

Contact officer: Helen Kilroy – Tel. 01484 221000

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Monday 24th September 2018

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillors Lawson, Allison, Bellamy
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director, Learning and Early Support
Steve Comb, Interim Head of Corporate Parenting
Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager (Children and Families)
Martin Green, Head of Localities Offer (Children and Families)
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher
Sanna Mahmood, Looked after Children and Leaving Care
Ophelia Rix, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance
Keith Fielding, Kirklees Fostering Network
Colleen Callaghan, Kirklees Fostering Network

In attendance: Richard Smith, Youth Offending Team Service Manager
Julie Bragg, Service Manager (Children & Families)
Andy Quinlan, Acting Service Manager (Fostering)
Sara Miles, Service Manager (Children and Families)

Apologies: E Mc Shane, T Brailsford and G Addy

1 Introductions and Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Elaine Mc Shane, Tom Brailsford and Gill Addy.

The Chair welcomed Keith Fielding and Colleen Callaghan from the Kirklees Fostering Network to the Board and noted that they would attend future meetings as a Board member.

2 Minutes of previous meeting

The Board considered the minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2018.

RESOLVED –

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 9th July 2018 be approved as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the public

All items were considered in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions
No deputations or petitions were received.

6 Public Question Time
No questions were asked.

7 Review of Membership and Terms of Reference of Corporate Parenting Board

The Board considered revised Terms of Reference and the change to the Membership of the Board.

The Board agreed to invite the Chair of the Children’s Scrutiny Panel, or his/her nominee, to become a Member of the Board and attend future meetings.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board agreed to amend the Membership of the Board to add the Chair of the Children’s Scrutiny Panel, or his/her nominee, to the Board as an ex-officio Member and approved the revised terms of reference for the 2018/19 municipal year.

8. Ofsted and Improvement Board update

The Board considered a verbal update on Ofsted and the Improvement Board presented by Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting.

Steve Comb advised the Board that Ofsted had given positive feedback relating to the outcomes for Copthorne Children’s Home.

The Board was advised that the next Ofsted monitoring visit to Kirklees Children’s Services would take place in December 2018 and that the focus was expected to be on the front door, but noted that this could change. Steve Comb further explained that there would be a full inspection of the Children’s Services at some point in the new year.

RESOLVED –

1. That the verbal update on key issues from Ofsted and the Improvement Board be noted.
2. The Board agreed to continue to receive regular updates at each meeting.

9. Performance Monitoring Update

The Board considered a verbal update on key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for the Children’s Service presented by Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting and Janet Tolley, Virtual Head Teacher.

Steve Comb and Janet Tolley highlighted the following key issues:-

- **Initial PEP completion** – there had been educational challenges in terms of meeting initial PEP completion dates in the required timescales. Janet Tolley advised the Panel that officers were continuing to work with social work teams to improve PEP. This included weekly updates to Social Work

managers and regular chase up emails and phone calls to Social Workers where there was missing information. The Board was informed that this was a priority for the Virtual School;

- **Child in care moving school** - The Virtual School were working to improve communication when a child moved school to ensure a smoother transition and had agreed that the team would now have an education planning PEP in these cases. The Board was advised that it was essential that considerations and agreement were given to the education provision as a central part of any placement move decision;
- **Children in Care** – good work was going on to support the child to remain with their family or get back to their family as soon as possible to retain the family dynamic;
- The Board was advised that when the State made a decision to remove a child from its home, officers had to be sure it was the right decision as outcomes for children in care were not always positive.

The Board agreed that they were concerned with regard to children with multiple placements who might have to move school more often and the negative impact this had on the child or young person.

Janet Tolley advised the Board that if a School wanted to permanently exclude a child the Virtual School would get involved. The Board was informed that there had been no exclusions for children in care since the Virtual Head Teacher had been in post. The Chair of the Board expressed an interest in visiting Carr Manor School in North East Leeds who had a policy of non-exclusion.

Keith Fielding from the Kirklees Fostering Network advised that negotiations could be carried out with young people to get them back into school and improving attendance, for example agreeing an arrangement with the young person to attend school for 6 half days rather than full time to ensure that they were still engaging with the school on a daily basis.

Janet Tolley advised the Board of a pilot being carried out to mentor and provide role modelling for young people in care who were experiencing difficulties in attending school. The Board agreed to consider updates on the pilot in the future.

Colleen Callaghan from the Kirklees Fostering Network advised the Board that it was very important for children to be able to stay at their current school so that they could maintain their peer friendships and that conversations would take place with Foster Carers to endeavour to ensure this could happen where possible. The Board was informed that where a foster carer did not have a car to get a child to school, an option could be to car share with other foster carers.

