

Mayor and Cabinet			
Title	Response to CYP Select Committee Review into Careers Information Advice and Guidance		Item No
Key Decision	No	Item No.	
Ward	All		
Contributors	Sara Williams – Executive Director for Children and Young People		
Class	Part 1	Date	15 February 2017

1. Purpose of paper

- 1.1 As part of its work programme in 2016 the CYP Select Committee undertook an in-depth review into independent advice and guidance (IAG) in Lewisham secondary schools.
- 1.2 This paper provides further detail to Mayor and Cabinet regarding the Select Committee's view that a Champion for Children's Rights be appointed following discussion regarding the response to recommendation 11 within the initial report.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Mayor:

- 2.1 Approves the response from the Executive Director for Children and Young People to the comments from CYP Select Committee.
- 2.2 Agrees that this report should be forwarded to the Children and Young People's Select Committee.

3. Background

- 3.1 On 12th October 2016, the Children and Young People Select Committee considered a report entitled *Response to recommendations of the review into Careers, Information, Advice and Guidance*. The Committee resolved to advise Mayor and Cabinet of the following:

3.2 Referral 1

- 3.2.1 The Committee recommends that the Mayor appoint a Champion for Children's Rights with a focus as outlined in recommendation of the review.

3.3 Response

- 3.3.1 Whilst the CYP Select Committee has asked for the Mayor and Cabinet to consider whether a Champion for Children's Rights should be appointed, the Mayor is asked to note the current provisions which ensure appropriate champions are in place

within Lewisham and nationally to ensure the rights of children are respected. Given the very clear statutory guidance below it could be argued that the Council already has a number of Champions for Children's Rights including the Executive Director for Children and Young People, the Lead Member for Children's Services as well as the Young Mayor.

4. Context and background

- 4.1 The CYP Select Committee consulted with Young Advisors through the Lewisham Young Mayor programme and heard from young people about their concerns on the quality and amount of guidance and support they and their peers had received in relation to careers education at Key Stages 4 and 5 as well as for higher education. These concerns, and a number of recent legislative changes, meant that reviewing careers information, advice and guidance was particularly relevant at this time.
- 4.2 The review investigated the current situation in Lewisham including providing analysis of the statistics around those young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and destination data of school leavers. It also had a strong emphasis on good practice looking closely at the London Ambitions Framework and also drawing on the evidence in the Gatsby report and from practitioners within Lewisham and other local authorities. There was also a strong focus on those young people who are most vulnerable such as looked after children and care leavers.
- 4.3 The review focussed its recommendations on areas where the local authority retains the statutory responsibility and where the local authority can provide support and guidance to support improvements in schools and educational setting across Lewisham. Every young person in Lewisham should receive one to one guidance and have as much exposure to the world of work as possible and that there should be as comprehensive as possible support to all vulnerable young people.
- 4.4 The review resulted in eleven recommendations, the responses to which were discussed and accepted by the committee. The final response to recommendation 11 resulted in further discussion regarding the possibility of appointing an elected member to be a Champion for Children's Rights in Lewisham as the committee acknowledged that a Children's Rights Officer was not necessarily a requirement.

5. Recommendation 11 and response

5.1 Recommendation 11

Support should be put in place to ensure young people are apprenticeship/work or college ready. This should include skills such as time management, financial awareness, resilience, emotional support and understanding their rights and requirements. Further, a children's rights officer should be appointed to work across the borough and support young people.

5.1.1 Response 11

The Lewisham Apprenticeship programme has been running since April 2009 and aims to create real and valuable training opportunities for 16 to 24 year olds that will enable them to build a career. So far the programme has placed 400 16 – 24 year

olds into opportunities across the borough and been very successful; 75% of apprentices have entered jobs so far.

- 5.1.2 The local authority continue to provide support to the apprentices during their programme this includes developing skills in time management, financial awareness, resilience etc. Every apprentice has access to a mentor in addition to their college tutors and line managers. The council facilitates a monthly Apprenticeship forum to allow apprentices to meet and discuss matters of interest, as well as find out what is happening across the programme. It is expected that most quality apprenticeship programmes would offer some of this support.
- 5.1.3 The appointment of Children's Rights Officer does not sit with current statutory duties in relation to the Raising of the Participation Age or Careers Education and would require an additional resource to be identified.

6. A Champion for Children's Rights

- 6.1 The CYP Select Committee discussed the response to recommendation 11 as above in detail and understood that a Children's Rights Officer was not required to meet the Council's statutory obligations and that much is already being done to ensure children and young people have the support and help they need with regard to Information, Advice and Guidance. The Committee asked if the Mayor would like to consider appointing an elected member as a Champion for Children's Rights.
- 6.2 In April 2013 the DfE published statutory guidance regarding the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and Lead Member for Children's Services. A few key extracts from this document are below for reference:

"The DCS and LMCS should each have an integrated children's services brief, ensuring that the safety and the educational, social and emotional needs of children and young people are central to the local vision. Between them, the DCS and LMCS provide a clear and unambiguous line of local accountability.

