Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 27ᵗʰ April 2021

Subject: **Corporate Parenting – Annual Report 2019-20**

Lead officer: Hannah Doody (Director of Children's Schools and Families)

Lead Member: Cllr Eleanor Stringer

Lead Officers: David Michael, Head of Children in Care and Resources; John Walsh, Head of Service Adolescent and Family Service, 14 plus, Care Leavers and Youth Offending service; Karl Mittelstadt, Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships

Recommendations:

A. To note the content of Corporate Parenting Annual Report (2019-2020)

1   **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

1.1   The Corporate Parenting Annual Report (2019-2020) provides an overview of services delivered to Merton's children in care and care experienced young people. It covers the performance and comparative data for the 2019/20 reporting year.

1.2   This report contributes towards the Corporate Parenting Board's duty to ensure and monitor how well services are delivered and how children and young people experience these services.

1.3   Merton's corporate parenting board is held 4 times a year and is comprised of care experienced young people, elected members, senior managers from across the council, the NHS, and the CCG. It is chaired by the council's Chief Executive, Ged Curran, which contributes to a strong corporate parenting ethos across the Council and the wider children's partnership.

1.4   This report was considered and signed off by the Corporate Parenting Board meeting in January.

2   **DETAILS**

2.1   The Corporate Parenting Annual Report contains a large amount of information about the demographics of children in care and care experienced young people, service performance as well as outcome information.

2.2   The 2019/20 annual report confirms that:

- The number and rate of children in care has remained relatively stable for the last 5 years, and remains below London and national averages.

- The proportion of unaccompanied asylum seeking children in our care has increased from 13% in 2016 to 19% in 2020. This suggests that the number of Merton children in care has decreased in the same time period.

- Children in our care from black/Black British and mixed ethnic backgrounds are over-represented when compared to Merton's wider children's population

- Merton issued court proceedings for 48 children which was a significant decrease from the previous reporting year. Positively, all but 11 of these children remained in either their immediate or extended family networks.

- Regionalisation of adoption was progressed with the transferring of most of Merton's adoption functions to Adopt London South. 6 children were adopted in the reporting year.

- Performance regarding the recruitment of foster carers was low in comparison to previous years which was mainly attributable to a drop in budget. A digital campaign is now being trailed.

- Merton's first fostering conference was held in February 2020 which was well attended and hailed as a big success.

- We strengthened the planning and support for young people within our care and those transitioning into adulthood with a focus on the quality of pathway plans

3.   NEXT STEPS

2.3   The annual report will be published shortly.

2.4   Corporate Parenting Board continues to monitor performance information as well as the implementation of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

3   FOR DECISION

There are no items for decision.

4   ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

- No specific implications for this report

5   CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- None for this report

6   TIMETABLE

- Not applicable for this report

7   FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- None

8   LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- None

9   HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

• None

10   CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

• None

11   RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

• None

12   APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

Corporate Parenting Board – Annual Report 2019/20

12.1   BACKGROUND PAPERS

• None

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