

Contact Officer: Alaina McGlade

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Monday 24th April 2017

Present: Councillor Erin Hill (Chair)
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Fazila Fadia
Gill Ellis, Interim Strategic Director for Children & Young People
Anne Coyle, Service Director for Family Support & Child Protection
Martin Green, Deputy Assistant Director
Steve Collins, Calderdale & Kirklees Careers
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Headteacher

Apologies: Councillor Gemma Wilson
Julie Mepham, Head of Corporate Parenting
Jo-Anne Sanders, Acting Assistant Director for Learning & Skills
Andrew Carden, Integrated Children's Service Manager
Marion Gray, Learning & Organisational Development Manager
Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Director of Public Health

In attendance: Rob Finney, Interim Fostering Team Manager
Sue Griggs, Performance Lead for Children & Young People
Alaina McGlade, Governance & Democratic Engagement Officer

1 Introductions and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Gemma Wilson, Julie Mepham, Head of Corporate Parenting, Jo-Anne Sanders, Acting Assistant Director for Learning & Skills, Andrew Carden, Integrated Children's Service Manager, Marion Gray, Learning & Organisational Development Manager and Rachel Spencer-Henshall, Director of Public Health.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 February 2017 be approved as a correct record subject to the amendment of Minute 9 from '...and attendance at only one High School.' to '...and a single social worker.'

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

The Panel considered the question of the admission of the public and determined that all items would be considered in public.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time

No questions were received.

7 Feedback - Young People Event

The Chair advised that a number of Board Members had attended an informal event at the University where feedback had been sought from a number of young people.

Everyone in attendance at the event agreed it had been extremely beneficial and that these informal meetings should continue in order to provide consistent feedback to the young people on suggestions they raise. It was outlined that honest communication was required when liaising with young people so as to maintain meaningful feedback sessions whilst not raising unrealistic expectations.

Board Members outlined that the way in which the outcomes of young people would be improved as a result of the access to the facilities that will be created through the amended use of the old registrar's office, needed to be demonstrated clearly. It was explained that a number of benefits from these facilities will relate directly to the recommendations contained within the improvement plan.

The Board also agreed that regular informal events with young people should be arranged for the forthcoming municipal year and that these events should assist to create a consistent feedback mechanism between the Board and young people.

RESOLVED -

That an update on the progress made at the old register office site be considered at a meeting of the Board in the new municipal year.

8 Commissioner's Report - Preparation for Independence

RESOLVED -

That this item be deferred to the first meeting of the Board in the new municipal year.

9 Adoption Regionalisation Update

The Board was advised that since 2015, Kirklees has been part of an early adopter scheme with Local Authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber Adoption Consortium to consider how high quality adoption services could be offered on a regional or sub-regional basis.

It was explained that this has progressed and between September 2016 and December 2016, Cabinet approval was given in all 5 West Yorkshire Local Authorities to establish a sub-regional Adoption Agency, named as One Adoption Agency, with Leeds City Council acting as the host for this agency.

Anne Coyle, Service Director for Family Support & Child Protection explained that all five Local Authorities have worked together to ensure that staff in all 5 Local Authorities were fully consulted; there was engagement with the relevant Unisons; consultation with adopters and adopted children and young people and discussions regarding IT; Finance, HR matters, Information Sharing and Performance Data. It was also explained that there had been engagement with Adoption Matters and Barnardos as representatives of the Voluntary Adoption Agencies in the region.

It was advised that the One Adoption Agency came into effect and for Kirklees on 1 April 2017 and that this would mean:

- All prospective adopters that reside in the Kirklees area will be assessed, approved and supported by the One Adoption Agency;
- Adoption Support to adopters, children and birth families will be provided by the One Adoption Agency;
- Family Finding for all children who have a plan for adoption is being carried out by the One Adoption Agency;
- Kirklees Children's Services remains responsible for all of the looked after children who have a plan for adoption until an Adoption Order is made;
- Kirklees Children's Services remains responsible for the performance against the Adoption Score Card and Ofsted will continue to assess performance against the Score Card.

