

Contact Officer: Jodie Harris

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

Tuesday 12th September 2023

Present: Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)
Councillor Karen Allison
Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds
Councillor John Lawson
Councillor Cooper (Ex Officio)
Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and Care Leavers
Kieran Lord, Interim Service Director: Resources, Improvements & Partnerships
Stewart Horn, Head of Joint Commissioning, Children and Families
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director for Learning and Early Support
Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers
Janet Tolley, Executive Headteacher of the Virtual School
Ian Mottershaw, Head of Contextual Safeguarding and Y.E.S
Sara Miles, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance

In attendance: Lucy Fearnley, Team Manager for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding
Michelle Rawlings, Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire

Apologies Councillor Richard Smith
Louise Hallas, Virtual School Headteacher
Keith Fielding, Kirklees Fostering Network

1 Membership of the Board/Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillor Richard Smith, Louise Hallas - Virtual School Headteacher and Keith Fielding - Kirklees Fostering Network.

The Board welcomed Georgina Louanne - Kirklees Fostering Network Representative to the Board and noted Keith Fielding's continued membership. The Board also welcomed Councillor Elizabeth Reynolds as the Chair of Governors and thanked Councillor Carole Pattison for her contributions to the work of the Board.

The Board further expressed gratitude and thanks to Jacqui Gedman, Chief Executive of Kirklees Council for her support to the Corporate Parenting Board.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the apologies and agreed the new appointments.

2 Terms of Reference

The Board considered an amendment to the membership of the Board as set out in the Terms of Reference.

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RESOLVED: The Board noted the amendment to the Terms of Reference, and it was agreed that:

- (1) The Principal Social Worker be removed from the Membership, and updates continue be provided through the Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers.
- (2) Consideration be given to the addition of representation from Special Guardians and Kinship Carers.

3 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 4 July 2023 be approved as a correct record

4 Interests

No Interests were declared.

5 Admission of the Public

All Items were held in public session.

6 Deputations/Petitions

There were no deputations or petitions received.

7 Public Question Time

There were no questions received from members of the public.

8 Children's Performance Highlight Report

The Board considered the latest Children's Performance Highlights Report in respect of the performance monitoring data for Children's Services.

Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers highlighted the following points in relation to Looked After Children:

- From August 2022 to July 2023, the number of children looked after peaked at 64.2 (629 children) in October 2022 and had since decreased to 61.6 (604 children) in July 2023.
- The current 12-month average for Kirklees was 62.1 (609 children), above the 31st March 2022 published rate of 62.0, but was below the England 2022 rate of 70.0 and was significantly below Statistical Neighbours 2022 rate of 92.0.
- Of the 604 children who were Looked After, 65 were living in homes outside of Kirklees.
- This was a key area of focus, and monthly meetings were held for assurance that placements were continuing to meet young people's needs.
- Since January 2023, 40 children had been successfully supported to remain within their family network through a Special Guardianship Order.
- There had also been an increase in Staying Put placements and work continued to promoting care leavers remaining with carers post 18.
- Promoting independence remained a key priority and there had been an increase in activities for young people, such as cooking and living skills sessions as well as 'drop-in's' to support strengthening relationships.
- Work had also been undertaken to encourage young people to become more involved in their communities.

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- This had included identifying a calendar of local events in young peoples communities and sharing this with the young people, as well as the development of a Facebook page and a digital app (in process) to make this information more available and engaging to young people.
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) maintained oversight of children and young people placed in external placements through review panel held monthly and chaired by the Service Director.

The Board noted the update in respect of Children Looked After and Care leavers. During the discussion to follow, Councillor Cooper (Ex-Officio) asked a question in respect of Pathway Planning and supporting Care leavers to integrate with their local community. Councillor Cooper also asked about what support was given in respect of general household management, was there any joint work with Kirklees Homes and Neighbourhoods.

In response Ophelia Rix outlined the offer and planned schemes in relation to supporting care leavers which involved; joint work between social workers and housing officers, 'Starter flats' and plans to introduce a mentor scheme ensuring that young people had someone to talk to. The importance of strengthening the offer to enable young people to live independently was highlighted and it was noted that a part of achieving this was building a sustainable support network of individuals around care leavers. Ophelia further put forward an ask to ward members to contribute any ideas they may have to help achieve this.

