

Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

## **KIRKLEES COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

**Tuesday 15 November 2022**

Present	Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair) Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds Councillor Karen Allison Councillor John Lawson Councillor Richard Smith Councillor Andrew Marchington (ex-officio) Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support Colleen Kenworthy - Kirklees Fostering Network Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Looked After Children Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children Sara Miles, Head of Service – Resources, Improvement and Partnership Elaine McShane, Service Director - Family Support and Child Protection
In Attendance	Rahila Habib, Service Manager – Family Support and Child Protection Krissy Podgorski, Team Manager – Children Looked After Independent Service Joel Hanna, Head of Service for Sufficiency for Children and Young People
Apologies:	Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships) Stewart Horn, Head of Childrens Integrated Commissioning

#### **1. Membership of the Board/Apologies**

Apologies had been received from Tom Brailsford, Service Director (Resources, Improvement and Partnerships) and Stewart Horn, Head of Childrens Integrated Commissioning.

## **2. Minutes**

The Board considered the minutes of the last meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022. It was noted that Cllr Richard Smiths apologies be added to the minutes.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the previous meeting be approved 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 were received.

## **6. Public Question Time**

No public questions were received.

## **7. Children's Performance Highlights Report**

The Board considered the latest reports giving key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for Children's Services. Rahila Habib, Service Manager – Children in Care Service presented the key highlights in relation to Children Entering Care, Children in Care and Placement Stability and explained that:

- There was a continued fluctuation in the number of children coming into care from 607 to 621.
- It was important to note the work undertaken in respect of Connected Carers and Special Guardianship Orders (SGO's) in respect of this data.
- 3 further SGO's had been made in September and work continued to increase these numbers in the best interest of children and young people.
- There had been an increase in unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people through the national transfer scheme.
- Following the recent opening of adult accommodation there had been an increased volume of referrals to Children's Services from adults claiming to be children.

Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children in Care, Care Leavers and Looked After Children added that the data showed that children did continue to become looked after, but there had also been an increase in placements with parents and connected cares which should be considered alongside the data.

Ophelia Rix referenced the Children's Act and its emphasis on keeping children with their families and connected communities where it was safe to do so. It was explained that this was the key principle underpinning the SGO's and it was important to make sure that where children wanted to and could return home that there was the correct structure to facilitate this. The approach prevented children from remaining looked after, and Kirklees offered a support plan to enable this, but it was important to note that this was only the case where it was safe and appropriate to do so.

The Ex-officio noted the update and the explanation of the data in relation to children entering care and expressed that this was positive and reassuring. In relation to the data around unaccompanied asylum-seeking children showed a slight downward trend and it was important to monitor this going forwards.

The Board noted it was satisfied by the continued good work in relation to kinship carers and SGO highlighting that this together with the Councils investment in early support helped contribute to preventing children from becoming looked after. The Board further noted that it would be helpful to receive comparative data including learning points and long-term outcomes to evidence this.

Ophelia Rix presented the data in relation to Care leavers and highlighted that:

- There had been an increase in the performance indicator for Children in Care (aged 17 years) with an allocated Personal Advisor.
- The increase was from 96.0% in August 2022 to 97.9% in September 2022, but the target was 100%.
- There had been an increase in the percentage of Care leavers in Employment, Education and Training (EET) but this was a key area for improvement.
- A programme of work was to be produced along with education, housing, and businesses in relation to improving EET opportunities for care leavers.
- There had been an increase in staying put arrangements (post 18), and the new financial policy was successful in enabling this.
- The number of young people with a pathway plan had increased but a key priority was to improve the timeliness of updating the plans.

The Board noted the data in respect of Care Leavers, and it was agreed that an update in relation to improving EET opportunities be provided to a future meeting of the Board.

Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher presented the data in relation to Children Looked After Educational Outcomes, and it was highlighted that:

- Work continued with education and social care providers to make sure all young people had at least one Personal Education Planning (PEP) meeting each term.
- 100% of PEPs had been completed within the Summer Term in-line with the termly processes.
- 100% of initial PEPs had been completed within 10 school days of the child coming into care since 01/09/2022.
- Persistence Absences continued to be key area for improvement, and in September there was a decreasing trend.
- There continued to be a strong focus on pupils not in full-time education and reducing the number of school moves.

