

Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Wednesday 4th March 2020

- Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor Fazila Loonat
Councillor John Lawson
Steve Comb
Stewart Horn
Colleen Kenworthy
Barry Lockwood
Sanna Mahmood
Sara Miles
Janet Tolley
Christine Carmichael
- In attendance: Andy Quinlan, Service Manager (Fostering)
Deborah Lucas, Head of People's Services
Siraj Mayet, HR Partner (Apprenticeships)
- Apologies: Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Richard Smith
Julie Bragg
Tom Brailsford

1 Membership of the Board/Apologies

RESOLVED -

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies had been received from Cllr Richard Smith, Cllr Andrew Marchington, Anna Gledhill and Julie Bragg.

2 Interests

No interests were declared.

3 Admission of the Public

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

4 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

5 Public Question Time

No questions from the public were received.

6 Saturday Job Scheme Pilot for Care Leavers

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The Board considered a report providing an update on a new Council initiative to support Care Leavers to enhance their employment prospects, presented by Deborah Lucas, Head of People's Services, and Siraj Mayet, HR Partner (Apprenticeships).

Siraj Mayet highlighted the following key points:-

- Engagement work was ongoing with care leavers;
- The scheme was set up to raise aspirations in terms of future employment and opening up future horizons for care leavers;
- Traineeships working with Kirklees College;
- Ring fenced apprenticeships with employers were available for care leavers and these would be advertised just to Kirklees Care Leavers;
- 7 Saturday jobs were currently in place which was paid work for 1 day per week and young people were expected to complete timesheets and induction periods to mirror employment as much as possible;
- Workshops were for employers on how to support the care leavers in their employment;
- Care leavers were referred for employment by Social Workers;
- Ongoing evaluation of pilot scheme was being carried out which should be complete in September 2020.

Colleen Kenworthy from the Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN) advised the Board that she looked after 2 children leaving care and they had not heard about the Saturday Job Scheme. The Board was informed that the KFN ran a Teenager Support Group and would welcome some engagement from Siraj Mayet into this group to inform the young people of the Saturday Job Scheme.

The Board agreed that the Saturday Job Scheme needed to be promoted to a wider group, which would include the KFN and foster carers. Janet Tolley advised that a representative of the Virtual School could work with Siraj Mayet to promote and share details about the Saturday Job Scheme to young people in care.

Sanna Mahmood informed the Board of funding which was available from the Huddersfield Town Foundation to cover employability and help care leavers find employment or volunteering opportunities. The Board agreed Siraj Mayet should make contact with Sanna Mahmood to make a link with this initiative.

The Board agreed that a co-ordinated approach was required to link all the key services and agencies together on the Saturday Job Schemes and to promote the scheme as widely as possible to key groups. The Board agreed to consider a future report with an action plan. The Board noted that a link should be made to the Saturday Job scheme with Kirklees Active Leisure. The Board was informed that KAL currently sent job vacancies via email to the Kirklees Fostering Network.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the report on the Saturday Job Scheme for Care Leavers and thanked Deborah Lucas and Siraj Mayet for their contributions.
2. That the communications and engagement on the Saturday Job Scheme be extended to the Kirklees Fostering Network and foster carers as well as via Social Workers.

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3. That links be made with the Virtual School and funding for the Huddersfield Town Foundation on the Saturday Job Scheme.
4. That Deborah Lucas and Siraj Mayet meet with Julie Bragg to discuss a co-ordinated approach to link all the key services and agencies together on the Saturday Job Scheme and to ensure that the scheme was promoted as widely as possible and that an action plan be brought back to the Board for consideration – date to be determined.

7 **Ofsted and Improvement Board update**

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

Steve Comb advised that Ofsted reports for the Kirklees Children's Homes had now been published and all had received a good rating. The Board agreed that this was very positive feedback.

