

Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

## **KIRKLEES COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**Monday 21st January 2019**

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)  
Councillor Fazila Loonat  
Councillor John Lawson  
Councillor Donna Bellamy  
Janet Tolley  
Steve Comb  
Ophelia Rix  
Sanna Mahmood  
Gill Addy  
Colleen Kenworthy

Apologies: Councillor Karen Allison  
Jo-Anne Sanders  
Martin Green  
Tom Brailsford  
Melanie Tiernan  
Barry Lockwood  
Keith Fielding

#### **1 Introductions and Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Cllr Allison, Jo-Anne Sanders, Keith Fielding, Melanie Tiernan, Barry Lockwood, Martin Green, Tom Brailsford.

#### **2 Minutes of Last Meeting**

The Board considered the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018.

The Board was informed that information relating to the Independent Visitors Scheme had been circulated to all elected members so that they could assist with promotion of the scheme to encourage more volunteers.

The Board was informed that the CAMHS Transformational Plan had also been considered by the Children's Scrutiny Panel on the 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

The Board noted that two Briefing Sessions for elected members had been arranged by Ophelia Rix, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, regarding CSE and Safeguarding on the 28<sup>th</sup> January and 26<sup>th</sup> February 2019.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018 be approved as a correct record.

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### 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 **One Adoption Agency 6 monthly Report (April to Sept)**

The Board considered a 6 monthly report from One Adoption West Yorkshire covering the period April to September 2018, which included comparable data for other West Yorkshire Local Authorities. The Board welcomed Mandy Prout from One Adoption to the meeting.

Mandy Prout advised on an amendment to the report in that the report covered the period April 2018 to September 2018, not 2017 as outlined in the report.

The Board was informed that One Adoption was in the second year of operation and was building positive relationships with staff in the Children's Services within Kirklees. Mandy Prout further explained that there was evidence which showed in practice that there was good joined up working with all social care teams in Kirklees.

The Board was advised that One Adoption had continued to work with Kirklees to create successful placements for children in Kirklees thus avoiding delays for children.

Mandy Prout advised the Board that One Adoption was working with five virtual school heads (VSH) to assist in implementing the new duty placed on VSH in each locality to enable an education worker within One Adoption to work with VSH to help implement the new duty. The Board was advised that one of the main aims of working with the VSH was to help families and prospective adopters to empathise with children early on in terms of the impact on them of trauma and change.

In response to a question from the Board relating to the reduction of numbers of children coming through with a plan for adoption, Mandy Prout explained that less plans had been made for adoption for children in Kirklees which was partly due to the Kirklees Improvement Journey and that Kirklees was investing in 'early doors' work and had been working hard on intervention and assessment to improve outcomes for children and to enable them to stay within their own families wherever possible.

In response to a question from the Board relating to the decrease in the number of families at stage 2 of adoption at the end of quarter 2, Mandy Prout advised that there was often a complex picture relating to a child that could not be seen in the data. The Board was informed that there had been an increase in adoption interest in January 2019 due to positive promotional events which had taken place, including

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the recent article on Look North. Mandy Prout advised the Board that One Adoption were hoping for a bigger increase in interest for adoption during the first part of 2019.

In response to a question from the Board relating to people dropping out of adoption, Mandy Prout advised that One Adoption were carefully monitoring the drop-out rate of adopters and ensured that every case was followed through.

In response to a question from the Board relating to the progress of the Special Guardianship approach, Mandy Prout advised that One Adoption had been working in partnership with grandparents plus and the five Local Authorities to provide support to special guardians in the region but that this work was still in the very early stages. Mandy Prout agreed to provide an update on the Special Guardianship work within the next report to the Board in July 2019.

In response to a question asking for more information relating to early permanence practice, Mandy Prout explained that this was where adoption was not certain for a child and that they could be placed in fostering until matched with an adopter. The Board was informed that Kirklees had a good approach to this prior to One Adoption and this continued to be an area of strength.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. The Board noted the One Adoption Agency 6 monthly report (April to September 2018) and thanked Mandy Prout from One Adoption for attending the meeting.
2. That the Board consider an update from One Adoption on the joint work taking place between One Adoption, Grandparents plus and the five Local Authorities on providing support for special guardians in the region – July 2019.