Responding to a question from the Board around the decreasing trend in Persistence Absence for September, Louise Hallas explained that previous absence data could be a result of Covid-19 absences. The Board were informed that some measures around persistent absence had been actioned, but it was too early to identify if these had impacted on the decreasing trend.

The Ex-Officio, highlighted the educational outcomes as positive, especially the work around PEP's highlighting this was an example of strong partnership working achieving good outcomes for young people.

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children presented the data in relation to Children Looked After Health and it was highlighted that:

- Kirklees Local Authority (LA) rolling 12-month data showed that 80.5% of Initial Health Assessments were completed in the statutory 20 working day timescale.
- Locala monthly data for September showed that 16 Initial Health Assessments were completed 'in house' and 100% were completed within timescales.
- For Review Health Assessments (RHA), Kirklees's 12-month data showed that 89% of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5 years old) and 93.7% of 'Annual' assessments (over 5 years old) were completed in statutory timescales.
- Locala monthly data for September showed that 85% of under 5-year-olds and 63% of over 5-year-olds RHA's were completed in timescales.
- There were 12 in-house breaches, 9 were in relation to capacity, 2 due to holiday, and 1 was re-arranged.
- In relation to breaches it was reported that other Local Authorities reported similar issues.
- A Business Case had been delivered to senior managers and Locala to request additional nursing resources to mitigate capacity and KPI issues.
- For Dental Checks, Kirklees rolling 12-month data showed that 61.6% of children aged 1+, at the point of their RHA had attended the dentist.
- Locala monthly data showed that 91% and 97% of children aged 18 months - under 5 years, and 5-18 years, had attended the dentist at the point of their RHA.
- Locala data showed that 93% and 100% of children aged 18 months to 4 years and 5 years+ at the point of their RHA, were registered with a dentist.
- The use of the 'Flexible Commissioning Project' had supported Children Looked After and Care Leavers to register with a dentist.
- The Designated Nurse attended the 'Kirklees Oral Health Advisory Group', to advocate for vulnerable children and care leavers.
- In relation to substance misuse, 6 young people (1.26%) admitted to, or were known to use substances when asked at their last RHA.
- All cases had been discussed with the local Substance Misuse Outreach worker, to ensure support had been offered.
- If a young person declined their RHA, a check was made with the social worker to ascertain if substance use was an issue.
- Any young person misusing substances at any level was offered support.

In relation to increased pressure on health services and the requirement to hold extra clinics, the Board agreed that additional support should be prioritised and progressed.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the Children's Performance Highlights Report, and it was agreed that:

1. The data for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children continued to be monitored and reviewed going forwards.
2. The Board receive comparative data, in respect of the Councils investment in early support, learning points and long-term outcomes.
3. A programme of work was to be produced along with education, housing, and businesses in relation to improving EET opportunities for care leavers.
4. Additional support to alleviate the pressure on health services should be prioritised and progressed.

## **8. Kirklees Looked After Annual Health Report**

The Board considered the Kirklees Looked After Annual Health Report (March 2021-April 2022) presented by Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children. It was highlighted that:

- During 2021-22 alternative hybrid methods of working were necessary to comply with Covid-19 restrictions in Initial Health Assessment clinics.
- There was a rise in demand for support related to increased child health complexities, unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), and involvement with children accommodated in Kirklees by other local authorities.
- There had also been an increased amount of telephone and IT communication.
- The increased number of agencies using the electronic child health record System-One amplified the number of communications via tasks, and the volume of information available to inform assessments.
- The wealth of material was an asset but added significantly to the time taken in the preparation of assessments.
- A Business Case related to the team capacity and resource has been submitted to the joint commissioner for consideration and discussions had been held with senior managers. This was still ongoing.
- Completion of the Review Health Assessments (RHA's) within statutory timescales continued to present a challenge.
- To alleviate pressure, a temporary 6-month measure was introduced to complete the RHA's in the month they were due, but Statutory guidelines were reintroduced in March 2022.
- An audit looking at reasons for breach in Quarter 1 of 2022, illustrated that children and their families were at the heart of the planning, prioritising family, work, school, and outside activity commitments before timescales.
- Dental access had improved from the time of the pandemic and was supported by the 'Flexible Commissioning' programme.
- Immunisation rates averaged 91.5% across all ages. Teenage boosters remained the most common outstanding immunisations.
- The manual return rates of 'Strength and Difficulty Questionnaires' (SDQ's) had remained low.
- It was noted that this was a time consuming but statutory task and the electronic portal was unable to facilitate any system improvement.
- The redevelopment of the Local Authority Placement Support Service (PSS) provided a multi-agency approach alongside the SDQ's.
- The inclusion of a trauma screening assessment for UASC by a Local GP, added a valuable dimension to the support options.

- The Ages and Stages Social and Emotional (ASQ–SE) questionnaire, continued to provide a resource to measure the emotional health of children and babies under 4 years old.
- Liaison with the sexual health, and substance misuse outreach workers continued, reinforcing the collaborative working model. Drop-in's had also resumed recently.
- Medical reports continue to be completed by the Medical Advisors, and all adoption panels in Kirklees and Calderdale had a Medical Advisor present for advice and support.
- The 'Health Outcome Audit' project enabled data collection to continue.
- This measured the health needs of children as they entered care and a comparison of improvements to their health for those who remained in care, at the point of their first Review Health Assessment (RHA). A re-audit was planned during 2022-23.
- A recent review identified that it was not possible to resume pre-pandemic levels of performance.
- The service had required modification to meet the needs of a changed society and vulnerable group of children.
- Further adjustments may be needed, as challenges in relation to changes to practice and demands on the service continued.
- During the reporting period 741 RHA's were completed including requests from other authorities.
- 236 adult medical reports for foster and special guardianship orders, 77 adult and 69 child medical reports for adoption plans and 26 meetings with prospective adopters, were carried out by the Medical Advisor

The Board welcomed the report as very comprehensive. Responding to a question from the Board in relation to the assessments of UASC and follow up work, Gill Addy advised that there was a shortage of this specialist work. Referrals were currently submitted through the placement support service and picked up by wellbeing team to identify where support may be available. The Board noted value in identifying where there may be capacity to support young people's needs. Gill Addy further added care leavers were now included in the screening assessment made by the GP, and the Board welcomed that this work was being undertaken at an early stage.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the Kirklees Looked After Annual Health Report

## **9. Virtual School Headteacher Report**

The Board considered the Virtual School Headteacher Report for the 2021-22 academic year presented by Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher and it was highlighted that:

- Kirklees Virtual School now worked with all young people in the care of Kirklees Council from the age of 2 through to age 18 (end of Year 13 with consent).
- Following self-assessment, the Virtual School rated the service as good overall with some outstanding features, and some areas for development.
- Most recent national indicators showed that Kirklees Virtual School was in Quartile A in 5 of the indicators and Quartile B in 1 of the indicators.

