

Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Thursday 14th February 2019

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor John Lawson
Christine Bennett
Julie Bragg
Tom Brailsford
Steve Comb
Barry Lockwood
Sanna Mahmood
Jo-Anne Sanders
Ophelia Rix
Janet Tolley

Apologies: Councillor Donna Bellamy
Martin Green
Mel Meggs
Melanie Tiernan

1 Introductions and Apologies

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and apologies had been received from Cllr Donna Bellamy, Mel Meggs, Martin Green and Melanie Tiernan.

2 Minutes of Last Meeting

The Board considered the minutes of the meeting held on the 21st January 2019.

RESOLVED -

1. The minutes of the meeting of the Board held on the 21st January 2019 were agreed as a correct record.

3 Interests

No interests were declared.

4 Admission of the Public

It was agreed that all agenda items would be held in public session.

5 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions.

6 Public Question Time

No questions were received from members of the public.

7 Ofsted and Improvement Board update

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

Steve Comb highlighted the following key points:-

- The Corporate Parenting Strategy would be considered by the Improvement Board shortly;
- Discussions had taken place with Ofsted regarding the 3 mainstream children's homes in Kirklees – 2 homes for children with disabilities still required further remedial work and the service were looking at moving the children to Orchard View and Elm Grove whilst the remedial works took place;
- Preparation was underway for the forthcoming Ofsted Inspection of Children's Services and officers were engaging with other local authorities around the region to learn from their inspections;
- The service was working hard to ensure all data was up to date and accurate and were mapping how this looked against other local authorities;
- Liquid Logic Champions were in place to help develop the system.

The Board was informed that Ophelia Rix was leading the development of Liquid Logic to ensure the system was working correctly and that investigations were currently underway to check that any issues which were having an impact were being prioritised and tested.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the update on Ofsted and Improvement Board and thanked Steve Comb for his contributions.

8 Children in Care Services Performance Highlights

The Board considered an update giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service in December 2018, presented by Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting and Janet Tolley, Virtual Head Teacher.

The Board agreed to consider a future report on the stability of placement moves to include more in-depth information as to what was involved, in particular regarding foster carers.

Steve Comb informed the Board that feedback which had been received had been positive regarding the Legal Gateway Permanence Panels and the board welcomed the positive work of this Panel.

Janet Tolley advised the Board that statistics on educational attainment and progress would be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board when available.

The Board raised concerns regarding the numbers of persistent absentees and asked how many children were engaged or still of concern. The Board was informed that the Children's Commissioner had requested that a focus was needed on persistent absentees and agreed that the Board should have this in view including how many were on track and how many had moved school. Janet Tolley advised the Board that there could be a genuine reason why a child was persistently

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absent from school, for example, due to illness and that the service should concentrate on those cases where there were genuine concerns. Janet Tolley further explained that each case had to be dealt with on its own merits and that the best approach would be adopted to help the child or young person to engage. The Board agreed to consider a future report giving further detail on persistent absentees from school, including case studies – date to be determined.

Julie Bragg advised the Board that there were currently 4 young people leaving care who were refusing to have contact or engage. The Board noted that in some cases care leavers wanted to move on with their lives and did not want to continue to be involved with the Social Care system. The Board was informed that no young people were currently in bed and breakfast accommodation. Julie Bragg further explained that officers were engaging with care leavers to help them on their employment, education and training journey.

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked after Children, agreed to meet separately with Ophelia Rix, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance, to discuss some areas of Liquid Logic where changes needed to be made. Gill Addy agreed to try and attend some of the meetings of the Legal Gateway Permanence Panels, though due to lack of capacity within the team this was not always possible. Christine Bennett confirmed that there were mechanisms in place to share information from the Panel meetings with Gill Addy and her team.

Julie Bragg advised the Board that a new drop-in centre for looked after children and care leavers would be opened sometime in April 2019 which was similar to the No 11 facility in Huddersfield.

RESOLVED -

1. That the update on Performance within Children's Services be noted.
2. The Board agreed to consider a future report on stability of placement moves – date to be determined.

The Board agreed to consider a future report giving further detail on persistent absentees from school, including case studies – date to be determined.

9 Number and age of Children in Care

The Board considered a report giving the latest data showing the number and age of children in care presented by Julie Bragg, Service Manager for Children and Families.

Julie Bragg highlighted the following key points:-

- The number of children in care at the end of December 2018 was 629 and week ending 11th February was 633 so was showing a slight increase;
- The Legal Gateway Permanence Panel were checking that children in care should remain in care and were reassessing their individual circumstances;
- There had been an increase in the number of unaccompanied child asylum seekers;
- As at 31st December 2018 there were 106 children placed outside the district.

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In response to a question from the Board regarding what proportion of children living outside the district were in different placements, the Board agreed that future performance reports should include this information.