- 8 Review of Membership and Terms of Reference of Corporate Parenting Board**  
The Board considered a report requesting changes to the Membership and Terms of the Reference of the Corporate Parenting Board.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. The Board noted the Review of the Membership and Terms of Reference of the Corporate Parenting Board.
2. The Board agreed to amend the Membership of the Board to include the Director of Children's Services, Service Manager (Looked after Children and Leaving Care), Practice Improvement Lead (Family Support and Child Protection), Improvement Partner (Children's Services).

- 9 Ofsted and Improvement Board update**  
The Board considered an update on Ofsted and the Improvement Board presented by Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting. The Board considered the letter from Ofsted following the monitoring visit on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> December 2019.

Steve Comb informed the Board that Ofsted had advised that Kirklees had made significant progress in improving its initial response to children and young people

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who needed help and protection. Steve Comb highlighted the following key areas from the Ofsted letter:-

- Ofsted found effective decision making at every level and good independent reviewing officer oversight at the midway review of the child protection plan;
- The workforce was now increasingly stable and there had been a considerable improvement in the recruitment of permanent staff at all levels. The morale of those workers spoken to was good and they felt supported by Managers.

In response to a question from the Board as to whether this was the last monitoring visit from Ofsted, Mel Meggs (Director of Children Services) advised that this was the last monitoring visit and that the service was preparing for a full inspection within the next 6 months.

In response to a question from the Board relating to case notes not always being kept up to date and that this had been flagged by the Children's Scrutiny Panel, Steve Comb advised that there was a case audit system in place where officers met monthly to gather evidence from the audit system. Steve Comb further explained that Liquid Logic had been installed and the data would be further interrogated as staff get more familiar with the new software. Steve Comb advised the Board that there had been some migration of data to Liquid Logic which had created further challenges, that the service needed to identify where caseload practitioners required support and that there was further work to do in this area.

The Board agreed to consider further feedback from the Improvement Board and other monitoring mechanisms in the future.

### **Resolved –**

1. The Board noted the update from Ofsted and Improvement Board and thanked Steve Comb for his contributions.
2. The Board agreed to consider further feedback from the Improvement Board and other monitoring mechanisms in the future.

## **10 Performance Monitoring update**

The Board considered a summary report outlining recent key performance data and highlights for children in care and care leavers up to November 2018, presented by Steve Comb (Head of Corporate Parenting), Janet Tolley (Virtual Head Teacher) and Gill Addy (Designated Nurse for Looked after Children).

Steve Comb highlighted the following key points:-

- The number of children in care remained stable with a reduction of 21 since December 2017, the current number was 631;
- The Placement Support Team was increasingly focussing their work on some of the most vulnerable and troubled young people to help build resilience in placements. Whilst the data showed an improvement over a 12 month period, officers were mindful of the deterioration and impact placement stability had on children and young people and would continue to focus on the retention of staff and consistency in case allocation;

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- The Legal Gateway and Performance Panel was the key indicator for knowing why children were coming into care;
- Early permanence placements – continued to consider early permanence placements for children with a plan for adoption and had made some improvements in this area in terms of timescales for children;
- There had been a small rise in the number of young people in suitable accommodation since June 2018 and the service was continuing to maintain strong links with KNH and Housing to ensure that suitable accommodation was available in a timely manner.

Janet Tolley highlighted the following key points:-

- The initial Personal Education Plan (PEP) completion rate had increased in September 2018 and all PEPs had been completed within 10 working days of notification to the Virtual School since 1<sup>st</sup> September 2018;
- The Team were monitoring attendance that was less than 70%, were maintaining a strong focus on pupils not in full-time education and wherever possible looking to ensure a return to full-time education as quickly as possible;
- Further work had been undertaken within Children's Homes to increase engagement and support to children, for example, helping them with their homework and supporting their emotional health and wellbeing.

Gill Addy highlighted the following key points:-

- 100% of health assessments had been undertaken for over 5's;
- 100% of all age range were registered with a dentist and up to date with immunisations;
- Good relationship with substance misuse team and working with colleagues within the community to seek better engagement with children and young people and to encourage them to use the outreach services;
- The quality of health assessments had been better for children from other areas as they were carried out in Kirklees.

In response to a question from the Board regarding whether accommodation was suitable from the point of view of the young person, Julie Bragg advised that Children's Social Care had excellent relationships with partners and were quickly made aware of any problems with housing and would try and put this right with Housing colleagues. Julie Bragg further explained that officers would work with the young person to try and secure the most suitable accommodation for them and that care leavers would be eligible for priority banding for housing with no time limit on bidding for properties.