- The team was experienced and effective and worked with all young people to monitor their educational progress and to provide the best for young people.
- The Virtual School collaborated well with other professionals including Social Workers, Designated Teacher's, Carer's, and Education Psychologists.
- There were robust systems and processes which provided accurate data linked to the Virtual School's priorities and statutory duties.
- Most of all children in care accessed free early education and continued to be placed with an education provider judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding'.
- Year 1 phonics screening was above the national average for children and young people in care in 2022.
- The percentage of KS1 pupils reaching expected or a higher standard for Reading, Writing and Maths and Reading/Writing combined was above the national average for 2022.
- Improvements in KS2 results in 2022 highlighted that Kirklees were above national averages for Reading, Writing and Maths individually and just below national averages for combined.
- This was a significant improvement for KS2 outcomes for Kirklees Council.
- Most young people who achieved national expectations at the end of KS1/2 progressed on the trajectory to expected outcomes at the end of KS2 and KS4.
- Participation and progression remained strong in Post 16 education despite the remaining challenges following the Covid-19 pandemic.
- There had been no permanent exclusion of a child and young person in care since the establishment of the Virtual School.
- The electronic Personal Education Plan (PEP) system enabled the Virtual School to monitor the completion and quality of PEPs and allowed for systematic application, authorisation, and monitoring of Pupil Premium Plus funding for individual pupils.
- 100% of PEP's were completed within the termly timescales.
- Initial PEP completion in 10 school days of notification was 98% in 2021/22 an increase from 97% in 2020/21 within 10 working days.
- The Virtual School Team Managers had oversight of school changes and ensured that new schools were at least 'good' and met the curriculum needs of the young person.
- In July 2022, 81% of children and young people in care were attending good or outstanding schools.
- There was a clear understanding of the 19% in attendance at education provisions judged as requires improvement / inadequate at their last Ofsted visit, or those providers with no inspection report (13%).
- When a schools Ofsted judgement was inadequate, extra monitoring and support was in place to ensure that educational needs were being met.
- 89% of school moves took place with no break in learning and 92% of these took place within 20 days.
- The Virtual School commissioned multi-agency support working across the Education Psychology Service.
- This included dedicated Educational Psychologist support, inclusion workers supporting complex young people, and nationally recognised work with schools through the Timpson Project.
- Additional resources were commissioned for the Childrens Emotional Wellbeing Service which enhanced the offer to young people in care.

- There were commissioned programmes of work from the Kirklees Early Years Outcomes Team.
- These provided opportunity for parents/carers and Early Years Practitioners to work together around school readiness (START programme) and language development (50 things to do before you're 5 programme).
- The structure of the Virtual School had been developed to ensure that young people with SEND had specialist and timely support.
- The Virtual School had an established Governing Body that met regularly with a cross section of representatives to hold the Virtual School to account through supportive and challenging meetings.
- The Virtual Schools key areas for improvement to reach outstanding included:
  - Reducing the number of suspensions for all young people with a particular focus on secondary education.
  - Consistent improvement in early years development and consistent progress across all key stages
  - Improvements to persistent and unauthorised absence.
  - Ensuring that Covid-19 recovery and school led tutoring around the impact on pupil progress was embedded in all PEP meetings.
  - Focussing on school stability, minimising changes, especially during Key Stage 4 and supporting any necessary school moves.
  - Enhanced provision to support UASC young people for the full year.
  - Embedding the work for children and young people with a social worker so that it becomes system led and system wide throughout the authority and education system.

The Board welcomed and noted the report. In the discussion to follow the Ex-Officio advised that in attending a meeting in respect of understanding the work of the Virtual School was helpful. It was also noted that the Governing body was giving an appropriate level of challenge and support and the structure was working well. Providing additional support for parents in meetings was also raised as a key idea.

Responding to a question about the increase in demand the additional duty placed on the Virtual School and the impact of this, Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support provided reassurance to the Board that the extended duties had been in place to give the virtual school oversight of any child with a social worker. The Executive Virtual School Headteacher was working alongside the Virtual School Headteacher, social work teams and designated teachers to raise the profile of any child with a social worker. This was a systematic change but there was no expectation that PEP's to be put in place, but some of the expertise and learning from these may be utilised. There was a small amount of additional funding received with the new duty and an innovative and joined up approach had been taken. The Board noted the response and it was agreed that the Executive Virtual School Headteacher provide a report to a future meeting of the Board around work undertaken in response to the Virtual School's new duty and the key outcomes.

The Ex-officio added that it would be difficult to replicate the structure of the Virtual School for the new numbers of children under the additional duty and in order to achieve the desired outcomes appropriate resources to replicate detailed areas of work and processes were required. The Board agreed that the new challenge was



been approached in the best way possible, but it was important that this was properly resourced.