Cllr Kendrick, Chair of the Board, agreed to raise the issue of number of social work changes for children in care at the next Improvement Board meeting.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the verbal update on Ofsted and thanked Steve Comb for his contributions.
2. That the Chair of the Board raise the issue of number of social worker changes for children in care at the next Improvement Board meeting.
3. The Board agreed to consider a future report on Social Worker stability and the reasons for changes and moves.

8 **Children's Performance Highlight Reports**

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 end of January 2020 presented by Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting (Sufficiency), Janet Tolley, Virtual Head Teacher and Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked after Children and Care Leavers.

Children in Care

Steve Comb, Janet Tolley and Gill Addy highlighted the following key points:-

- The total number of children in care had increased from 659 in December 2019 to 672 in January 2020;
- Innovative solutions had been implemented for placement stability and support of placements by the Placement Support Team;
- Feedback was awaited from Public Health on the Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan 2019-24 to raise the profile of looked after children and care leavers, as a cohort which should automatically have access to dental registration;
- There had been a slight increase with regards to the number of children in care who had received a statutory visit in line with practice standards and work was ongoing with Independent Reviewing Officers to ascertain why this had occurred;
- Independent Reviewing Officers would continue to liaise closely with Social Workers to ensure that they informed children of their right to an Independent

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Advocate at the earliest opportunity and children were enabled to participate in their review to ensure that their voice was heard;

- There had been a decrease in the number of young people in suitable accommodation which was linked to young people being taken into custody, rather than a lack of suitable accommodation being available in the borough;
- A new drop in centre called No 12 had been established in the North of the district which had improved the Service's outreach to young people.

The Board agreed that Janet Tolley, Virtual Head Teacher and Gill Addy, Designated Nurse, would contact Claire Morgan, Service Manager for Disabled Children's Regulated Services, with a view to attending the regular meetings held with Managers of Kirklees Children's Homes.

Colleen Kenworthy from the Kirklees Fostering Network advised that children in care needed more help and support in dealing with their own feelings, as for some children this was their only way of expressing their emotions. The Board was informed that Kirklees had set up a short term pilot scheme, which was targeting eight 5 to 10 year olds to talk about their feelings and emotions. The pilot scheme was aimed at children who had not been taught how to manage their feelings by their parents. Sanna Mahmood updated the Board on the Samantha Sykes Foundation which offered therapy for young people in the Yorkshire region. The therapy was specifically for those children in the care of the Local Authority and at an increased risk of harm, for example from child sexual exploitation. The Board agreed that the Kirklees Fostering Network would meet with Steve Comb to discuss whether the pilot scheme helping children deal with their emotions and feelings could be extended to older children in care and that a link should also be made to the Samantha Sykes Foundation.

The Board agreed that Stewart Horn, Head of Joint Commissioning, and Steve Comb would co-ordinate a response to the actions agreed by the Board and link all key services and partners together.

The Board agreed that the Health and Wellbeing Board should raise the profile of the Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-24 in relation to children in care and care leavers. Gill Addy agreed to contact Cllr Kendrick with the necessary information. The Kirklees Fostering Network and Gill Addy agreed to meet to consider holding monthly clinics to undertake health assessments for looked after children.

The Board agreed that a future standard item should be added to the Board's agenda to discuss Mental Health and Emotional Support to children and young people in care.

The Board raised concerns regarding the drop in the number of Independent Return Interviews for looked after children offered within 72 hours of the child being located and requested more information be brought to a future meeting to provide an explanation.

The Board raised concerns regarding the slight decrease in the number of children in care who had received a statutory visit in line with practice standards. The Board

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was informed that officers were working with Independent Reviewing Officers to establish why this might have occurred.

In response to a question from the Board relating to how many children were waiting to be matched to Independent Visitors, Sara Miles informed the Board that there currently was not sufficient capacity to manage and coordinate the scheme and as a result a business case had been submitted to request additional help with the co-ordination of the Independent Visitors Scheme and that a decision was expected in April. The Board noted that if additional capacity was secured more could be done on the promotion of the scheme and to recruit a greater number of Independent Visitors.

