

Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Monday 10th February 2020

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Richard Smith
Gill Addy
Julie Bragg
Tom Brailsford
Steve Comb
Stewart Horn
Colleen Kenworthy
Barry Lockwood
Melanie Tiernan
Janet Tolley

Co-optees

In attendance:

Observers:

Apologies: Councillor Fazila Loonat
Christine Bennett
Charlotte Jackson
Mel Meggs
Sara Miles
Jo-Anne Sanders

1 Membership of the Board/Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies had been received from Cllr Fazila Loonat and Sara Miles.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

RESOLVED -

1. The minutes of the last meeting held on the 24th October 2019 were agreed.
2. That the Board receive a future update on whether a foster carer allowance calculator had been added to the website as previously agreed at the Board.

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3. The Board agreed to add Anna Gledhill, Social Work Practice Lead to the Membership, who would represent Children's Rights, Compliments and Complaints Unit and the Legal Project Officers.
4. The Board agreed that Julie Bragg, Head of Service for Corporate Parenting (Children in Care and Care Leavers) would represent the Assessment Intervention and Front Door Teams at the Board meetings.
5. The Board agreed that the Terms of Reference Membership would be updated as agreed in (3) and (4) above.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

It was agreed that all agenda items would be held in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions.

6 Public Question Time

No questions from the public were received.

7 Role of Corporate Parent (Strategic Director for Economy and Infrastructure)

This item was deferred.

8 Role of Corporate Parent (Strategic Director for Adults and Health)

This item was deferred.

9 One Adoption Agency 6 monthly Report (April to Sept)

The Board considered a 6 monthly report from One Adoption West Yorkshire covering the period April to September 2019 presented by Suzanne Whiteley, One Adoption West Yorkshire.

Suzanne Whiteley highlighted the following key points:-

- An interim Service Delivery Manager joined the agency on the 1st August to cover long term sick and was transferred from Barnardo's;
- The Department for Education had extended the funding for One Adoption Centre of Excellence Project until 31st March 2020 and training of staff across the region would continue into May;
- In May 2020 Coram Baaf will award One Adoption the quality mark for Early Permanence Placements, which would assist One Adoption in attracting adopters and was a partnership approach with the West Yorkshire Local Authorities;
- The pilot project of using the virtual reality headsets had been extremely positive over the last 18 months with an increase in adopters understanding more about the felt impact of trauma, increased empathy and understanding the need for a therapeutic parenting approach;
- A review of the One Adoption website was currently underway to add online forms within the secure area which could be accessed by adoptive parents;

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- One Adoption had continued to make significant use of the Adoption Support Fund over the last 6 months and the DFE had agreed further funding for 12 months;
- 14 children had been matched with prospective adopters which was a decrease against the half yearly numbers from 2018/19;
- One Adoption had agreed to work with the University of East Anglia in implementing a research and evidence based approach to managing transitions from foster care to adoption;
- Dip sampling case file audits had been undertaken with three local authorities (Leeds, Wakefield and Kirklees) in the last four months to look at family finding activity for those children waiting for adoption (Leeds, Wakefield and Kirklees).

The Board noted that the interim evaluation report (Appendix 1) and the appendices the Voice and Influence of Adopters, Children & Young People report Card April 2019 to September 2019 (Appendix 2) were not attached to the report. The Board agreed that the appendices would be circulated to all members of the Board for information.

In response to a question from the Board regarding the drop in numbers of children adopted in 2019/20, Suzanne Whiteley advised that there had been increases and decreases of the number of adopters at different quarters during 2019.

In response to a question from the Board relating to the approval process for prospective adopters, Suzanne Whiteley advised that the recruitment and assessment process was not timely across West Yorkshire. The Board was informed that adopters could elect to take a break in the process which slowed things down. Suzanne Whiteley further explained that checks and references could also take a while to be come back.

