

Contact Officer: Alaina McGlade

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Monday 28th November 2016

Present: Councillor Erin Hill (Chair)
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Gemma Wilson
Linda Patterson
Sarah Callaghan
Steve Collins
Andrew Carden
Marion Gray
Martin Green
Janet Tolley
Matthew Holland – Head of Children’s Trust Management and Development

Apologies: Councillor Fazila Fadia
Rachel Spencer-Henshall
Carly Speechley
Gill Ellis – Assistant Director, Learning and Skills

In attendance: Michelle Rawlings, Adoption Team Manager
Alaina McGlade, Governance & Democratic Engagement Officer

1 Introductions and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllr Fazila Fadia, Jacqui Gedman, Deputy Chief Executive and Director of Economy, Skills and the Environment, Carly Speechley, Assistant Director – Family Support & Child Protection, Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Director of Public Health and Gill Ellis, Assistant Director for Learning & Skills.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2016 be approved as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

The Panel considered the exclusion of the public and determined that all agenda items be considered in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

7 Youth Engagement Event

Linda Patterson, Interim Head of Corporate Parenting distributed a briefing note that provided an update to the Board on the feedback received from the young people in attendance at the recent engagement event.

Linda advised that the event had taken place on Tuesday 15th November and that the children in attendance had engaged in open and honest discussions with officers. She explained that a number of key themes had emerged, one of which being the need to consult with the young people. The team was currently researching practical arrangements for formal engagement with the young people as a way to assist the service in challenging the processes involved in meeting their ambitions. The Board was advised that the service was aware that a broader representation of young people's views would be required going forward and that work in this area would start immediately.

Another key message that was prevalent amongst the young people was the need to consider how to avoid Looked After Children standing out as different in comparison to other children, whilst still supporting their needs. They advised that the special treatment sometimes provided to them meant that, on occasions, they stood out amongst their peers.

Sarah Callaghan, Director of Young People advised that the "You Said, We Did" was a nationally established mechanism used to engage with young people and that there were a number of mechanisms that could be researched. She advised that this research would be brought back to the next meeting of the Board and that as part of the work, a way to incorporate the young people's views into a refreshed children's pledge would also be considered. She explained that it was vital that the young people were kept informed of the outcomes of their engagement in order for them to remain positive about their involvement.

Cllr Hill, Chair of the Board advised that, in her opinion, engagement events were required to be taken to the young people in their own environments, as well as the young people being invited to the council. Sarah explained that the Board also needed to consider how corporate parents within Kirklees were championing the voice of the child and that this would feed into the improvement plan for Children's Services.

RESOLVED - That;

- (1) The update be received, with thanks to Linda.
- (2) A briefing note detailing options for capturing the voice of young people in Kirklees be considered by the Board at their next meeting in January 2017.
- (3) A refresh of the children's pledge be considered at the next Children in Care Council meeting.

8 OFSTED Feedback

Sarah Callaghan, Director for Children and Young People provided the Board with an overview of the feedback received from OFSTED during their visit in September and highlighted the main issues arising from the inadequate rating received.

Sarah advised that the result of the inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and the review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board was an inadequate rating. She explained that Eleanor Brazil had been assigned as the Children's Services Commissioner that will work alongside the council for three months in order to determine whether the council has the capacity to improve its services for children and young people. Sarah explained that Eleanor Brazil would consider the political and corporate support available to children's services and also the leadership within the service.

Sarah explained that the report had identified that the council were already undertaking an improvement programme and the council would continue to focus on improving;

- * Work force
 - valuing staff and encouraging them to remain at Kirklees
- * Performance culture
 - quality assurance framework
- * Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and front door access to support
 - early intervention and prevention
- * Sufficiency
 - 44% of Looked After Children are placed outside of Kirklees and significant numbers are placed more than 20 miles away from their communities

Sarah went on to advise the Board that a "Putting Children First" event had been arranged to take place at the John Smith's Stadium in order to establish corporate and private support for our children. The priorities established at the event would feed into the corporate improvement plan and would provide clear accountability areas for partners. She also advised that Clare Burgess had been brought in as an independent chair for the Improvement Board.