The Board reiterated that the briefing around understanding the work of the Virtual School was helpful in understanding sharing ideas and recommended that this be repeated to allow other Board members to attend. Louise Hallas responded to agree that the workshops could be replicated on a 1:1 basis for any interested Board Members.

The Board noted that in 2022 Kirklees was above the 2019 national Children Looked After data for GCSE outcomes but were yet to obtain the fully validated results or national comparators for 2022. Louise Hallas responded to advise that the validated data should be available in January 2023, and it was agreed for the Board to be provided with this information when appropriate.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the Virtual School Headteacher Report for the 2021-22 academic year and it was agreed that:

1. The Executive Virtual School Headteacher provide a report around work undertaken in response to the Virtual School's new duty and the key outcomes to a future meeting of the Board.
2. The new duty had been approached in the best way possible, but it was important that this was properly resourced to replicate effective processes going forwards.
3. Briefings around understanding the structure and work of the Virtual School be offered to any interested Board Member.
4. The validated data for GCSE outcomes be provided to the Board when available.

#### **10. Children's Voice, Participation and Corporate Parents Presentation**

The Board received a presentation in respect of Children's Voice, Participation and Corporate Parents presented by Krissy Podgorski, Team Manager – Children Looked After Independent Service.

It was highlighted that the Children's Rights Team wanted to work with the Board to ensure that the views of children in care and care leavers were a consistent and influential feature of the Board. Ideas for participation included:

- Themes and patterns from advocacy be reported to the Board on a regular basis
- Children and young people are enabled to regularly share the key issues and themes that affect them with the Board.
- A young person friendly meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board be held once or twice per year to enable and encourage attendance.
- The use of video's or presentations be used as an additional method of communicating with the Board.
- Progress being measured by the Board through hearing directly from young people and through visiting the groups periodically throughout the year.

In relation to the child's voice shaping policy, it was highlighted that Children's Services should be involving young people in discussions around policy changes and work around key priorities through the Children in Care Council and the Care leavers Forum as well as the wider group of Children Looked After and Care leavers to gather a broad representation of views. This engagement could be facilitated through the Children's Rights Team, with support from other services. Krissy Podgorski, requested to hear the Boards thoughts on the ideas presented and asked for any other suggestions.

In response, the Board welcomed the idea of video submissions, and other methods of communication with Children Looked After and Care leavers (e.g.- voice recordings or written statements). The Board also requested that the details of upcoming meeting dates of the Children In Care Council and the Care Leaver Forum, and for an invitation to attend these meetings be shared with Board members.

The Board welcomed the idea of video submissions and requested that the details of upcoming meeting dates of the CIC and CLF, and an invitation to attend these meetings be shared with Board members. The Board also recommended that some meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board be set at a time appropriate to enable the attendance of young people with a young person friendly agenda.

The Ex-officio noted the importance of meeting children and young people in their environment as well as ensuring the agenda was appropriate and relevant to allow young people to engage and participate. It was also important to make sure there was a feedback loop to acknowledge ongoing positive work across Children's services. The Board agreed and further noted there was a skill development opportunity for the young people in being able to present to Board members.

The Board highlighted the Total Respect Training as positive, as well as asking Foster Carers questions via voice recording for presentation to the Board. The Board also supported the idea of hearing directly from young people of their experiences and for them to have the opportunity to ask board members questions but highlighted that the formality of the meeting may be intimidating so agreed with the idea of making the conversation more informal or sharing the questions to CIC and CLF to answer during the meeting beforehand.

The Board expressed enthusiasm for the ideas presented, there need to be direct contact where possible, but video and written submissions would also be welcomed. It was also important for the young people to understand why their voice was important.

The Board suggested taking a 'you said, we did' approach to create the feedback loop perhaps by sharing a video from Board members to communicate back actions to children to demonstrate the impact that they are having, and how their feedback is linked through the Board into discussions around policy. The Ex-officio added it was important to manage expectations and set parameters whilst acknowledging the importance of knowing what young people need.

The Board also suggested that 1:1 drop-in slot with councillors be held with young people for direct contact and feedback.