RESOLVED –

1. That the verbal updates on Performance within Children’s Services be noted.
2. The Board agreed to consider future updates on the pilot being carried out to mentor and provide role modelling for young people in placements and children’s homes, who were experiencing difficulties in attending school.

10 Overview of number of children in care

The Board considered a report giving an overview of the number of children in care, their placement location and age presented by Julie Bragg, Service Manager for Looked after Children and Leaving Care.

Julie Bragg advised that where children had been placed in care out of Kirklees, their cases would be reviewed to decide on the best approach for that child. Julie Bragg further explained that if children had settled in an area outside Kirklees and made friends and networks it was important that they be allowed to stay in that area. The Board was advised that each child needed to be looked at and supported on their own merits, individual needs and circumstances.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the overview report on the number of children in care and thanked Julie Bragg for her contributions.

11 Draft Refreshed foster carer handbook

The Board considered the Draft Foster Carer's Handbook presented by Andy Quinlan, Acting Service Manager for Fostering.

Andy Quinlan advised the Panel that the Handbook was still in draft and would be finalised shortly, but that the main changes were around CSE and radicalisation. The Board was advised that an electronic version of the revised handbook would be available so that updates could easily be made. Andy Quinlan further explained that when changes were made to the revised Handbook, a note would be sent out via a newsletter advising of any key changes.

The Board agreed that the Foster Carer Handbook should be reviewed annually and that comments should be sought from the Kirklees Fostering Network and Foster Carers.

Andy Quinlan advised the Board that he would be attending the Foster Carers Business Meeting shortly with Steve Comb and would go through the draft Handbook and seek feedback and comments and that these would be included in the revised version of the handbook.

The Board noted that the final version of the handbook was expected to be available electronically and circulated within approximately 4 weeks.

The Board noted that the Handbook was a work in progress and that it was important to keep listening to those caring for children and make changes and improvements as required.

Keith Fielding advised that it would be useful to have more detailed financial information in the handbook, for example a maximum figure for what should be spent on a prom outfit to help foster carers.

Janet Tolley suggested that information on what funding foster carers were entitled to claim for should be explained within the handbook.

The Board agreed to send any further comments on the draft handbook to Andy Quinan by the 5th October, to allow any changes to be incorporated in the final version.

The Board agreed that the revised draft of the Foster Carer Handbook should be shared via email with the representatives from the Kirklees Fostering Network and all foster carers for comments, before it was finalised.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the draft foster carer handbook and thanked Andy Quinan for attending the meeting.
2. The Board agreed that all the comments and feedback from Members of the Board should be taken into account in updating the draft Foster Carer Handbook.
3. The Board agreed that the revised draft of the Foster Carer Handbook should be shared via email with the representatives from the Kirklees Fostering Network and all foster carers for comments before it was finalised.
4. The Board agreed that the comments and feedback from the Foster Carers Business Meeting on the draft Foster Carers Handbook should be included in the revised handbook.
5. The Board agreed to send any further comments on the draft Foster Carer Handbook direct to Andy Quinan by the 5th October.
6. The Board agreed that the Foster Carer Handbook should be reviewed annually and that comments should be sought from the Kirklees Fostering Network and Foster Carers.

12 Children's Rights – Annual Report

The Board considered an annual report on Children's Rights covering period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 presented by Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager (Children and Families) and Sara Miles, Service Manager (Children and Families).

The Board was advised that the Children's Rights Team shared the views and opinions of looked after children with Children's Social Work Services to ensure that the voice of the child was heard and taken into account in respect of Local Authority policy development and service delivery.

Melanie Tiernan advised the Board of key highlights from the report which included:-

- Every child or young person had the right to an independent advocate;
- The most common issues raised by children and young people were regarding placement planning issues;
- Positive outcomes for looked after children and young people included additional contact with family being agreed, clarity about contact arrangements being reached; the views of the child or young person being taken into consideration about what they wanted from their long term placement; and attending school trips or holiday activities;

Melanie Tiernan advised the Board that one of the key Ofsted findings was around sufficiency and one of the key areas for development was to work with Senior Managers to ensure that the voice of the child was included in sufficiency planning.

The Board was informed that advocacy for child protection conferences had been increased and that student social work placements would be offered within the team to lead on gaining the voice of the child within the child protection process.

In response to a question from the Board regarding what feedback and response had been received from young people, Melanie Tiernan advised that the Service had started to make an offer to young people that they could be entered into a prize draw to win a £25 voucher to try and encourage more written feedback. The Board was informed that a record was kept of both verbal and written feedback from young people. Melanie Tiernan further explained that the service was looking to send a feedback form to young people to be completed a few months after the advocacy. The Board noted that monitoring would be undertaken to check if young people were happy with their outcome and if the advocacy had worked for them.