Suzanne Whiteley advised that a piece of work was being undertaken to identify the number of adoption disruptions across the Region. The Board was informed that the statistic for the number of disruptions was incorrect and further investigated and a detailed report would be produced in due course. Suzanne Whiteley explained that there had been a national increase 2 to 3 years ago on the number of disruptions. The Board agreed to consider the report on disruptions when it was available, which would look at the cases in detail and would be set out in themes, for example around sibling groups and children placed at distance.

In response to a question from the Board regarding how thoroughly cases were reviewed when disruption occurred and how accurate the matching process was, Suzanne Whiteley advised that when disruption occurred either an internal review of the case was undertaken or an external independent reviewer would look at the case to ascertain what factors led to the disruption. The Board was informed that disruption could often be caused by a series of events, was not predictable and usually not one single factor had caused the disruption.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the 6 monthly report from One Adoption West Yorkshire covering the period April to September 2019 and thanked Suzanne Whiteley for her contributions.

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2. That Appendix 1 and 2 be circulated to the Board.
3. That the Board consider a report from One Adoption West Yorkshire on the analysis of disruption cases.

10 **Ofsted and Improvement Board update**

The Board considered a verbal update on key issues from Ofsted and the Improvement Board from Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting (Sufficiency).

Steve Comb advised the Board that Woodlands, Copthorne House and Healds Road Children's Homes had received 'good' Ofsted rating following recent unannounced inspections. The Board was informed that Elm Grove was inspected last week and Orchard View was still to be inspected, date unknown but expected to be within this financial year.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the verbal update on Ofsted and thanked Steve Comb for his contributions.

11 **Children in Care Services Performance Highlights**

The Board considered the latest reports giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service for Children in Care, Fostering and Children's Homes up to the 31st December 2019.

The Board was informed that it was often embarrassing for some children to discuss their personal health issues in a Review meeting that could be attended by a number of different professionals and a decision would be taken where appropriate to discuss certain sensitive issues outside of the Review meetings. Gill Addy and Sanna Mahmood further explained that some children did not like to discuss their weight and BMI and that children might not understand the meaning of some of the medical terms referred to during the discussions.

Colleen Kenworthy from the Kirklees Fostering Network advised the Board that foster carers needed more help and support to understand the different ways of helping to control eating for children in their care. The Board noted that there were U tube videos on healthy eating that foster carers could encourage children to watch to raise awareness. Colleen Kenworthy advised that if a KAL Passport was available for all children in care and care leavers this would encourage more involvement in physical exercise.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the Children's Performance Highlight Report (December 2019) and thanked Steve Comb, Julie Bragg, Janet Tolley and Gill Addy for their contributions.

12 **Overview of number of children in Care**

The Board considered an overview of the number and age of children in care presented by Julie Bragg, Head of Corporate Parenting for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

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Julie Bragg advised the Board that the largest age group for boys was 11-15 years with 113 children and the largest age group for girls was 11-15 years with 95 children. The Board was informed that officers were currently looking at reuniting 8 of these children with their parents, but that this process could take between 6 to 12 months.

In response to a question from the Board regarding support from the Multi-Systemic Team who worked with children before they came into care, Julie Bragg advised the Board that the Multi-Systemic Team was being increased. The Board noted that this could have an impact on the numbers of 11-15 year olds coming into care.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the report on Number and age of Children in Care and thanked Julie Bragg for her contributions.

13 Siblings in Care

The Board considered a report outlining the success of placing sibling groups in care placements within Kirklees presented by Julie Bragg, Head of Corporate Parenting (Children in Care and Care Leavers).

Julie Bragg highlighted the following key points:-

- 58 groups of siblings were currently in care and 38 of those children were placed together;
- Where possible siblings were placed together but there were sometimes reasons when this was not appropriate, for example, children might not get on or the carer may not be able to cope with the number of children;

Sanna Mahmood advised the Board that some children had fed back at the Children in Care meetings that it was sometimes better to be separated from their siblings, but that it was important to maintain contact.