Anna Gledhill, Service Manager Quality Assurance and Safeguarding agreed to share the dates for the CIC and CLF and put together a proposal around the suggestions made by the Board and create the feedback loop to communicate back the responses from the Board. Rahila Habib, Service Manager – Family Support and Child Protection highlighted an upcoming meeting with the children in care council and care leavers forum and in respect of the corporate parenting Strategy and suggested asking them for their ideas for participation.

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director – Learning and Early Support highlighted the SEND transformation plan and Kirklees futures, and capturing the live experience, this was about taking a planned and co-ordinated approach to the suggestions made.

The Board highlighted the upcoming Foster carers celebration and requested that future invitations be extended to all Board members. The Board also noted the invitation to meet Foster Carers, and hear their views directly, at weekly Thursday morning meetings, and it was agreed that the Kirklees Fostering Network representative would provide the relevant details.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the Children's Voice Presentation, and it was agreed that:

1. Anna Gledhill would share the dates of upcoming meetings of the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum with an invitation to Board members to attend.
2. Rahila Habib would communicate the ideas around participation to the Children in Care Council and Care Leaver's Forum as well as asking the young people to provide their own ideas for participation for inclusion.
3. A proposal around the discussed ideas for participation be created and that a plan for implementation be made.
4. The proposal should be centred around a feedback loop to communicate responses from the Board to young people to demonstrate impact.
5. Members of the Board be invited to a future meeting of the Kirklees Fostering Network and the Kirklees Fostering Network representative provide the relevant meeting details.
6. Future invitations to the foster carers celebration be extended to all Board members.

## **11. Virtual School Governing Body Update**

Louise Hallas, Virtual School Head Teacher presented a verbal update in respect of the Virtual School Governing Body, and it was noted that:

- At the last meeting the Virtual School Governing Body were presented with the Annual Virtual School Headteacher report.
- This was followed by an analysis of persistent and unauthorised absences and action points were shared with the Governing Body.
- It was agreed that at the next meeting the Governing Body would receive a presentation from the new SEND Lead.
- This would include an analysis report in respect of young people with SEND and the action plan.

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- The Governing Body also planned to consider an update on the Virtual School's new duty to include all young people with a social worker.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the Virtual School Governing Body Update.

## **12. Update from Board Members on Interaction with Services**

The Board noted verbal updates from Members in respect of interactions with Services and it was highlighted that:

- The Ex-officio noted the link between children looked after and adoption (particularly around children with SEND) and requested that the Board considers this pathway going forwards.
- The Ex-officio noted that the Children's scrutiny panel visited a Dewsbury cluster team meeting and highlighted that participation was found to be useful.
- The Chair noted attendance at a number of events including; the Kinship Carers event (Greenwood Centre), the Kinship carers Halloween party, Homestats AGM, the Kirklees Together Partnership Board, the Children's Partnership Event and the Kirklees Children's Safeguarding Board.
- The Chair had been interviewed by a representative from the LGA in respect of the West Yorkshire view of Children's social care.
- The Chair also visited Fairfield's School and presented the 'Democracy Friendly School Awards'
- It was highlighted that the students were to be invited to the Council Chamber in the New Year to learn about voting.
- The Chair had also attended the Mockingbird Project Celebration Event and the launch of 'Constellation', and the positive feedback received from Foster Carers was highlighted.
- The Board noted attendance at 'Woven' where the Board met the co-ordinator of the care leavers quilts exhibition in the piazza.
- This was highlighted as important work and Board members were encouraged to view these on exhibition.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the update on Interactions with Services.

## **13. Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/2023**

The Board considered its agenda plan for 2022/23. It was noted there were a few items arising from the meeting to be added to the Plan.

**RESOLVED:** The Board noted the agenda plan for 2022/23 and it was agreed that:

1. The items highlighted during the meeting be added to the document for the Boards consideration.
2. The link between Children Looked After and Adoption (particularly around children with SEND) and this pathway be added to the work programme as highlighted under item 12.