried out jointly by the Society of London Treasurers (SLT) and the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS).

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 2018/19. There is a continuation of a large 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 weekly unit cost of £3.6k. We are also seeing a rise in the number of under 18s in high-cost semi-independent placements. Where children in their late teens are deemed to be vulnerable, and in many cases are transitioning from residential to semi-independent placements, they may still require a high-level of support and in extreme circumstances bespoke crisis packages. These pressures have been recognised by the Group Director - Finance & Corporate Resources with a total growth of £5.3m included in the base budget between 2012/13 to 2018/19.

The Children and Families Service has continued to make significant contributions to the efficiency agenda of the Council. Over the previous eight years the services have delivered £11m savings with further £0.3m being delivered in 2018/19.

8. VAT Implications on Land & Property Transactions

There are no VAT implications in this report.

9. COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR, LEGAL & GOVERNANCE SERVICES

This is a statutory report updating Members of the developments and key performance trends within the Children and Families Service in Hackney for 2017/2018.

The report to Members sets out how Children and Families Service in Hackney is undertaking its statutory functions towards children, young people and their families 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.

Further challenges to note could be the potential implications of the implementation of the Immigration Act 2016 which may result in an increased number of families approaching Children's Services for services where they are excluded from mainstream support. 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.

The use of section 20 accommodation in place of issuing care proceedings remains contentious and the service will need to monitor it in light of recent judgments in the courts.

Consideration should continue to 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.

The report raises no specific legal issues, but Legal Services will assist in providing advice, should specific issues arise.

APPENDICES

The Children and Families Service 2017-18 Full Year Report to Members.

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

Description of document (or None)

None.

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