Sara Miles advised the Board that further work was being undertaken nationally with West Yorkshire Police on the number children in care who go missing to rewrite local missing procedures to ensure that the Council was capturing the right young people in the missing data.

The Board noted that there had been a decline in the number of people placed in suitable accommodation which was linked to the number of young people taken into custody and agreed to consider a future report providing an update. Colleen Kenworthy advised that children in care aged 18 were often emotionally under this age group and should not be pushed into semi independent accommodation if they were not ready and should be supported to stay put with foster carers where possible. Andy Quinlan advised the Board that there were currently 28 carers who offered staying put.

In response to a question regarding the opening times of the new drop in centre No 12, Sanna Mahmood advised that the centre was still only open 3 days a week. The Board expressed concerns that if the centre opening hours were not extended it would not be used as much by young people. Steve Comb agreed to check if the No 12 drop in facility had been promoted to foster carers and young people in care and suggested that an open day could be arranged where they could be invited to visit the drop in facility.

Fostering and Residential Homes

In response to a question from the Board relating to whether the Kirklees Fostering Network could be involved in the assessment of potential foster carers, Andy Quinlan advised that the Fostering Team were looking into arranging for established foster carers to buddy up with potential carers to give them extra support. The Board was advised that current foster carers would be invited to talk at recruitment events and share their experiences.

Barry Lockwood from the Kirklees Fostering Network (KFN) advised that the KFN were not involved in the de-registration of foster carers and that they could often help to stop carers leaving. Andy Quinlan advised that the Fostering Team would consider further the involvement of the KFN in the de-registration of foster carers.

In response to a question from the Board relating to what was being learned through exit interviews when foster carers left, Steve Comb advised that a number of foster

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carers had resigned as they had gone to permanence. Steve Comb further explained that some carers did not fully realise the role of being a foster carer and what it actually involved.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the Children's Performance Highlight Report (January 2020) and thanked Steve Comb, Janet Tolley and Gill Addy for their contributions.
2. The Board agreed that the Virtual Head Teacher and Designated Nurse would contact the Service Manager for Disabled Children's Regulated Services with a view to attending the regular meetings held with Managers of Kirklees Children's Homes.
3. The Board agreed that the Kirklees Fostering Network would meet with Steve Comb to discuss whether the pilot scheme set up to help children to deal with their emotions and feelings could be extended to older children in care and that a link should also be made to the Samantha Sykes Foundation.
4. The Board agreed that Stewart Horn, Head of Joint Commissioning, and Steve Comb would co-ordinate a response on (3) above and link all the key services and partners together.
5. The Board agreed that the Health and Wellbeing Board should raise the profile of the Oral Health Strategy and Action Plan for 2019-24 in relation to children in care and care leavers. Gill Addy, Designated Nurse, agreed to contact Cllr Kendrick with the necessary information.
6. The Kirklees Fostering Network and Gill Addy agreed to meet to consider holding monthly clinics to undertake health assessments for looked after children.
7. The Board agreed that a future standard item should be added to the Board's agenda to discuss Mental Health and Emotional Support to children and young people in care.
8. The Board agreed to consider an update on the reasons for the drop in the number of Independent Return Interviews for looked after children offered within 72 hours of the child being located.
9. The Board agreed to consider a future report on the work ongoing in relation to the number of children in care who go missing.
10. The Board agreed to consider a future report explaining the decline in the number of care leavers placed in suitable accommodation, which was linked to the number of young people taken into custody.
11. The Board agreed that Steve Comb would make enquiries as to whether the No 12 drop in facility had been promoted to foster carers and young people in care and that investigations should take place in respect of arranging an open day where all foster carers and young people would be invited to visit the facility.
12. That the Service Manager for Fostering consider further involving the KFN in the de-registration of foster carers.

9 Overview of number of children in Care

The Board considered an overview of the number and age of children in care presented by Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting for Sufficiency.

In response to a question from the Board regarding the reason why the numbers of children in care were close to the national average, Steve Comb advised the Board

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that the statistical neighbours were set by the Department for Education and were based on social and economic factors.