Steve Comb advised the Board that additional funding had recently been secured to fund an additional post to work on supported accommodation for care leavers.

Mel Meggs advised the Board that the Council was currently reviewing the local standards for properties in Kirklees and that care leavers would benefit from this.

The Board agreed to consider monitoring changes in supported accommodation for care leavers in future performance report and agreed to extend an invite to

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representatives from the Care Leavers Forum to present information to Board on their experiences of living in suitable accommodation.

Colleen Kenworth advised the Board that Teenage Support workers were helping the Kirklees Fostering Network to work with care leavers on suitable accommodation.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the update on Performance within Children's Services be noted.
2. The Board agreed to consider monitoring changes in supported accommodation for care leavers in future performance reports.
3. The Board agreed to extend an invite to representatives from the Care Leavers Forum to present information to the Board on their experiences of living in suitable accommodation.

### **11 Overview of number of children in Care**

The Board considered a report on the number and profile of children in care, which included information relating to those children placed outside of the District. The report was presented by Julie Bragg, Service Manager (Children Services).

Julie Bragg highlighted the following key points:-

- Increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children;
- Reduction of children placed outside of Kirklees District and the service continued to be pro-active in recruiting new foster carers for children within the district;
- A review had been undertaken of children placed outside Kirklees in terms of bringing them back into the area wherever possible.

### **RESOLVED –**

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

### **12 Number of children in care with a Youth Offending Order**

The Board considered a report on the number of children in care with a Youth Offending Order covering the period from April 2016 to March 2017, presented by Richard Smith, Youth Offending Team Service Manager.

Cllr Kendrick advised the Board that the Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board had recently considered a report by the Youth Offending Team and had requested data and case studies on the number of children in the youth justice system.

Richard Smith advised the Board that there had been improved outcomes for children who were supervised by the Youth Offending Team. The Board was informed that data could not be provided for April 2017 to March 2018 as the figures were not yet available. The Board agreed to consider comparative data in September 2019 in order to be able to compare the 2016/17 statistics.

Richard Smith highlighted the following key points:-

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- There had been a higher percentage of young LAC women supervised by YOT;
- Out of 22 young people, 12 were resident outside Kirklees, 21 were in residential care and only 1 was in local authority foster care;
- Reoffending was at 41% which was slightly above the rate of the general population;
- Out of 2 of the young people currently in custody, 1 was on remand and 1 had been sentenced to custody.

The Board discussed the issue of a young person receiving a criminal record from being involved in the youth justice system and who had been criminally exploited. Richard Smith advised that there were systems in place for making referrals where a young person had been exploited as a result of criminal behaviour. The Board agreed to consider a future report giving an update on the work being undertaken jointly between the Youth Offending Team, Children's Social Care and the Police regarding criminal exploitation to develop systems and to ensure the Council was keeping children safe.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. The Board noted the report on the number of children in care with a Youth Offending Order for the period April 2016 to March 2017 and thanked Richard Smith for his contributions.
2. The Board agreed to consider an update report in September 2019 on the number of children in care with a youth offending order which would provide comparative data for 2017/18.
3. The Board agreed to consider a future report giving an update on the work being undertaken jointly between the Youth Offending Team, Children's Social Care and the Police regarding criminal exploitation to develop systems and to ensure the Council was keeping children safe – date to be determined.

### **13 Independent Visitors Scheme - Quarterly Report (Quarter 3)**

The Board considered a Quarterly report (Quarter 3) on the Independent Visitors Scheme presented by Christopher Berridge, Independent Service Officer.

Christopher Berridge highlighted the following key points:-

- There was 44 young people with an independent visitor and 16 were placed with another Local Authority;
- 7 young people waiting to have an independent visitor and the service aimed to match a child or young person within 3 months of being referred;
- 8 completed applications had been received and the new volunteers would be trained in March 2019.

The Board was informed that marketing was currently underway to recruit more Independent Visitors and Christopher Berridge explained that some information had recently been sent to all Councillors in Kirklees so that they could help to promote the scheme within their wards. The Board agreed to promote the Independent Visitors Scheme and receive a copy of the information sent to all Councillors.

