

Contact officer: Helen Kilroy – Tel. 01484 221000

## **KIRKLEES COUNCIL**

### **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> July 2018

**Present:** Councillor Viv Kendrick (Chair)  
Councillors Lawson, Allison  
Jo-Anne Sanders, Service Director, Learning and Early Support  
Steve Comb, Interim Head of Corporate Parenting  
Melanie Tiernan, Service Manager  
Martin Green, Head of Localities Offer (Children and Families)  
Janet Tolley, Virtual School Head Teacher  
Sanna Mahmood, Looked after Children and Leaving Care  
Gill Addy Designated Nurse for Looked After Children and Care  
Leavers

**In attendance:** Mandy Prout, One Adoption (West Yorkshire)  
Julie Bragg, Service Manager (Children and Families)

**Apologies:** Cllrs Hill, Bellamy and Loonat  
E Mc Shane, M Tiernan, O Rix, T Brailsford

**Observers:** Emma Whittell, One Adoption West Yorkshire  
Tony Earnshaw, BBC

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

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Hill, Bellamy and Loonat, Elaine Mc Shane, Melanie Tiernan, Ophelix Rix and Tom Brailsford.

#### **2 Minutes of previous meeting**

The Board considered the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2018 be approved as a correct record.

#### **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 West Yorkshire Annual Report**

The Board considered an Annual Report from Mandy Prout of One Adoption West Yorkshire, outlining the management and outcomes of the adoption service. The report provided an overview of the adoption service activity from April 2017 to March 2018.

The Board was informed that One Adoption was the first Adoption Agency nationally and that they had developed strong partnerships with the Kirklees Children's Services Leadership Team.

Mandy Prout advised that Children were waiting less time to be placed with adoptive families, and an Adopter Led Service had been set up.

In response to a question from the Board relating to the reason for the reduction in Adopters, Mandy Prout advised that this was the case across the country and that work had been ongoing to try and find the answer. Mandy Prout further explained that a number of reasons could include lack of financial confidence due to Brexit and people often came into parenting later in life and if they could not have children, they often moved on. The Board was informed that West Yorkshire was in a good position to be able to progress potential adopters through the door as quickly as possible.

The Board was informed that One Adoption were working closely with the Fellowship Adoption Agencies to try and secure additional funding.

Mandy Prout explained that One Adoption was continuing to increase its work with partners and was now linking more with the Virtual Head Teachers.

The Board was informed that Emma Whittell from One Adoption had a press background and experience of promoting services in the press and was looking to do more promotion and marketing on Adoption.

Mandy Prout advised that the Adoption Leadership Board was engaged with One Adoption, who had spent time with the Chair recently to look at the family funding journey.

In response to a question from the Board regarding accommodation and co-locating staff together from Kirklees and One Adoption, Mandy Prout advised that the offices within Kirklees were decreasing from 5 to 3 but that the future ambition was to have all staff in one central base.

### **Resolved –**

1. The Board thanked Mandy Prout for attending the meeting and the One Adoption West Yorkshire Annual Report was noted.

## **7. Performance Monitoring Update**

The Board considered a verbal update on key highlights on Performance Monitoring data for the Children's Service.

Steve Comb, Head of Corporate Parenting, and Janet Tolley, Virtual Head Teacher, highlighted the following key issues:-

- Children currently in care – 668 (this figure was shared once a week with the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Children);
- Children subject to a care order and placed at home – progress was not as fast as it should be, in June 2017 the number was 59 and had decreased to 47 in May 2018;
- Children entering care – Steve Comb advised that the Legal Gateway Permanence Panel continued to support the consistency regarding decision making and planning around placement moves for children and young people;
- Looked after children reviews within statutory timescale – up to 91% in May 2018;
- Child participation in reviews – this had increased from 88.6% in June 2017 to 97.7% in May 2018 which showed positive results and that this was moving in the right direction;
- Independent Return and missing – the number of children that actively participated within their reviews continued to increase;
- Local Authority in touch with Care Leavers – In April and May 2018 the rate was 98% which was an increase from 97.7% in March 2018; Steve Comb advised that some young people did not want to be labelled as 'having been in care' but that they would let the Local Authority know where they were so the Council could keep in touch;
- A new Early Help Strategy was in place to help children to stay with their families;
- Educational attainment of children in care - a lot of work still to do to improve in this area and the impact of placement and relocation of children and young people going into care was important and any decisions needed a central discussion to ensure that the wellbeing of the young person was paramount.

### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the verbal updates on Performance within Children's Services be noted.

## **8 Ofsted and Improvement Board Update**

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

Steve Comb advised that the Ofsted Monitoring visit would take place on the 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2018 and that their main focus would be on pre-birth assessments and child protection plans.

The Board was informed that the Commissioner had said that the health outcomes for children in care were encouraging compared to what had been seen in other Local Authorities.

Steve Comb advised that Ofsted had been focusing on three Children's Homes in Kirklees and highlighted the following key issues:-

#### **Healds Road**

- Inspected by Ofsted in April 2018. had been rated as 'good overall' and the report had been published;
- The relationships between staff and young people were improving;
- Number of children at the home had reduced from 6 to 4 and transitions had been planned and well managed;
- Staff were promoting and supporting regular contact for the young people with their families and friends;
- Ofsted had given positive feedback on the decision making at all levels of Management at the home.

#### **Woodlands**

- Inspected by Ofsted in May 2018, had been rated as 'good overall' and the report had been published;
- The young people at the home were making good progress and were building strong relationships with staff;
- Incidents of challenging behaviour were reducing;
- Number of children at the home had reduced from 6 to 4.

#### **Orchard View**

- Inspected by Ofsted in May 2018, had been rated as 'good overall' and the report had been published;
- 59 children and young people were accessing the short breaks in the home for respite care;
- Staff were working well in building partnerships with families;
- Individual risk management plans had been created for each child so they were all helped and supported effectively.

In response to a question from the Board regarding how reductions in numbers in the homes had been managed, Steve Comb advised that as young people moved out of the homes their beds had not been reallocated.

Steve Comb advised that the Statement of Purpose for all three Children's Homes mentioned above had been adjusted and reports had been considered by the Board in April 2018.

The Board noted that one of the ambitions of the Sufficiency Strategy was to have more Children's Homes with places within the Kirklees area.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the verbal update on key issues from Ofsted and the Improvement Board be noted.

## **10 Recruitment of foster carers and future membership of Fostering Panels**

The Board considered a verbal report from Steve Comb on recruitment of Foster Carers and the future membership of Fostering Panels.

Steve Comb advised the Board that changes had been made in May 2018 to the Councillors who were Kirklees representatives on the Fostering Panels. A decision had been taken to have 4 Councillors in a pool who would sit on the Fostering Panels on a rota basis or when available. Steve Comb further explained that training would be undertaken and the Councillors new to the role would observe Fostering Panels as part of their training.

The Board was informed that an Acting Service Manager for Fostering had recently been recruited and was now in post. Steve Comb explained that recruitment of foster carers was a national challenge.

Cllr Kendrick advised the Board that she had met with the Kirklees Fostering Network and that connections with Kirklees was important. The Board was informed that 4 network meetings took place each year, the most recent meeting had been held in June 2018 and had been well attended. Steve Comb advised that the Network meetings were a good opportunity for foster carers to meet and talk to each other. Cllr Kendrick informed the Board that she had presented long service awards to foster carers at the Network Meeting in June and between them they had provided 400 years of foster care.

Steve Comb advised the Board that feedback from foster carers at the Network Meeting had been that the event was positive and they had appreciated the opportunity to meet and talk to other foster carers. The foster carers felt valued that Cllr Kendrick had attended the event. The Board was informed that the Virtual Head Teacher and Children's Social Care Managers would attend future Network meetings.

Steve Comb advised the Board that approximately 40 enquiries per month were received in Kirklees from people wishing to become a foster carer. The Board was informed that a report would be presented later in the year giving progress on the recruitment of foster carers.

The Board was informed that Laura Counce now had oversight of the Fostering Placement Team due to her commissioning background.

Steve Comb advised the Board that when people became foster carers, their family needed to understand the process and receive support and help.

