

Contact Officer: Tish Barker

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Monday 18th April 2016

Present: Councillor Erin Hill (Chair)
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor Lisa Holmes
Jacqui Gedman
Steve Collins
Andrew Carden
Marion Gray
Janet Tolley
Matthew Holland
Toni Traynor

Apologise Councillor Phil Scott
Rachel Spencer-Henshall
Martin Green

24 Minutes of previous meeting

The Board considered the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2016. There followed a brief discussion on the issue of on-going case studies that had been raised at the January meeting.

RESOLVED -

(1) The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2016 were agreed as a correct record.

(2) That Councillor Hill and Toni Traynor, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting, give further consideration as to how anonymised cases can be followed throughout their school careers to understand the impact of the care system on looked after children.

25 Interests

There were no interests declared.

26 Admission of the Public

It was agreed that all items be considered in public session.

27 Virtual School

Janet Tolley, Virtual School Headteacher presented outcome data, validated externally that provided performance information on Looked After Children at Key Stage 1, 2 and 4. In addition there was information on exclusions and absence for the period together with Looked After Children by Special Educational Needs. The data covered the last academic year and provide statistical comparisons on a sub-regional, regional, and statistical neighbours basis.

In considering the report the Board recognised the limitations of the data provided nationally but felt that locally further breakdowns were required to clarify and provide more context to information. It was suggested that if possible a gender split should be included as part of the statistical data. There were also concerns about the length of time it took for data to be filtered through to a local level as it did not represent an accurate picture of the current position and concerns.

The Board felt there was more merit in being able to look at the child's experience throughout school rather than as part of a cohort. The Board needed to be in a place where it had statistical and narrative information to understand the position with children looked after by the Authority.

The Board noted the position regarding long term foster placements outside of Kirklees and questioned the sufficiency of placements within the borough and local options. The Board also noted the volume of children coming into the care system and requested an LAC profile so they could understand where in Kirklees children were coming from as well as the picture of children leaving care.

The Board felt it would be appropriate to consider the Virtual School update on a termly basis, with the ability to track changes and trends within the statistical information.

Also appended to the report was a summary of information from a conference run by the Rees Centre of Research in Fostering and Education at the University of Oxford, which presented the findings of a research project which explored the relationship between educational outcomes, young people's care histories and individual characteristics. It was suggested that officers give further consideration to the key findings and policy and practice implications of the research and bring a further paper for consideration by the Board on how this might be used by Children's Services.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the update report from Janet Tolley, Virtual School Headteacher be received and noted.

(2) That where possible the gender split between boys and girls be included within statistics both at a local level and nationally.

(3) That future data information include an up to date position statement that clarifies the statistics, for example identifying hot spots, contributory factors and actions going forward.

(4) That with the proposed increase in meetings of the board in the new municipal year, the information be provided on a termly basis. The information will also track changes and trends.

(5) That information provided by the Rees Centre be given further consideration by officers with proposals to a future Board meeting as to how the information and learning from other local authorities might be used.

28 **Looked After Children Strategy**

Toni Traynor, Head of Service, Corporate Parenting provided a briefing for the Board on proposals to develop a Looked After Children Strategy.

The Strategy would include the duties, powers and responsibilities in relation to Looked After Children and care leavers as well as the contribution that the Authority and partners make throughout a child's life. It would also include reference to the profile of Looked After Children in Kirklees and what those children said about the care system. The pledge to children, together with Governance arrangements would also be set out within the Strategy. It was noted that the pledge would be updated as part of the work.

It was suggested that there be further discussions with the Board about the delivery of the Strategy including any action plan and timescales. An engagement plan would also be drawn up to ensure that key partners had the opportunity to inform the Strategy.

The Board recognised the need to have a Strategy in place as soon as possible but agreed that further work would be ongoing to continue to refine the Strategy and use feedback from engagement to inform the final version.

RESOLVED -

(1) That proposals to produce a Looked After Children Strategy be approved.

(2) That the concerns of the Board regarding the scope of engagement be considered as part of further work once the initial strategy has been put in place.

(3) That a further report on the strategy be considered at a meeting in the new municipal year.

29 **Fostering and Adoption Position Statements**

The Corporate Parenting Board considered a briefing on the National Adoption Scorecard 2012-2015 which had been published in March 2016 and was based on data for the 3 years to March 2015. It was noted that the Scorecard covered three key indicators;

- Average time between a child entering care and moving in with its adoptive family for children who have been adopted
- Average time between a Local Authority receiving Court Authority to place a child (Placement Order) and the Local Authority deciding on a match
- Percentage of children who wait less than X months between entering care and moving in with their adoptive family

The data in respect of indicator 1 indicated a 67 days improvement, representing a 9.5% reduction, compared to the 2011-2014 scorecard. The second indicator had improved by 14 days or 4.2%, and the third indicator had reduced from 42% to 37% against a more challenging timescale target. The report also included statistical benchmarking information with neighbouring authorities. The report continued to provide information on the adoption work flow and some pen pictures of children awaiting placements.

There followed similar information on fostering services at April 2016. The Board was pleased to note that the first pilot of Pillars of Parenting, a therapeutic parenting model, was launched in April 2016. A group of children and young people, placed with Kirklees foster carers, were part of the pilot. Linda Patterson, Service Manager attended the Board meeting to present the information and answer Members questions.

There Board discussed how Kirklees was attracting foster carers and it was noted that officers were part of a regional group which looked to develop comparable support packages. Toni Traynor confirmed that a new Head of Service had been appointed and would be looking at sufficiency issues as part of a complete review to determine the way forward.

RESOLVED -

(1) That Linda Patterson, Service Manager be thanked for attending the Board meeting.

(2) That the briefing on the Adoption Score Card and Fostering Agency Report be received and noted.

(3) That the use of case studies to help the Board's understanding of fostering and adoption cases be welcomed.

30 Looked After Children Profile

The Board considered as a late urgent item, a first draft of a Looked After Children Profile for the Kirklees area. The profile presented statistical information on monthly trends in the number of Looked After Children, age and gender information and the length of time looked after by age. It continued to set out starter and leaver information for 2015/2016 with explanatory notes; legal status and placement type; placement location and the ethnicity of Looked After Children.

Matthew Holland, Head of Children's Trust Management and Development and Toni Traynor presented the information and sought the views of the Board on areas for inclusion. It was recognised that case studies had already been identified as adding meaning and context to discussions. It was suggested that further clarification of the decision making categories was required.

Overall the Board supported the introduction of a Looked After Children Profile subject to inclusion of more narrative information. It was agreed that officers would continue to develop the profile information and bring it to future Board meetings.

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In closing the Board was informed that there was a Pillars of Parenting Managers session being run on 26 April 2016 at the Textile Centre, Huddersfield. An invitation was extended to any Board Member to attend. Further information would be circulated by the Governance Officer following the meeting.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the approach to producing a Looked After Children Profile for Kirklees be welcomed and noted.

(2) That information on the categories of decision making, for example Section 20, be included in future information.

(3) That where appropriate a narrative be included within the profile to add additional context to statistical information.