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Christopher Berridge was informed that members of the public or council employees could apply to become an Independent Visitor as long as they had no conflicts of interest. The Board was informed that the Scheme was under represented by male volunteers.

### **RESOLVED -**

1. The Board noted the Quarterly report (Quarter 3) on the Independent Visitors Scheme and thanked Christopher Berridge for his contributions.
2. The Board agreed to receive information which had been sent to all Councillors regarding the Independent Visitors Scheme and agreed to actively promote the scheme wherever possible to help recruit more volunteers.

#### **14 Marketing Plan for Recruitment of Foster Carers**

The Board considered the Marketing Plan for the Recruitment of Foster Carers which was presented by Andy Quinlan, Service Manager (Fostering).

A number of Board Members advised that they had seen the promotional fostering posters and material around Kirklees and agreed that this was encouraging.

Andy Quinlan highlighted the following key points:-

- Good feedback had been received on the electrical board outside Kingsgate promoting fostering;
- Display stands in Civic Centre 1 and 3, and libraries to engage the public and raise awareness;
- Fostering fortnight – this was a national campaign that was held annually in May and celebrated fostering and numerous events would be held;
- Costa coffee drop ins – developed and started in January 2019;
- Consideration was being given to creating a short (4-5 minutes) animated film to use across Kirklees and wider which could be used on social media platforms and possibly added to the Kirklees fostering pages.

In response to a question from the Board relating to a retention plan for foster carers, Andy Quinlan advised that a number of events had recently been held to celebrate foster carers, for example, Long Service Awards to acknowledge the important work by foster carers. Andy Quinlan further explained that the team were looking at undertaking exit interviews to give an understanding of why people left foster caring.

The Board offered their support for Fostering Fortnight and Andy Quinlan agreed to liaise with the event organisers and report back to the Board.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the Marketing Plan for the Recruitment of Foster Carers be noted and that Andy Quinlan, Service Manager (Fostering) be thanked for his contributions.
2. The Board offered their support for the Fostering Fortnight event and Andy Quinlan agreed to liaise with the organisers of the event and report back to the Board.



**15 Future Focus of Corporate Parenting Board and forward agenda plan**

The Board noted the report on the Future focus of the Corporate Parenting The Board considered a report on the future focus and agenda plan of the Corporate Parenting Board for the 2018/19 municipal year and beyond. The Board discussed the following key points in relation to the development and future focus of the Corporate Parenting Board:-

- Directors/Heads of services to attend to discuss how their service areas contribute to corporate parenting;
- Encourage corporate parenting champions for different aspects e.g. early years, health, care leavers, housing, preparing to leave care, work experience etc;
- Consideration to be given to a care experience video for Board members to view;
- Planning for the future (ambitions for children looked after & care leavers) eg Funds for care leavers, facilities for care leavers, semi-independent living, increased & appropriate residential provision, Council Tax reductions;
- What would outstanding look like? The Board could visit a Corporate Parenting Board meeting in another Local Authority that has been rated by Ofsted as outstanding to get ideas.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the report on the future focus and agenda plan of the Corporate Parenting Board for the 2018/19 municipal year and beyond.
2. The Board agreed that further work should be undertaken to develop the forward agenda plan of the Board to ensure that future focus for the Board was on the wider responsibility of the Council as a corporate parent.
3. Members of the Board agreed to bring forward ideas for future agenda items and areas for further exploration.
4. That the Governance Officer be authorised to liaise with officers on agreed actions.

**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, visits and meetings she had recently attended, as follows:-

- Visited 5 residential Children's Homes and gave out vouchers for discounts at various social locations, eg restaurants;
- Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board Training on the 18<sup>th</sup> January regarding children's rights;
- Commitment to Care Leavers Launch on 17<sup>th</sup> January which was overscribed and attended by representatives from Health, Education and Schools;
- Planned visit to Southgate School;
- Visited Woodley School.

The Board suggested that it could consider future updates on progress from the Care Leavers Forum and Children in Care Council.

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### **RESOLVED –**

That the verbal updates from the Chair of the Board on interaction with Services be noted.

- 17**     **Dates of Future Meetings**
1. That the Board noted the future meeting dates of the Board during the 2018/19 municipal year:
    - Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019, 10 am
    - Monday 11th March 2019, 10.30 am
    - Monday 15th April 2019, 10.30 am
  
  2. That the Board will consider potential future dates for the meetings during the 2019/20 – date to be determined.