The Board was advised that there would be a period of transition as staff in the 5 Local Authorities move to new work bases and whilst they take on a new role and put new practices in place.

In terms of Kirklees staff, the vast majority were given their first preference in terms of work base and role and a significant number of Social Workers and Managers from Kirklees had been retained and were now part of One Adoption, based at Riverbank. It was explained that there were many benefits to be gained from this, in relation to continuity and working relationships with staff in Children's Services.

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It was highlighted that this was the first sub-regional Adoption Agency to come into place nationally.

Cllr Marchington questioned how the current adoption panels that include Members would integrate into the new system. Cllr Hill advised that it was her understanding that involvement of Members at a local level was to be retained.

The Board outlined that regular updates on the progress made in this area were important to enable the Board to monitor its effectiveness.

RESOLVED -

(1) That the update be received, with thanks to Anne.

(2) A further update be considered by the Board in 3 months' time.

10 Performance Report

The Board considered a report that was tabled at the meeting, which provided an end of year summary with an overview of all the agreed indicators that monitor the performance relevant for the Corporate Parenting Board. It was advised that there were 63 indicators in total.

The Board agreed that any questions or issue arising from the performance information within the report should be considered at the next meeting due to the Board being unable to consider the detailed information in the report within the time allowed for the item.

RESOLVED –

That the content of the report be noted, with thanks to Sue and that a detailed discussion on the information take place at the next meeting of the Board.

11 Fostering Agency Report

Rob Finney, Interim Fostering Team Manager advised the Board that as of the end of March 2017, the council had 683 Looked After Children. It was explained that the fostering service currently looks after 298 of these children and young people. Of these, 90 were placed with connected (friends and family) carers and 217 with mainstream (recruited) carers.

It was also advised that 188 young people were placed with external Independent Fostering Agencies and it was explained that there is an additional cost to placing with external agencies. Therefore, a successful recruitment and retention strategy was one of the key development areas for the service in order to significantly increase the number of carers available to the fostering service.

It was explained that the current fostering development plan is focused on three main areas of practice:

- Business planning
- Compliance
- Quality Assurance

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Rob explained that it was currently taking 9 months to complete the adoption process but that by reducing the current 2 stage process down to a single stage, it was envisaged that this timeframe could be reduced to 4 months.

Gill Ellis, Interim Strategic Director for Children & Young People advised that neighbouring authorities had advised that a reduction in paperwork for foster carers had helped reduce timescales also.

Rob advised that a good number of enquiries were received but that the current recruitment strategies were not as effective as they could be. He explained that a response to each initial enquiry needed to be made within 72 hours and that marketing strategies were required to be implemented in order to sell the advantages of fostering for the Local Authority.

Rob also advised that work was ongoing to re-establish a positive working relationship with the Kirklees Fostering Network and include them within the programme of induction and training.

Rob advised that a quality assurance framework was in place and that a business plan had been developed. The aim of the business plan was to add an additional 63 carers to the Local Authority's team within the next three years. He explained that additional foster carers in the system would enable expensive residential places appropriately. Anne explained that transferring residential children to fostering placements is a complex process and that the Board may benefit from a presentation explaining the process. The Board agreed that it would be beneficial to receive a presentation that assisted them to understand the operational processes.

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the update be noted, with thanks to Rob.
- (2) A presentation explaining the operational processes relating to the transfer of placements be arranged for a meeting of the Board in the new municipal year.

12 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan

The Board considered its agenda plan for future meetings and noted the change in time and venue for the next meeting.

RESOLVED -

That the agenda items for the last meeting of the Board be noted and agreed.

13 Dates of Future Meetings

The Board noted the date of the last meeting of the Board for the 2016/17 municipal year.

RESOLVED -

That the next meeting of the Board be held on 15 May 2017 at 10am in Huddersfield Town Hall.