Ophelia Rix advised the Board that a task and finish group had been set up to look at the variable ways to capture the voice and views of young people and the wider family network and what learning was from this. The Board agreed to consider an update giving feedback on this work at a future meeting – date to be determined.

Colleen Callaghan advised the Board that copies of letters sent to Children were also being sent to foster carers, so carers could help and prompt the children.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the Annual Report on Children's Rights and thanked Melanie Tiernan and Sara Miles for their contributions.
2. The Board agreed to consider a report in January 2019 giving feedback on the learning being undertaken on capturing the voice and views of young people and the wider family network.

13 Independent visitors scheme (Annual Report)

The Board considered an Annual Report of the Independent Visitors Scheme during the period 1st April 2017 to 31st March 2018 presented by Melanie Tiernan.

The Board was informed that the Kirklees Independent Visitors Scheme, also known as Care2Listen, was a Local Authority funded scheme which sat within the Looked after Children Independent Service.

Melanie Tiernan advised the Board that the number of children and young people accessing the service had increased during the reporting period of April 2017 to March 2018 with 44 being matched with an Independent Visitor.

The Board was informed that officers were looking at the current scheme and how it should be taken forward, including the 16+ offer.

In response to a question from the Board regarding publicity of the Scheme, Melanie Tiernan advised that the Scheme had been promoted via social media and Facebook. Colleen Callaghan suggested that the Scheme be promoted via Social Workers as the children in her foster care had accessed the Scheme in the past. A number of Board Members advised that they were not aware of the Scheme and agreed that it should be brought to the attention of all Councillors and the Improvement Board to raise awareness and help with promotion of the scheme to reach a wider audience.

Councillor Kendrick agreed to visit Melanie Tiernan's Team in Family Support and Child Protection in the near future.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the Annual Report on the Independent Visitors Scheme and thanked Melanie Tiernan and Sara Miles for their contributions.
2. The Board agreed that the Independent Visitors Scheme should be further promoted to reach a wider audience, including the Improvement Board, elected Members and via social media.
3. The Chair of the Board agreed to visit Melanie Tiernan's Team in Family Support and Child Protection in the near future – date to be determined.

14 Annual Report on Youth Offending Team and their work with children in Care

The Board considered a report regarding the improvement in outcomes for Looked after Children (LAC) subject to an intervention by the Youth Offending Team (YOT), presented by Richard Smith, Youth Offending Team Service Manager.

Richard Smith outlined the different youth offending categories, which were explained within the report. Richard Smith highlighted a number of key areas, as outlined below:-

- YOT were aware that outcomes for LAC were significantly worse than the general YOT population, and the aim was to bring outcomes for LAC more in line with the general population;
- There had been an improvement in the percentage of 10-17 year old LAC who were convicted of an offence, though far less dramatic;
- In 2010 almost 13% of Kirklees LAC were convicted of an offence compared with a national average of under 5%, by 2016 the Kirklees figure was just over 6% compared with a national average of 5%;
- Over the past 4 to 5 years the YOT's Restorative Justice Team had been working with Children's homes to encourage the use of restorative practice to deal with minor offences that occurred within the homes by giving the young person an opportunity to make amends for their offence, for example redecorating or repairing damage they have done, rather than going through the criminal justice system thereby reducing the number of young people criminalised for relatively minor offences.

In response to a question from the Board relating to what action taken by the YOT had made the biggest difference, Richard Smith advised that the YOT now took on responsibility for all LAC with Court Orders and had YOT Social Workers who had a real understanding of LAC behaviour and had built up relationships with young people in Children's Homes and with foster carers in Kirklees which had led to better engagement with young people. Richard Smith further explained that YOT were taking a different approach with young people and that it was about being more flexible in meeting the needs of the young person, whilst at the same time putting appropriate boundaries in place to ensure enforcement.

In response to a question from the Board relating to which Local Authority took responsibility for a young person with a YOT order living outside of Kirklees, Richard Smith explained that the other Local Authority would take on supervision of the young person, but that Kirklees YOT would retain ownership of the Court Order which had been served in Kirklees and vice versa.

The Board agreed to consider comparable data and trends of how many children with a Youth Offending Order were in foster placements and Children's homes within Kirklees. The Board also agreed to consider regular updates from the Youth Offending Team.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the Annual Report on the Youth Offending Team (YOT) and their work with children in care and thanked Richard Smith for his contributions.
2. The Board agreed to consider a report at the November meeting giving comparable data and trends on how many children with a Youth Offending Order were in foster placements and Children's homes within Kirklees.
3. The Board agreed to consider regular updates from the Youth Offending Team – dates to be determined.