RESOLVED -

The Board noted the report on Number and age of Children in Care and thanked Steve Comb for his contributions.

10 Staying Put Fostering for Children in Care

The Board considered a report regarding the Kirklees Council Staying Put Scheme for young people in care, presented by Andy Quinlan, Service Manager (Fostering).

Andy Quinlan advised the Board that the staying put scheme allowed children in care to stay with their foster carers beyond the age of 18. The Board was informed that it is was the decision of the foster carer to continue to foster the young person or the young person might request to leave.

Andy Quinlan explained that once young people in care reached the age of 18 there were considered an adult and if they could stay with their foster carer they would often feel happier, well cared for and could plan for their future opportunities and next steps in life.

Colleen Kenworthy advised the Board that when a young person turned 18, the foster carer still had to undertake all the foster caring roles and responsibilities and that it was important to support foster carers who wanted to allow young people to stay put. The Board raised concerns that some foster carers could be put into financial difficulties if they allowed the young person in their care to stay put and could also be traumatic for the young person if they had to move out if they wanted to stay. The Board acknowledged that the emotional impact and wellbeing of the young person could be detrimental in this situation.

In response to a question from the Board relating to what financial support was available in Kirklees for foster carers who wanted to operate the staying put scheme and what schemes were being operated elsewhere, Andy Quinlan advised that where children were still in education Kirklees had continued to pay the foster care allowance until the young person had completed their education. The Board was informed that Kirklees was currently in line with other Local Authorities in terms of the financial offer for foster carers.

The Board agreed to consider the Staying Put report at the next meeting due to lack of time.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the report on the Kirklees Council Staying Put Scheme for young people in care and thanked Andy Quinlan for his contributions.
2. That the report on Staying Put be considered at the next meeting of the Board.

11 Supported Lodgings Scheme

The Board considered a report regarding the Supported Lodgings Scheme, presented by Andy Quinlan, Service Manager (Fostering).

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This item was deferred due to lack of time.

RESOLVED –

That the report on Supported Lodgings Scheme be considered at the next meeting of the Board.

12 School Moves Summary report Autumn Term 2019-20

The Board considered a report on the number and nature of school moves for children in care during the Autumn term 2019-20, presented by Janet Tolley, Virtual Head Teacher.

Janet Tolley advised the Board that statutory guidance advised that key stage 4 children in care should not be moved schools wherever possible.

Janet Tolley highlighted the following key points:-

- From the 1st September 2019 to 20th December 2019 there had been 33 school moves during the academic year;
- 13 of these moves were as a result of moving towards a permanence;
- 10 of the moves were as a result of placement moves where the young person could no longer attend their previous school or setting because it was too far away;
- 10 of the moves were positive moves as a result of identification of an appropriate setting to meet the young person's needs.

Janet Tolley advised the Board on strategies being implemented to continue to make improvements for young people in care:-

- The Service was working together to enable children in care to remain in their school wherever possible;
- Where a school move was necessary officers would work together to ensure a smooth transition, in 82% of all cases a move was completed within the statutory 20 days, and often with no break in provision;
- Where there was a placement breakdown officers would work closely together to prioritise educational provision as a key part of the process.

Janet Tolley advised the Board that when a young person had an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) there were statutory timescales that would override the Council's processes and procedures in terms of timescales. The Board was informed that EHCP Plans took a long time to put together.

The Board was informed that if a young person was placed out of area, it could take a long time to work with the Local Authority to manage their moves and placements. Janet Tolley informed the Board that education was much more of a key priority than it used to be in terms of placement moves.

The Board raised concerns regarding children in care who were moved schools due to the fact that the school was too far away from the child's placement.

RESOLVED –

The Board noted the update on the School Moves Summary report Autumn Term 2019-20 and thanked Janet Tolley for her contributions.

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13 **Updates from Board Members on interaction with Services**

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

14 **Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2019/20**

This item was deferred due to lack of time.

15 **Dates of Future Meetings**

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the date of the remaining meeting 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