The Board welcomed the information included within the report regarding statistical neighbours.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the report on Overview of number of children in care and thanked Julie Bragg for her contributions.
2. The Board agreed to consider information in future performance reports regarding the number of children who were placed outside the district, outlining what proportion were in different placements

10 Voice of the Child Development Plan

The Board considered a report on the Voice of the Child Development Plan presented by Ophelia Rix, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance.

Ophelia Rix advised the Board that Kirklees needed to continue to respond to the changing views of children and young people and that work was in progress to develop an action plan which would be signed off by the end of March 2019.

The Board was informed that the Voice of the Child Development Plan would be shared with the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum to get their views and feedback.

Christine Bennett advised the Board that she was liaising with Ophelia Rix on children in care with a disability, to ensure that the voice of the child who did not have a 'natural' voice could get involved and engaged.

In response to a question from the Board regarding what difference the work on the voice of the child would make to children and young people in care, Ophelia Rix explained that it would take some time to be able to demonstrate what a difference the Plan had made but that co-production with other services and partners would be overly written into the plan. The Board noted that officers were committed to progressing the work on the voice of the child as a priority.

The Board was informed that the Voice of the Child Development Plan was for children of all ages and that links would be made with foster carers who could advocate on behalf of younger children.

Julie Bragg advised the Board that officers were exploring an App for Care Leavers and were talking to a number of other local authorities who were currently using the App. Gill Addy explained that a Health App was in place and a link would be sent to the carer and young person following a health assessment to seek feedback on their experience.

Ophelia Rix advised the Board that officers were working with Kirklees Democracy, Community groups and local businesses to help to shape the next steps and actions of the Voice of the Child Development Plan.

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Gill Addy advised the Board that health were introducing an “age and stages” questionnaire which would be a way for carers to express the emotions and experience of babies and that this would be rolled out in April 2019.

The Board agreed that officers needed to get the message on the voice of the child across to all elected members and agreed that considerations should be given as to how this work could be taken forward and shared with all Councillors via their political groups.

Sanna Mahmood advised the Board that quarterly Corporate Parenting meetings with Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum would be arranged and would be attended by the Director of Children’s Services, Service Managers and various teams which would give young people an opportunity to ask questions about the services they received.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the report on the Voice of the Child Development Plan and thanked Ophelia Rix for her contributions.
2. The Board agreed that co-production should be written into the Voice of the Child Development Plan.

The Board agreed that consideration should be given as to how the information within the Voice of the Child Development Plan could be shared with all Councillors via the political groups.

11 Developing Role of the Corporate Parenting Board and agenda plan for 2018/19

The Board considered a report on the developing role of the Corporate Parenting Board and the agenda plan for 2018/19 and beyond, presented by Steve Comb (Head of Corporate Parenting).

The Board members suggested the following topics and events to be considered in the future:-

- Customer and Exchequer – services for care leavers, eg Council Tax reductions
- KNH – Housing
- Representatives from Local Businesses
- Apprenticeships – how do we create more apprenticeships for Care Leavers
- Health and Wellbeing of children in care and care leavers
- Informal sessions with internal and external partners to talk about the role of corporate parenting
- The Board suggested that Elected Members on the Board could become Corporate Parenting Champions and attend other forums to promote and challenge the role of the Corporate Parent and to be an advocate for the voice of the child.

The Board suggested that the 3 main aims of the Board should be the following:-

- a. That Elected Members on the Board become Corporate Parenting Champions
- b. That informal events be arranged to invite partners and services to talk about the role of corporate parenting

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- c. That Visitors be invited to the Board, eg Chair of Licensing Committee – what is being done to keep children safe in Kirklees?

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the report on the Developing role of the Corporate Parenting Board and agenda plan for 2018/19 and thanked Steve Comb for his contributions.
2. The Board agreed to the officer recommendations outlined within 6.1 and 6.2 of the report.
3. The Board agreed that a proposal on the future work programme and role of the Board be considered at the next meeting which reflected the suggestions made on future agenda items and work of the Board to be taken forward.
4. The Board agreed the agenda plan for the remainder of the 2018/19 municipal year.
5. That the additional agenda items be added to the agenda plan for the 2018/19 municipal year and amendments be made as agreed.
6. That the Governance Officer be authorised to liaise with officers on agreed actions.

12 Updates from Board Members on interaction with Services

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

Cllr Kendrick, Chair of the Board, gave a summary of events, visits and meetings she had recently attended, as follows:-

- Drop-in Centre in Dewsbury;
- Early Support Launch on the 30th January 2019;
- Staff Engagement Session on the 7th February 2019.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the updates from the Chair of the Board on interaction with services.

13 Dates of Future Meetings

The Board noted future meeting dates of the Board during the 2018/19 municipal year.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Corporate Parenting Board would meet on the following dates:-
 - Monday 11th March 2019, 10.30 am
 - Monday 15th April 2019, 10.30 am