

Contact Officer: Alaina McGlade

KIRKLEES COUNCIL
CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Monday 17th July 2017

Present: Councillor Erin Hill (Chair)
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Fazila Fadia
Councillor Gemma Wilson
Jo-Anne Sanders, Acting Assistant Director for Learning & Skills
Julie Mepham, Head of Corporate Parenting
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Headteacher
Kerrie Scraton, Interim Senior Manager – Safeguarding Assurance
Scott Deacon, Participation Officer

In attendance: Rob Finney, Fostering Team Manager
Alison Waters, Senior Performance Officer
Belinda Cashman, Team Manager – Family Support & Child Protection
Alaina McGlade, Governance & Democratic Engagement Officer

Apologies: Anne Coyle, Service Director – Child Protection & Family Support
Martin Green, Head of Localities Offer for Children & Families
Tom Brailsford, Head of Joint Commissioning

1 Introductions and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Anne Coyle, Service Director - Child Protection & Family Support, Martin Green, Head of Localities Offer for Children & Families and Tom Brailsford, Head of Joint Commissioning.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2017 be approved as a correct record.

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 OFSTED Monitoring Visit

Julie Mepham advised the Board that OFSTED completed their first monitoring visit at the end of June and the outcome of that inspection had been received by letter.

Julie explained that the initial feedback from the visit was that OFSTED had definitely noticed improvements being made, recognising that although there was still some instability with the workforce in some areas, Kirklees in the main now had a dedicated and positive workforce and management oversight was apparent. There were no children found to be unsafe and although the changes being implemented had not yet impacted on outcomes, the changes were apparent and the improvement journey was recognised.

Julie advised that the next visit would be in September and at this visit, the Care Leavers Service and the Looked After Children's Service would be the focus.

RESOLVED -

That:

- (1) the update be received and noted and;
- (2) that a further update on the next visit be scheduled to be received at the November meeting of the Board.

8 Civic Centre Drop-In Centre

Belinda Cashman attended the meeting along with 3 young care leavers to update the Board on the development of the drop-in centre in Huddersfield Town Centre. Belinda provided the Board with an overview of the planned layout for the centre and advised of all of the facilities that will be in place.

The young people explained that they were really excited about their involvement in the development of the centre and appreciated the opportunity to influence the proposals. They explained that the centre was required to be much more than a drop in centre and that young people were committed to providing training and employment opportunities within the centre.

Julie explained that following recommendations from young people, officers were speaking with HR regarding the possibility of business/admin traineeships for care experienced young people to enable them to staff the reception of the centre. The

peer mentoring service would also be situated within one of the rooms within the centre. She explained that they hoped to coordinate a launch event in September and advised that the Board would receive further details of this closer to the time.

RESOLVED -

That the update be received and noted with thanks to the young people for attending and contributing to the meeting.

9 Service Plan Update

The Board considered a report which updated the Board on the current developments in the Corporate Parenting Service and the plans for the future of the service.

Julie clarified that the focus of the recent strike action had been in relation to workloads across the service. She explained that workloads in the Looked After Children, Fostering and Care Leavers teams were all low in comparison to national averages. However, she explained that workloads with the Assessment and Intervention team were high and improvements to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub were currently being piloted in the hope of helping to remedy the high workloads.

The Board was advised that the Corporate Parenting Service encompasses: looked after children, leaving care, residential homes, fostering, placement finding, connected person assessments & support and the contact service.

In relation to service plans for each of these teams, plans are in place and are reviewed and updated monthly by the service managers, with all updates being fed into the Improvement Plan.

Julie Mepham advised that assessments of 20 foster carers were currently underway and the service were hopeful of a net increase of approximately 15 new carers as a result of this. She explained that the service had a proposed recruitment target of 21 net carers each year so felt confident that the service would reach this target.

Pathway planning training had continued to be rolled out across the Looked After Children and Leaving Care service, with the focus of this training being on an improvement in the quality of plans. Julie advised that at the time of the update, 90% of plans were on the system, explaining that this was positive for young people as plans now reflected their involvement and voice. She also advised that the number of care plans had improved significantly as has the number of up to date assessments for every child. A compliance clinic had been arranged to maintain the standards now reached by the service.

RESOLVED -

That the content of the report be noted.

10 Performance Report

The Board considered a report providing an end of year summary with an overview of all the agreed indicators that monitor performance relevant to the Corporate Parenting Board.

The current issues were highlighted as being:

- a slight rise in residential placements since May 2016 (advised as relating to 2 children);
- lower number of children in care (currently 690, was 699 in March 2017);
- lower number of children subject to a Care Order placed at home than in April 2017 but still way above target;
- above target for placement stability within a year;
- a decrease in placement stability within two years;
- a rising number of social worker changes;
- IRO visits and reviews were under performing in a few different areas;
- a similar trend of a high number of Looked After Children going missing more than once in a month continues to occur;
- attainment, attendance and persistence absence continues to cause concerns;
- dental checks have reduced from figures provided in March 2017.