Gill Addy, Designated Nurse for Looked after Children and Care Leavers, advised the Board that an additional LAC Nurse (Health Visitor) had been secured to work with the LAC Team. The LAC Nurse provides an additional resource to support foster carers with younger babies and children as well as the general LAC health duties.

In response to a question from the Board regarding good practice for seeking feedback from foster carers when they were leaving the service, Steve Comb advised that exit interviews were carried out. The Board was informed that people sometimes stepped down from foster caring as their own children had grown up and then grandchildren came along. Steve Comb further explained that foster caring was very specialist and some children had attachment difficulties, particularly babies who had been neglected, and could display certain distressing behaviours. The Board was informed that a lot of support was in place for foster carers. Steve Comb advised that some foster carers had agreed to be respite carers during school holidays.

In response to a question from the Board regarding promotion of foster caring via social media, Steve Comb advised that a member of staff in the Fostering and Recruitment Team was an expert on social media marketing and that 38% of enquiries to be a foster carer were now generated through the internet.

The Board agreed to consider a future report on the marketing plan for foster caring – date to be determined.

The Board was informed that a representative from the Foster Caring Network would be invited to be on the Board's membership and attend future meetings. Steve Comb further explained that the Network were currently trying to identify who the representative would be and agreed to update the Board in due course.

#### **RESOLVED –**

1. That the verbal update on Recruitment of foster carers and future membership of fostering panels be noted.
2. That the Board consider the marketing plan for recruitment of foster carers at a future meeting – date to be determined.
3. That a representative from the Foster Caring Network be invited to become a member of the Corporate Parenting Board and attend future meetings.

### **11 Care Leavers – Local Offer Keep on Caring**

The Board considered a report outlining the development of the Kirklees Local Offer for Care Leavers and extending Personal Advisor Support to care leavers to the age of 25 and welcomed Julie Bragg to the meeting.

Julie Bragg advised that No 11 Drop-in facility was a remarkable resource for looked after children and young people and had been launched at the end of October 2017. The Council were now looking to review the service provision at No 11.

The Board agreed to comment on the Care Leavers Action Plan and feedback at the next meeting of the Board.

Julie Bragg gave an update on highlights from the report, as follows:-

- Officers were hoping to launch the Kirklees Local Offer for Care Leavers at the Care Leavers week in October 2018;

- Support for 21 to 25 year olds were being looked at and officers were developing an initial assessment tool to establish the needs of the young person and how the Council could help; developed a 'keeping in touch' protocol with Adult Services;
- Review of the No 11 drop-in facility building and housekeeping, Steve Comb advised that the open plan arrangement was not always suitable for some conversations and clinics;
- The Council would like to see a No 11 facility in North Kirklees so the service provision was accessible from both parts of the borough.

The Board agreed to receive details of the Care Leavers Week in October.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the report on Care Leavers – Local Offer keep on caring be noted.
2. That the Local Offer Action Plan for care leavers be circulated to Board Members for comment and be considered by the Board in September 2018.
3. That the Board receive the dates of the Care Leavers week in October 2018.

**12 Draft Children's Interim Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan (2018-19)**

The Board considered a report on the draft Children's Interim Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan for 2018-2019 presented by Steve Comb.

The Board noted that as part of the Improvement Plan, the Council was committed to producing a Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan setting out how it would increase the availability of local placements to ensure that children and young people did not need to be placed at a distance from their communities.

Steve Comb advised the Board that the last 12 years had seen an increase in the numbers of children in care and that partnership working was critical in terms of meeting complex needs locally. The Board was informed that a broader piece of work was required on how Children's Services could work well with the Child Adolescent Health Services to provide the support required.

Steve Comb advised that it was important to listen to children and young people and referred to the section of the report which outlined some extracts from "Views of Children" by the Kirklees Children's Rights Team in March 2017. The Board was informed that one young person had said that their foster carer did not understand what they were doing at school and could not help with homework. Steve Comb further explained that wider support was needed so that placements could be sustainable.

The Board agreed that it was positive to see that the child's voice had been included and taken into account in the development of the Sufficiency Strategy.