The Board noted the response and agreed the key actions to take forward as (i) a discussion on 'Starter Flats' be held at a relevant Portfolio Holder Briefing and for (ii) Board Members to be invited to an informal meeting to discuss ward level engagement further.

It was also noted by the Ex-Officio that any offer needed to be consistent across all wards through the sharing of best practice and effective oversight. Ophelia Rix added that as a Board the key principals needed to be agreed and that the re-promotion of the corporate parenting principals to all elected members would support consistency.

The Board further noted the national citizenship services residential offer to children, and asked if it would be possible to take a similar approach working with Huddersfield University. Ophelia Rix responded to note that discussions had been held around this and agreed to continue taking this forward.

The Board further suggested that contact cards for councillors be provided to care leavers, that the newsletter be shared and that awareness training for ward members be provided to support their involvement.

Janet Tolley, the Executive Virtual School Head Teacher provided an update in relation to Children Looked After Educational Outcomes and explained that:

- 100% of PEPs had been completed within the Summer Term with 99% initial PEPs completed within 10 school days.

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- The Virtual School was currently leading on all PEPs which were virtually held meetings.
- The Virtual School continued to work closely with social care to improve young people's educational experiences (including reducing asylum seekers with no school place and support to children with SMEH).
- The number of suspensions had decreased, and no exclusions had been reported, and this was highlighted as a positive outcome.
- Partnership arrangements with designated teachers and social workers remained strong.
- Improving attainment and progress at Key Stage 2, reducing persistence absence and the number of children not in full time provision continued to be the key areas of focus for the Virtual School.

The Board noted the Education outcomes and welcomed the 100% PEP rate and the positive outcomes reported.

Gill Addy, the Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and Care Leavers updated the Board in relation to the health data, which provided both twelve- month rolling and monthly figures:

- The LA rolling 12-month data showed that 67.9% of Initial Health Assessments (IHA) were completed within the statutory timescale.
- Locala monthly data for July showed that 31% were completed in the 20-day timescale.
- This significant decrease from the usual 90%+ was a result of several factors.
- These included continuing increased numbers of children coming into care including unaccompanied asylum-seeking children (UASC), increased complexities of need, increased requests from other LA's, the capacity of doctor and nurses time and the knock-on effect scheduling extra clinics had on the completion of medical reports.
- There were 10 IHA timescale breaches for Kirklees Children Looked After (CLA) related to clinic availability and capacity. There were 3 late requests from other LA's.
- Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that 89.7% and 90.1% of the 'Developmental' assessments (under 5yrs old) and 'Annual' assessments (over 5 yrs. old) respectively, were completed in statutory timescales.
- Locala monthly data for July showed that 100% and 59% for under and over 5 years olds respectively, were completed in timescales.
- 13 breaches were related to capacity to complete by the exact date in the month.
- In line with the DfE guidance, Locala from September will record RHA's as 'in date' if completed in the month they are due. Discussions are underway to look at aligning the LA data processing with this. This will remove unwarranted pressure on health practitioners to complete by an exact date in the month, which was affected by weekends, bank holidays, carer arrangements, sickness, holidays etc.
- For Dental Checks at the point of their RHA. Kirklees rolling 12-month data shows that 64.3% of children aged 1+, had attended the dentist.

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- Locala monthly data for July showed that 75% of children age 18months to under 5 yrs., and 91% 5 years+, had attended the dentist at the point of their RHA.
- 82% of children age 18m to 17yrs at the point of their RHA, were registered with a dentist.
- The use of the 'Flexible Commissioning Project' had supported CLA and care leavers to register.
- In respect of Substance misuse, work was being undertaken with data colleagues to improve the collection of data in this area.
- 100% and 70% of under and over 5-year-olds respectively, were up to date with their immunisations.

Stewart Horn, Head of Joint Commissioning, Children and Families reassured the Board that a meeting was to be held to raise awareness of current challenges with the Integrated Care Board (ICB). This would include a discussion around movement of children in care across West Yorkshire and it was agreed that the outcomes of meeting with the ICB be reported to the Board.