The DCS has professional responsibility for children's services, including operational matters; the LMCS has political responsibility for children's services. Together with the Chief Executive and Leader or Mayor² the DCS and LMCS have a key leadership role both within the local authority and working with other local agencies to improve outcomes for children and young people.....

The Lead Member for Children's Services (LMCS)

3) Section 19 of the Children Act 2004 requires every top tier local authority to designate one of its members as Lead Member for Children's Services. The LMCS will be a local Councillor with delegated responsibility from the Council, through the Leader or Mayor⁵, for children's services. The LMCS, as a member of the Council Executive, has political responsibility for the leadership, strategy and effectiveness of local authority children's services. The LMCS is also democratically accountable to local communities and has a key role in defining the local vision and setting political priorities for children's services within the broader political context of the Council.

4) *The LMCS is responsible for ensuring that the needs of all children and young people, including the most disadvantaged and vulnerable, and their families and carers, are addressed. In doing so, the LMCS will work closely with other local partners to improve the outcomes and well-being of children and young people. The LMCS should have regard to the UNCRC and ensure that children and young people are involved in the development and delivery of local services.¹*

6.3 This final paragraph specifically references the obligation of the Lead Member for Children's Services to have regard to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child². Given the very clear statutory guidance it could be argued that the Council already has a number of Champions for Children's Rights including Executive Director for Children and Young People and the Lead Member for Children's Services.

6.4 In addition, Lewisham, unlike many other councils, also has the long established Young Mayor's programme supported by Young Advisors who are regularly consulted and actively involved in many initiatives and the formal decision making process. The role of the Young Mayor as published on the Council's website is set out below:

“The Young Mayor serves a one year term and:

- *supports, and is a spokesperson for, the borough's young people*
- *informs and advises the current Mayor, Sir Steve Bullock, on issues relating to young people*
- *works with the young advisers and Young Citizens' Panel to inform the work of the Mayor, Council and other decision-making bodies*
- *oversees a budget of at least £25,000.³*

7. National Children's Commissioner for England

7.1 In 2005 England's first Children's Commissioner was appointed following on from the Children's Act 2004. The Children's Commissioner for England has a legal duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England. They must focus on children and young people in particular who are living away from home, in or leaving care, or receiving social care services, as well as other vulnerable groups of children whose voice is less likely to be heard. A brief extract from their website is below for information.

“The Children's Commissioner

The Children's Commissioner for England is Anne Longfield OBE.

She has a statutory duty to promote and protect the rights of all children in England in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

¹ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/271429/directors_of_child_services_-_stat_guidance.pdf

² <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us/childrens-rights-and-uncrc>

³ <http://www.lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/youngmayor/Pages/About-the-young-mayor.aspx>

The Children and Families Act 2014 gives her special responsibility for the rights of children who are in or leaving care, living away from home or receiving social care services.

She speaks for wider groups of children on non-devolved issues including immigration (for the whole of the UK) and youth justice (for England and Wales).

It is her job to make life better for all children and young people by making sure their rights are respected and realised and that their views are taken seriously.

The Commissioner is supported in her work by [a team of staff](#). Together, they are responsible for the rights of all children and young people until they are 18 years old, or 25 years if they have been in care, are care leavers or have a disability.

A brief history of the Children's Commissioner for England

A number of children's sector charities called for the post of Children's Commissioner to be established following a recommendation made by Lord Laming in the [Victoria Climbié Inquiry](#). In its advice on implementing the [UNCRC](#), the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommends that countries should ideally have an individual such as a Children's Commissioner or Ombudsman responsible for children's rights.

The post of Children's Commissioner was initially established by the [Children Act 2004](#) and the remit strengthened through the [Children and Families Act 2014](#).

Commissioners to date

Sir Al Aynsley Green, Children's Commissioner 2005-2009

Dr Maggie Atkinson, Children's Commissioner 2009-2015

Anne Longfield OBE, Children's Commissioner 2015-present⁴

8. Financial implications

8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Legal implications

9.1 These are addressed in the body of the report.

10. Equalities implications

10.1 Equalities are central to children's rights and vice versa.

Background documents

<http://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=134&MId=4149&Ver=4>

If there are any queries arising from this report, please contact Kate Bond, Head of Standards and Inclusion, telephone 0208 314 6142.

⁴ See <http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/about-us>