Linda Patterson explained the key findings of the report in relation to Looked After Children;

- * Untimely decision to put children in care
- * Placement stability
- * Young people being unhappy away from their communities
- * Children at home on care orders
- * Length of time waiting to be adopted
- * Care leaver pathway plans
- * Number of Looked After Children not in employment, education or training

Sarah advised that one of the main considerations in addressing the concerns highlighted in the report was how to intervene earlier and provide edge of care services to families that are struggling in order to identify problems before care interventions are required.

She also explained that a big challenge was down to the workforce and the dependency on agency staff being higher than is appropriate. She advised that the courts had issues in trusting what was presented in reports due to the high turnaround of staff involved in a case. She explained that the turnaround of staff impacted the stability of placements and this was something that required improvement. Sarah explained that exit interviews were held with staff and that going forward, work would take place around supporting staff in their professional development better whilst also ensuring workforce standards and accountability were clearly defined.

The Board held a discussion about the use of partners and the interventions they can provide and influence for young people. The Board agreed that the membership of the Board should be reviewed to consider the benefit of relevant partner organisations being invited to take up membership on the Board.

RESOLVED - That;

- (1) The update be received, with thanks to Sarah and Linda.
- (2) A comprehensive report be considered by the Board at their January meeting, highlighting suggestions for the Next Steps following publication of the OFSTED report.

9 Regional Adoption

Michelle Rawlings, Adoption Team Manager updated the Board on the progress being made with the regionalisation of adoption. She explained that the government is committed to adoption services being reorganised under regional arrangements whereby a group of local authorities collaborate to provide services. The driver for this proposed change is to enhance the outcomes for children in achieving the more timely placements of children for adoption; facilitate recruitment of the right adopters for children with an adoption plan and offer timely and expert adoption support.

Michelle advised that Cabinet will be asked to consider and endorse the arrangements for Kirklees to join with Leeds, Bradford, Calderdale and Wakefield to form One Adoption West Yorkshire; all five Local Authorities will have reached a decision by 20th December 2016.

Cllr Hill explained that leading members were now involved with this process and that one of the key considerations was how the authorities could work together on some of the other issues across the care system

RESOLVED - That the update be received, with thanks to Michelle.

10 Adoption Agency Report

The Corporate Parenting Board considered a report on Kirklees performance between 1.4.16 – 30.9.16, in relation to the National Adoption Scorecard. It was noted that the report covered three key indicators;

- * Children with a plan for adoption;
- * Recruitment of adopters
- * Matches and placements made

The data in respect of indicator 1 indicated the number of days waiting ranged from between 17 and 443 days and that this was an increase compared with the previous six months. The second indicator had slightly increased due to a successful recruitment campaign, and the third indicator demonstrated that 82% of the matches presented to panel were within 121 days of the Placement Order being made; this demonstrated a significant improvement on the previous six months when only 36% of matches were considered during this time.

The Board was advised that the indicators demonstrated an improving picture and that in-year performance was meeting the required timescales.

RESOLVED - That the content of the report be noted.

11 Performance Data/ Exception Report

The Board was presented with a report detailing performance data for the family support and child protection service for Quarter 2.

The report contained a number of graphs that demonstrated that there had been a gradual increase in the numbers of Looked After Children during the last 3 years and that the majority of Looked After Children were within the 10-15 age bracket.

Page 3 of the report demonstrated Kirklees figures in relation to Looked After Children and their placements and also showed how Kirklees compared with statistical neighbours and the average across the country.

Page 4 demonstrated Kirklees figures in relation to adoption and the adoption process and page 5 focussed upon care leavers.

Sarah Callaghan advised that the Council needed to have a proactive response to social care interventions so that the initial issue is identified early on. She explained this would assist to avoid social care issues later in the process. She explained that the Board could contribute to developing this area by considering the benefit of collaborative work with partners and the legal department.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the content of the report be noted.
- (2) Consideration be given to extending the membership of the Board to include a legal representative and members from key partner organisations.

12 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan

The Board was presented with an updated agenda plan outlining priority focus descriptions against each of the future meetings. The plan then outlined relevant agenda items against the priorities and the contact officer for each of the items.

The Board advised that key performance data was required to be considered by the Board at every meeting and that the data presented was to be outcome related data so that the Board could easily track and monitor the performance of the service.

RESOLVED - That;

- (1) The content of the report be noted.
- (2) A draft data performance report be presented for consideration at the next meeting of the Board, including OFSTED key indicators and outcome related performance.

13 Dates of Future Meetings

RESOLVED - That the future meeting dates of the Board be noted.