In the discussion to follow the Board expressed an interest in the outcomes of the developmental assessment for under and over 5's. In response, Janet Tolley explained that the Virtual School had begun working with children from the age of 2 to pick up any additional needs early. Gill Addy added that health visitors were aligned to the children and maintained the universal service alongside additional statutory assessment. The health assessment and any development needs were always available to social workers and the virtual school.

Joanne Sanders, Service Director for Learning and Early Support highlighted the 'Healthy Child Programme' (as part of written statement for action for SEND) and noted that work was being undertaken around identifying the needs of children and young people earlier. It was agreed that an update be given to a future meeting of the Board as this work progressed.

Ian Mottershaw, Head of Contextual Safeguarding and Y.E.S presented the data in respect of Looked After Convictions. It was advised that the numbers of CLA offending remained small, and in the October to March 2023 period no CLA had received convictions, this figure was significantly below statistical neighbours. The Board noted and welcomed the update.

Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director for Learning and Early Support presented the data in respect of Fostering and advised that the recruitment and retention of foster carers continued to be a priority. Work was focussed on recruiting internal foster carers to help meet sufficiency needs and Kieran Lord, Interim Service Director-Resources, Improvements and Partnerships shared the broadening of the offer for Foster Carers.

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

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1. A conversation in respect of 'Starter Flats' be added to the agenda for an upcoming Portfolio Holder Briefing for the Cabinet Member for Children's Services.
2. Board Members to be invited to an informal meeting to discuss ward level support to Care leavers.
3. The key principals of Corporate Parenting be re-promoted to all elected members as a part of increasing engagement with care leavers.
4. Ward Member contact cards be provided to care leavers in key locations.
5. The children and young people Newsletter be shared with ward members when appropriate.
6. Awareness training for ward members be provided to support their involvement with care leavers in the community.
7. The outcomes of the meeting with the ICB in respect of health assessment's be provided to the Board.
8. An update be given to a future meeting of the Board as work progressed around the Healthy Child Programme and developmental needs.

6 One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report

The Board considered the One Adoption West Yorkshire (OAWY) Annual Report presented by Michelle Rawlings, Head of One Adoption West Yorkshire. Michelle Rawlings provided a summary of the work undertaken with children with an Adoption Order in Kirklees or who had been placed for Adoption and it was highlighted that:

- During 2022/23 there was an ongoing fall in number of children adopted and a fall in those subject to a placement order and had an adoption plan.
- This reflected the ongoing work in Kirklees to keep children with their families through the increase in Special Guardianship Orders.
- There had been an increase in the percentage (87%) of children placed with OAWY approved adopters.
- This was a positive statistic meaning that Kirklees children were kept local and placed with families assessed by OAWY.
- There had been an increase in the Number of children placed via Early Permanence.
- There had also been a slight increase in the percentage of children matched for adoption which were previously in EPPs 13% +4% Number of children at year end with ADM not matched.
- At year end there were 17 children with a placement order but not matched.
- Of the 17 children, 12 have characteristics which make them more difficult to find families for (aged 5 or over, need a family alongside a brother or sister, are from an ethnically diverse background or have a disability), two of whom have more than one characteristic.
- Following active family finding for the 17 children not matched, 8 of those children had now been placed for adoption and 2 had matched identified, 3 of the children's foster carers were being explored as adoptions.
- A positive highlight was the improvement of timeliness in Kirklees for children in terms of time taken from entering care/placement order to being matched and moving in with a family.

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- There had also been increases in File access requests, Applications to the Adoption Support Fund, increased applications for ASF funding for therapeutic interventions and ongoing contact arrangements.

Responding to a question from the Board around increased applications for ASF Funding, Michelle Rawlings advised that ASF funding was secure until 2025, currently OAWY were keeping pace with applications and there was fair access funding available of up to £5000 per year. If funding was exceeded conversations around match-funding would need to take place with the Local Authority. Group bids (therapeutic groups etc...) helped to support families at an earlier stage and in upskilling families early on this would the ambition was to reduce the need for high levels of therapeutic support going forwards.

