

Contact Officer: Leigh Webb

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Wednesday 1 July 2020

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillor Fazila Loonat
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Carole Pattison
Councillor Richard Smith
Julie Bragg
Tom Brailsford
Stewart Horn
Barry Lockwood
Jo-Anne Sanders
Janet Tolley
Christine Carmichael

Apologies: Councillor Andrew Marchington
Councillor Karen Allison
Steve Comb
Keith Fielding
Gill Addy
Sara Miles
Ophelia Rix
Colleen Callaghan

1 Membership of the Board/Apologies

The Chair welcomed Councillor Pattison as a new Board Member in her role as Chair of the Virtual School Governing Body. Apologies had been received from Councillor Andrew Marchington, Councillor Karen Allison, Steve Comb, Keith Fielding, Gill Addy, Sara Miles, Ophelia Rix and Colleen Callaghan.

2 Interests

No interests were declared.

3 Minutes

RESOLVED-

That the minutes of the last meeting, held on 4 March 2020 be approved as a correct record.

4 Admission of the Public

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

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4 Deputations/Petitions

No deputations or petitions were received.

5 Public Question Time

No questions from the public were received.

6 Virtual School Report

The Board considered a report providing an update on how the Virtual School had been operating during the Covid-19 pandemic. It was reported that the current numbers of children and young people on roll at the Virtual School are: 71 EYFS; 173 Primary; 246 Secondary; 107 Post 16

The report detailed the key areas of work and highlighted that in these unprecedented times a “business as usual” approach was taken in so far as it was possible. Janet Tolley provided a specific update on the following areas of work during the pandemic:

- Contact and support for carers
- Contact and support for children and young people.
- Young people not on a school roll or at risk of withdrawal of their offer
- Risk Assessments
- Attendance and monitoring overview
- Initial PEP’s
- Covid-19 PEP’s and squiddle
- Prioritising PEP’s for this term
- School transition planning (to discuss during the PEP meeting)
- Young people undergoing SENDACT Statutory Assessment

In response to a question from Councillor Lawson concerning the use of the squiddle module to capture the views of young people, Janet Tolley reported that there had been a varied response. Many young people had flourished at home although equally many had missed the face to face contact. Councillor Lawson highlighted the importance of building on some of the positive experiences resulting from new ways of engaging with young people.

With regard to lessons learned by the team, Janet Tolley explained that there had been positives in terms of flexibility and greater availability but face to face relationships within the team had been missed.

In response to a question from Barry Lockwood concerning the provision of laptops to young people and foster carers, Janet Tolley confirmed that all requests had been responded to. Janet referred to the additional provision of 77 laptops through the supervising social workers and foster carers initiative.

RESOLVED -

1. The Board noted the positive and innovative ways of working undertaken by the Virtual School during the pandemic.

2. That any issues in respect of IT equipment provision from Kirklees Foster Carers Network be raised directly with Tom Brailsford

7 Children in Care Services Performance Highlights

The Board received a Service Update report with regards to the provision of services to vulnerable Children, Young People, their families and their carers During COVID 19. The report also provided a wider overview of the actions and steps taken to ensure that children in Kirklees are safe and contact is maintained during the current emergency.

The report outlined a range of measures that had been undertaken to support the workforce across a range of services including managerial support, check-ins, prioritisation clarity and advice on dealing with Covid-19 presenting clients. Information was also set out in respect of front door access for social care services and the work of the Assessment and Intervention Teams.

Julie Bragg advised that there had been an increase in referrals relating to domestic violence issues.

With regard to the numbers of Children in Care, it was reported that there had been an increase of 12 to 687 from the start of the lockdown period. Court processes have continued in respect of those children subject to care orders.

Tom Brailsford provided an update in respect of residential care and foster care. It was reported that residential homes had kept running as normal as possible, with initial issues on PPE at the start of the pandemic. All settings have been risk assessed, which did result in the suspension of respite provision at Orchard View and the Young Persons Activity offer. With regard to capacity alternative temporary settings have had to be registered. Work has been ongoing with KFN to help with the stability of placements with a new payment system being introduced. Additionally 9 emergency temporary foster carers have been recruited mainly from school staff.

Julie Bragg provided an update on Adoption Services, Care Leavers and the Youth Offending Team. With regard to the report a correction was highlighted as a typing error in para 2 (“in” to be replaced with “not in”).

Question and comments were invited from the Board and the following issues were raised:

- In response to a question from the Chair, Councillor Kendrick, Julie Bragg explained that one of the positives from the current situation was an increase in engagement by young people in respect of Looked After Children reviews and the use of virtual family time.
- Barry Lockwood requested a breakdown of the number of children in care figure. Julie Bragg undertook to provide a detailed breakdown to the next meeting of the Board.
- Julie Bragg confirmed that the mockingbird initiative within the fostering service may be slightly delayed but measures were underway to progress the initiative

RESOLVED -

1. That the report be noted
2. That an update in respect of the respite offer around Orchard View and YPAT be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

8 Virtual School Statistical First Release Outcomes

The Board received a summary report on the published educational outcomes for children and young people in care for the academic year 2019-20 following the publication of the verified national data.

Janet Tolley provided a breakdown of progress and attainment in respect of early years and Key stages 1-4. The data highlighted a number of positive outcomes around early years and key stages 1-4, progress 8 statistics and attendance and exclusion figures.

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the positive outcomes set out in the report.
2. The Board further noted areas of concern within the report in respect of KS2 and the additional work being undertaken, whilst acknowledging the complexities of the individual cohorts.

9 Virtual School Governing Body

The Board received a verbal update from the Chair of the Virtual School Governing Body, Councillor Pattison. It was reported that the Governing Body had recently been set up and an initial meeting had been held to establish membership and terms of reference. The Governing Body will next meet in September.

Janet Tolley reported that Governors had been familiarised with statutory guidance on the role of the virtual head teacher and governing body.

RESOLVED -

The Board noted the update on the Virtual School Governing Body.

10 Ofsted Improvement Board Update

Tom Brailsford provided a verbal update and highlighted the 6 tests identified under the issued improvement notice. Work is underway with Leeds Council, as the improvement partner, and the Department for Education to review progress. Focus Groups will be arranged relating to the improvement journey. Reference was made to ongoing work by Steve Walker and the DfE and the SEND 10 point plan work undertaken by Ronnie Hartley

RESOLVED –

1. The Board noted the update on the Ofsted Improvement Plan
2. That a further update be provided at the next meeting.
3. That consideration be given to the Board receiving the SEND 10 point plan.

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11 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2020/21

The Board considered the agenda plan of the Corporate Parenting Board for 2020/21. The Chair reported that mental health and emotional support for children in care would be a standing item at Board meetings.

Councillor Lawson requested that Covid specific monitoring in respect of anxiety and emotional health be undertaken and reported back to the Board. Tom Brailsford referred to a current piece of work being undertaken by Stewart Horn to review in house mental health provision. Cllr Lawson suggested that discussion take place on the corporate scrutiny risk register and how this feeds into how we design our own services.

RESOLVED-

1. That a meeting be arranged with the Chair and Officers to update the Agenda Plan, in light of the Covid 19 pandemic, prior to it being submitted to the next meeting of the Board

2. That a report on preliminary findings on the review of in house mental health provision be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

12 Dates of Future Meetings

RESOLVED -

The Board noted the future meeting dates:

- 2nd Sept 2020, 10am (potentially subject to change)
- 4th Nov 2020, 10am
- 13th Jan 21, 10am
- 3rd Feb 21, 10am
- 10th March 21, 10am