15 Care Leavers Local Offer Action Plan

The Board considered a report providing a progress update on the development of the Kirklees Local Offer and extending Personal Advisor support to care leavers to the age of 25 presented by Julie Bragg, Service Manager for Looked after children and leaving care.

The Board noted that they were consulted on the Action Plan and proposed draft of the Local Offer was considered by the Board in July 2018. Board Members had agreed to forward comments on the Local Offer to Julie Bragg following the meeting. Julie Bragg advised the Board that the Action Plan and proposed draft of the Local Offer for Care Leavers was considered at a meeting with partner agencies on the 28th August 2018. The meeting was attended by a mix of partners, some of which were already providing services at No 11. The main purpose of the meeting was for partners to discuss their role in the Local Offer in relation to enhancing the service provision for Care Leavers. Julie Bragg further explained that the partners had been asked to provide feedback on the proposed draft offer.

The Board was informed that one of the Care Experienced Apprentices was currently looking at the design of the offer in consultation with other young people.

Julie Bragg informed the Board that officers were planning to launch the Local Offer towards the end of November. The Board noted that further considerations were being given as to whether the Local Offer had the correct name or whether an alternative name would be chosen. The Board agreed to receive details of the launch date in November.

The Board was informed that officers had started looking for suitable premises within North Kirklees for a drop in facility similar to No 11 in Huddersfield.

Cllr Kendrick advised the Board that she had received feedback from Care Leavers that as soon as they were no longer in care they could not use their KAL cards. The Board was informed that care leavers could not afford to pay to use the KAL facilities. Cllr Kendrick further explained that the young people had advised that using the KAL facilities helped to make them feel better and enabled them to make friends and socialise. The Board agreed that the ability for young people in care to use leisure facilities was good for their general physical and emotional wellbeing. Colleen Callaghan advised the Board that it was good to encourage exercise to help the health and wellbeing of looked after children and that Bradford had a Foster Carer Card, which enabled young people in care to use a number of facilities, including free use of the local swimming pool.

The Board agreed to further explore if care leavers could access leisure facilities at a reduced rate.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the Care Leavers Local Offer Action Plan and thanked Julie Bragg for her contributions.
2. The Board agreed to receive details of the launch of the Care Leavers Local Offer in November.
3. The Board agreed that it should further explore if Care leavers could access leisure facilities at a reduced rate.

16 Updates from Board Members on interaction with Services

The Board considered verbal updates from Board Members on interaction with Services.

Councillor Kendrick gave a summary of events and meetings she had recently attended, as follows:-

- Ofsted Monitoring visit;
- Hive Youth Zone in Birkenhead where a lot of work and intervention had been undertaken with the Youth Offending Team and young people;
- Met with Apprentices and care leavers;
- Children's Scrutiny Panel meetings - positive feedback had been received from the Panel Members on the current engagement with scrutiny and standard of reports;

- Interviews for the new Director of Children's Services – Mel Meggs had been appointed, start date to be confirmed;
- Corporate Parenting training on the 13th September 2018;
- Attended a wide range of meetings and briefings within Children's Services including the Improvement Board and the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board;
- Key Cities Youth Conference on the 25th July at the John Smith's Stadium where young people had put forward strong views;
- Homestart AGM where some young mums had talked about what life in care had been like for them and what had happened in their lives, some of whom had become peer mentors and gone on to University.

Colleen Callaghan advised the Board that the Kirklees Fostering Network was very pleased to be on the Membership of the Corporate Parenting Board. Colleen Callaghan advised that the Kirklees Fostering Network had recently attended the following events:-

- Houses of Parliament to promote longer nursery hours for children;
- Campaigned for better support and options for foster carers and met with some MPs;
- Presented at the Fostering Network meeting in London.

RESOLVED –

1. That the verbal updates from Board Members on interaction with Services be noted.

15 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan for 2017/18 and looking forward to 2018/19

The Board considered the Agenda Plan for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal year.

The Board agreed to consider future reports on the following issues:

- Head Teachers Report on the educational outcomes for looked after children – 19th November 2018
- Kirklees Fostering Network – achievements, current priorities and future aspirations – date to be determined;
- Marketing Plan for Recruitment of Foster Carers – January 2019.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Agenda Plan for the Corporate Parenting Board during 2018/19 be noted.
2. That the additional agenda items be added to the agenda plan for the 2018/19 municipal year and amendments be made as agreed.
3. That the Governance Officer be authorised to liaise with officers on agreed actions.

16 Dates of Future Meetings

That the Board noted the future meeting dates of the Board during the 2018/19 municipal year:

- Monday 21st January 2019, 10.30 am
- Monday 11th March 2019, 10.30 am
- Monday 15th April 2019, 10.30 am