Responding to a from the Board around the amount of Adoption Panel Members available, Michelle Rawlings reassured the Board that a recent recruitment had been successful. The Board welcomed the response and highlighted the importance of having a diverse pool of panel members, with different levels of knowledge and experience was valuable and encouraged any interested individual to get in contact.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report and thanked Michelle Rawlings for the update.

8 Children's Rights Team Annual Report

The Board considered the Children's Rights Team Annual Report presented by Lucy Fearnley, Team Manager for Quality Assurance and Safeguarding. The report set out the services delivered by the Children's Rights Team (CRT) during the period of 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023 and it was highlighted that:

- The focus of the work of the CRT continued to be listening to and sharing the views and voices of Children Looked After and Care leavers.
- The CRT had supported children and young people with a wide range of advocacy issues in the previous year.
- At present the team was supporting 105 young people, and the feedback received was positive highlighting that young people felt listened to and heard.
- Young people continued to be involved in foster care recruitment and the children's services training programme.
- Both training programmes had now returned to being held face to face following the Covid-19 pandemic and were delivered by the young people.
- There were a number of young people who had also supported staff recruitment through the Young Peoples Panel's.
- The CRT continued to run the Children in Care Council and Care leavers Forums and there were various projects offered for young people to get involved with.
- The CRT aimed to ensure all CLA (from the age of 10 received) contact and information about the CRT and participation opportunities.
- The Independent Visitors Scheme continued to employ volunteers to match with CLA and spend time with young people on a 1:1 basis.
- There were currently 26 children match with volunteers.

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- Looking forwards, the key priorities for the CRT in 2023/2024 were:
 - To develop further the recording of advocacy work by exploring electronic recording of work with Liquid Logic Developers, with the view of establishing Tableau dashboards.
 - To continue to develop and enhance involvement in Practice Learning Days across Children's Services, to further capture children's voices, experiences, and help support participation to inform service developments and practice improvements.
 - To review the Service against revised Advocacy Standards when published.
 - To complete a review of the current service capacity and offer.
 - To work in collaboration with the Looked After Children's service, to develop a children's consultation forum to ascertain the view of children and young people Looked After in respect of how they wish to celebrate their achievements.

Responding to a question from the Ex-Officio about Democracy Friendly Schools and potential for joint work with the Our Voice team, Sara Miles, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance agreed to investigate the scope of this further.

Responding to a question from the Board in respect of making sure that the voices of children and young people were heard by the Corporate Parenting Board, Ophelia Rix, Head of Service for Children Looked After and Care Leavers advised that the development of the Looked After Multi-Agency Partnership was in progress which focused on the 7 Corporate Parenting Principals to drive this agenda forward working across the Council. Workstreams were identified and an update on key priorities within these would be available in due course, within these priorities would be a key focus on amplifying the voices of children and young people. This involved working closely with the CRT and the Children in Care and care leavers forums. The Board noted the response and highlighted the Boards role in instigating change.

Responding to a question from the Board in respect of the Total Respect Training, Lucy Fearnley provided reassurance that the training was held in person and provided to all new members.

Responding to a question from the Board in respect of specific plans to include children and young persons voices to the Board, Ophelia Rix advised that the approach was still in development, the first part would include the introduction of a newsletter including the feedback of children and young people. Lucy Fearnley added that this was being developed collaboratively across the wider services. In response the Board welcomed the demonstration of increased activities for Care Leavers as positive.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the Children's Rights Team Annual Report and it was agreed that Sara Miles, Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance would investigate the scope of joint working around Democracy Friendly Schools and the Our Voice Team.