The improvements were highlighted as being:

- children entering care by placement – percentage in fostering has increased from 58% in May 2016 to 71% currently;
- children entering care by placement within and outside the LA Boundary – in April 2017, 78% were placed within Kirklees and 21.4% outside – slight drop from March 2017 but improvement from May 2016 when 69.2% were placed within Kirklees and 30.8% outside;
- children leaving care with a positive outcome improved to 100% in April 2017;
- a reduction in placement movements from 48 in March 2017 to 19 in April 2017;
- health assessments being up to date and initial assessment completed on time had both increased when compared to figures provided in March 2017;
- Looked After Children convictions had reduced.

RESOLVED -

That:

- (1) the content of the report be noted;
- (2) the comparison figures for the previous 12 months be included where relevant in future reports;
- (3) a report detailing recent “Missing” statistics and work ongoing within the service, as presented to a recent CSE Panel, be included on the next agenda of the Board.

11 Fostering Agency Report

The Board considered a report advising that the service had just reported the Fostering data set for 2017 to OFSTED. Rob Finney explained that he had since met with the performance team and the Liquid logic teams to ensure that the systems built for the future enable efficient reporting as the data gathering was labour intensive.

The data advised that as of 31st march 2017, there were:

- 198 fostering households and
- 262 fostered children.

The report advised that there were some very complex young people in the service and that whilst the vast majority of young people enjoyed very settled placements, a number of young people were considered to be at risk of CSE or had multiple missing episodes. Rob further advised that the numbers could be slightly misleading and explained that, for example, the same child went missing 24 times. However, no young people in placements were considered to have actually experienced CSE whilst in placement. For example, one young person was missing 24 times.

Rob further expanded on the increase in potential foster carers currently undergoing the assessment process and explained that the increase was due to the fact that the team were managing enquiries better by replicating some private sector ways of working. He advised that the service have previously been and are currently working to a deficit model in relation to fostering placements. Because of this, the number of independent sector placements was high however he hoped to half this number over the next three years through utilising internal placements effectively.

Rob also advised that a key focus for the team was the implementation of emergency foster carers and CSE super foster carers. He explained that there is a national shortage of foster carers for teenagers and that work around the voice of the young person and involving young people in pre-assessment training was being undertaken to try to combat this shortage. He also advised that the Placement Support Team had been in place for just under a year and this team was a key component in delivering successful outcomes for the team.

The report explained that the service was working on implementing a quality assurance framework within fostering including good quality data analysis around compliance; file audits, direct observations of practice and analysis of systems and processes.

RESOLVED -

That the content of the report be noted.

12 Complaints & Compliments Annual Report

The Board considered a report providing information on Compliments, Representations and Complaints received by Kirklees Directorate for Children and

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Adults Service between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017. It was explained that it was a requirement in the Improvement Plan for the Corporate Parenting Board to have been presented with a copy of the Complaints & Compliments Annual Report.

Yasmin Mughal outlined the key points in the report, explaining that there had been a significant increase in the number of complaints received but that the majority of these complaints had been resolved at Stage One of the process.

Cllr Marchington questioned whether the nature of complaints had altered and also asked how the service incorporated the complaints process into training for the service. Yasmin explained that the nature of complaints had not changed. She also advised that if a number of complaints of a similar nature were received, this would be flagged up with the relevant service manager.

Yasmin also pointed out that the team had sometimes struggled with meeting response timescales but advised that this tended to be due to the complexity of the complaint.

RESOLVED -

That the Board considered the content of the report and acknowledged the information on Compliments, Representations and Complaints received by Kirklees Directorate for Children and Adults Service between 1st April 2016 and 31st March 2017.

13 Kirklees Independent Reviewing Officers' Annual Report

The Board considered a report providing information on the contribution of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to quality assurance and improving services for children in care for the period from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017. It was explained that it was a requirement under the Care Planning, Placement and Care Review (England) Regulations 2010 that the IRO Manager produce an annual report for scrutiny by the Corporate Parenting Board.

Kerrie Scraton outlined the key points in the report, explaining that it had been a busy year, with the numbers of both Looked After Children and children at risk still high. She explained that there were currently 6 vacancies within the team that had added pressure to the team but this would hopefully be resolved in the near future.

Kerrie explained that the focus for this year was to drive the standards forward for the service. The Chair advised that the issue of decision making not being taken in a timely manner was a big concern for the Board. Kerrie advised that this area was a focus for the team and developments were underway to fix the system.

RESOLVED -

That the Board considered the content of the report and acknowledged the contribution of Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) to quality assurance and improving services for children in care for the period from 1st April 2016 to 31st March 2017.

14 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan

The Board considered its agenda plan for future meetings and noted the scheduled items for the next meeting.

RESOLVED -

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

15 Dates of Future Meetings

The Board noted the dates of the future meetings of the Board for the 2017/18 municipal year.

RESOLVED –

That the next meeting of the Board be held on Monday 18 September 2017 at 10am.