The Board agreed that a paragraph be included in the “Voice of the Child” Sufficiency Action Plan to endeavour to keep children at their current school when they are placed in care.

The Board agreed that health needs for girls would be better supported if they could be placed within Kirklees. Sanna Mahmood advised that young females were more likely to talk and engage than young males and that this needed to be looked at.

In response to a question from the Board regarding over the border placements, Steve Comb advised that over the border placements from Kirklees remained the responsibility of the Corporate Parent and the relevant Local Authority would keep Kirklees informed.

Gill Addy advised the Board that Kirklees would undertake its own health assessments for out of border placements and would contact the Local Authority to advise when a child from Kirklees was being placed in their area and when they were leaving.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the report on the draft Children’s Interim Sufficiency Strategy and Action Plan for 2018-2019 be noted.
2. That the “Voice of the Child” Sufficiency Action Plan be amended to include a section on trying to keep children at their current school where possible when they are placed in care.
3. That Members of the Board give their comments on the draft Sufficiency Strategy and its future development to the Head of Corporate Parenting as soon as possible.

**13 Training for Members of Corporate Parenting Board**

The Board considered an update on the proposed LGA Corporate Parenting and Total Respect for Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and other elected members.

The Board was informed that Corporate Parenting Training had been scheduled for the 13<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> September 2018 and that all Elected Members would be invited to attend one of the sessions.

The Board noted that Total Respect training for members of the Board would be arranged in the near future – date to be determined.

**RESOLVED –**

1. That the update on the proposed LGA Corporate Parenting training for Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and other elected members be noted.
2. That the Board Members and all elected members be invited to attend the LGA Corporate Parenting Training sessions on either the 13<sup>th</sup> September (9.30 am at Hudawi Centre) or 17<sup>th</sup> September (5.30 pm at Dewsbury Town Hall).
3. That Total Respect Training take place for members of the Corporate Parenting Board in the future – date to be determined.

## **14 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 and meetings she had recently attended:-

- Visit to the Youth Offending Team – The Annual Report outlined good outcomes for looked after children who had been involved in the justice system; a good response had also been seen in terms of educational attainment;
- Attended Children’s Scrutiny Panel – feedback from the Panel had indicated that they felt well informed and that information provided was timely; Cllr Kendrick confirmed that information should be presented and shared with Scrutiny in the early stages;
- Visit to the Multi Systemic Therapy Team and joined in staff teams;
- Visit to West Yorkshire One Adoption Committee – meetings were held every 6 months attended by representatives from 5 Local Authorities in West Yorkshire;
- Met with Foster Carers at the Foster Carers Network and Long Service Awards Ceremony;
- Met with Care Leavers and Sanna Mahmood, Looked after children and leaving care;
- A Local Government mentor visited Kirklees from Wolverhampton and Councillor Kendrick will be visiting them in the near future to observe their Corporate Parenting Board;
- Visit to Peer Mentors at No 11;
- Visit to Heckmondwike Grammar School, had a good meeting with the Head Teacher and took part in a question and answer session on politics with 6<sup>th</sup> form students.

The Board noted that visits to internal services and external partners and organisations could be arranged and co-ordinated if required.

Steve Comb and Julie Bragg advised that they had recently visited the Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum.

## **15 Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan for 2017/18 and looking forward to 2018/19**

The Board considered the Agenda Plan for the remainder of the 2018/19 Municipal year.

The Board agreed to have an informal meeting at 9.30 am prior to the public meeting at 10.30 am.

The Board agreed to consider future reports on the following issues:

- Update report from Children in Care Council and Care Leavers Forum – November 2018 (S Mahmood)

**RESOLVED -**

1. That the Corporate Parenting Board Agenda Plan for 2017/18 be updated as agreed.
2. That the Board's supporting officer be authorised to liaise with attendees to address the agreed actions.

**16 Dates of Future Meetings**

That the Board noted the future meeting dates of the Board during the 2018/19 municipal year:

- Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018, 10.30 am
- Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2018, 10.30 am
- Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January 2019, 10.30 am
- Monday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2019, 10.30 am
- Monday 15<sup>th</sup> April 2019, 10.30 am