7 Overview of Childrens Residential Services

The Board considered a report providing an overview of developments within the Children's Residential Estate presented by Kieran Lord, Interim Service Director-Resources, Improvements & Partnerships. It was highlighted that:

- There were currently four internal children's homes within Kirklees, shortly the offer would be expanded to provide an additional home due to be reopened after a full refurbishment.
- Alongside reopening an existing home, a new home was being registered to provide additional capacity for up to four young people in need of small group living.
- Work continued with Ofsted to improve the four homes with the ambition to have all homes rated as Good or outstanding within the next inspection cycle.
- Work with facilities management and the revision of our staffing structures and staff training were central to achieving that aim.
- Of the registered homes; 1 home was judged to be Outstanding, 1 Home was judged to be Good, 1 home Required Improvement, 1 home was Inadequate and was due to be re-inspected in the next 6 weeks and 1 home awaited a judgement after reopening.
- A core principle of the homes arrangements for bringing children together in group living will be ensuring that the homes' statement of purpose and functions were delivered through careful matching of the needs of the children living in homes to the skills of the team and with consideration of the relationships between those who will live together.
- Work was ongoing with existing staff and the psychologist for the Emotional Wellbeing Service to develop and train the workforce on the model of care as well as sourcing specialist DBT (dialectical behavioural therapy) training for the workforce.
- The national sufficiency challenge was noted and addressing this locally was a key priority of the service.
- Work had been undertaken to engage with local providers and support the development of strong relationships.
- In investing in the residential services infrastructure, the aim was to ensure that there were adequate business and administrative support resources across Kirklees homes.

The Board noted the update and welcomed the recent certification and the re-opening of the residential home in providing opportunities to improve sufficiency. The Ex-Officio also highlighted the information presented as reassuring. In response, to a question around Ofsted inspections and judgements of homes, Kieran Lord highlighted the importance of working with Ofsted as a partner to understand what the key elements were they were looking for at inspections.

RESOLVED: The Board noted the report Overview of Childrens Residential Services.

Virtual School Governing Body Update

Janet Tolley, Executive School Head Teacher provided a verbal update in relation to the work of the Virtual School Governing Body. It was reported that updates had been provided on:

- The Validated Headteachers report and Data Review: including PEP's, Young people not in full time education and the reasons why, consultation for ECHP and a detailed analysis of suspensions by year group. The in-depth data outlined trends and the detail behind the information.
- Questions had been raised, around support for young people struggling with education and a detailed discussion was held.
- It was noted that an ILYACs inspection was upcoming, which could involve up to 3 days of scrutiny.
- Children with a social worker: the additional duty included working with all professionals to look at how practice can be influenced at a strategic level to achieve better outcomes and remove barriers to children and young people's education.
- A key area of focus was understanding what children and young people were doing when they were not in school and identifying how to increase engagement with education.
- Work around Child Protection Plans and building on best practice.

The Board noted the update and welcomed that the Governing Body provided strong support and challenge.

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

9 Updates from Board Members on Interaction with Services

The Board considered verbal updates from Board Members in relation to progress and key issues following interaction with Services and partners to challenge the role of the Corporate Parent.

Councillor John Lawson had recently been appointed to the Childrens Scrutiny Panel.

The Chair reported that she had:

- Attended a range of 'Time to Talk' sessions, the last one was held at Dewsbury Town Hall with colleagues from Childrens Services.
- 13/07/2023 - Attended an Emotional Wellbeing Partnership Session
- 18/07/2023- Attended a Leaving Care Team Meeting.
- 28/07/2023- Attended a meeting of the Children's Scrutiny Panel.
- 03/08/2023 – Attended a meeting of the Multi-agency Safeguarding Partnership.
- 09/08/2023- Visited the Central Stars Youth Club,
- 01/09/2023 – Joined a activity day at Bradley Woods for Children Looked After

The Board noted that the activity day at Bradley Woods was particularly positive and asked that this be repeated and rolled out to a wider group of young people.

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RESOLVED: The Board noted the Updates from Board Members on Interaction with Services and it was agreed that the activity day at Bradley Woods be repeated and consideration be given to offering this to a wider group of young people.

10. Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan 2022/23

The Board considered the agenda plan for 2023/24.

RESOLVED: The Board considered the agenda plan for 2023/24 and it was agreed that:

- 1) A target date be set to introduce the incorporation of children and young people's voice to the Board either through physical attendance, video or written submissions.
- 2) An informal Ad-hoc meeting of the Board be held in respect of the action to discuss ward level support to Care leavers.