Steve Comb advised the Board that some carers would agree to take on 2 out of 4 children for example, but may not be able to take more children as it was not practically possible due to the size of their house.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the report on Siblings in Care and thanked Julie Bragg for her contributions.

14 Update on Voice of the Child Development Plan

This item was deferred.

15 Updates from Board Members on interaction with Services

The Board considered verbal updates from Board Members on progress and key issues following interaction with Services and partners to challenge the role of the Corporate Parent.

Councillor Richard Smith advised the Board that he had recently visited the Youth Offending Team (YOT) to learn more about the youth justice system and the support provided to young offenders by YOT. The Board was informed that the Police were

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working with these children and the work going on was really making a difference to helping the young people. The Board noted that for a young person the stigma of a criminal conviction could make it very hard to get employment, but the Youth Offending Team helped them go get on the education and career ladder.

In response to a discussion regarding preventative work being undertaken with young people, Julie Bragg advised the Board that the Service was looking at a Youth Model involving agencies across the borough exploring youth zones, youth offer and preventative work. The Board was informed that the Multi-Systemic Team undertook a lot of preventative work with young people and agreed to consider a future report giving more information on the role of this team.

Cllr Allison advised the Board that she had been in contact with Kirklees Neighbourhood Housing to discuss housing for young people and had gone through an A to Z of what it was like for a young person when signing up for a Council tenancy. Cllr Allison further explained that an explanation had been provided on the help that was given to care leavers, which included a contact person for them to talk to about any problems with their tenancy.

Cllr Kendrick advised the Board that she had attended a Tackling Poverty Group where KNH had developed a pilot project to help vulnerable young people to get a tenancy. Cllr Allison agreed to speak to KNH to ascertain how this pilot was developing and would report back to the Board.

The Chair of the Board, Cllr Kendrick, gave a summary of events, visits and meetings she had recently attended, as follows:-

- Connected Persons Halloween Party
- Foster Carers thank you evening
- Residential Children's Homes in Kirklees
- Youth Commissioners of Kirklees regarding the Democracy Commission and looking for Cabinet Member Champion;
- Yorkshire and Humber Lead Members meeting – the main agenda item was regarding the Mental Health of young people and children in care.

Julie Bragg advised the Board that she had attended the Care Leavers Christmas Party and Christmas Dinner on the 25th December 2019 where voluntary organisations, volunteers, charities and local businesses had come together to serve a Christmas dinner to 25 young people in care and the event had been very successful. Julie Bragg went on to explain that transport had been provided to get the young people to the event and gifts had been donated. The Board was informed that the young people had fed back that they had really enjoyed the event.

Sanna Mahmood advised the Board that in October 2020 the Children in Care Council would be organising a black tie dinner and auction to raise funds for care leavers.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the updates from Board Members on interaction with services.

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2. The Board agreed to consider a future report on the role of the Multi-Systemic Team in the support provided and work undertaken with young people to prevent them getting involved in crime.
3. The Board agreed to consider a future update on the Tackling Poverty Pilot Project being run by KNH to help vulnerable young people to get a council tenancy.

16 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2019/20

The Panel considered the agenda plan for 2019/20 municipal year and agreed that the Strategic Directors who had been unable to attend today's meeting, would be invited to attend a future meeting to talk about their role as a corporate parent.

RESOLVED -

1. That the 2019/20 Agenda Plan for the Corporate Parenting Board be noted and updated as agreed.
2. That the Governance Officer be authorised to liaise with officers on agreed actions.

17 Dates of Future Meetings

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the dates of the remaining meetings in the 2019/20 municipal year on the 9th April 2020 at 10 am.
2. The Board noted the provisional meeting dates of the Board during the 2020/21 municipal year (to be confirmed following Council AGM on 20th May 2020):-
 - 1st July 2020 , 10am
 - 2nd Sept 2020, 10am
 - 4th Nov 2020, 10am
 - 13th Jan 21, 10am
 - 3rd Feb 21, 10am
 - 10th March 21, 10am