

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL**  
**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

Minutes of the Meeting held on 13 March 2023 at 5.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr M White – Chairman

Cllr S Moore – Vice-Chairman

Present: Cathi Hadley, Cllr R Burton, Louise Harris-Smith,  
Insight Representative, Insight Representative, Unite Representative,  
Sara Scholey (In place of J White) and Duncan Williams.

41. Apologies

Apologies were received from Sara Scholey and Cllr L Lewis. Apologies for lateness were received from the Co-Chair (Insight Representative).

42. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members

43. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest received.

44. Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2022 were agreed as a correct record.

The actions from the previous meeting were noted.

- It was confirmed that a working group was looking at allowance information for young people. This was a work in progress and would also consider issues of travel provision to the 333 hub. The Board welcomed a report back on these issues.
- It was now believed that all PEP's were on Mosaic and all issues now resolved.
- It was noted that training on handling complaints would be scheduled into the Councillor induction programme.

45. Participation Report

The Insight and Unite members presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided an update on the work of the Childrens Rights and Engagement team (previously named The Participation Team) and the voice of children and young people in BCP. The Board was advised of what Unite and Insight had been working on over the last quarter.

The Co-Chair advised that she had been working on a glossary of terms, and it was hoped that this would be included with any paperwork for young people. As well as explanations for abbreviations and specific terms it also included information on different rights for Children in care and Care Experienced Young People.

A draft copy of the glossary was shared. It was suggested that this would also be useful to a wider audience including members of the Board. The glossary was welcomed, and it was suggested that 'VOC' – Voice of the child should be added. **The Board was asked to advise Jo Fry of any suggested additions to the glossary.** It was suggested that terms used by the police and NHS would also be useful to include. It was important to make sure that this piece of work was utilised once completed. However, it was noted that different local authorities use different abbreviations. **It was suggested that a glossary be included in CPB agendas.** It was further suggested that the children in care and care leavers groups could keep a watching brief on this and review and update as required.

It was hoped that there would also be a section for top tips for working with different groups of young people and a family tree of different departments and people who work in and with BCP.

It was noted that the team were planning a residential experience to develop a plan for key priorities. It was expected that this would take place by the end of May for older young people. There was also a plan for a residential for the younger age range but this would not be held until September or October. This would pick up a similar theme for joint working. It was currently a very busy time for young people with lots of different pressures.

It was reported that Unite had been exploring approaches around recruitment. The Unite representative advised that they had been involved with training for interviewing new members of staff – which would take place on 20 March. They reported that they had developed an interesting task for interviewees.

They had also been working on a welcome video and a welcome box. The content of the video was being planned but there was already welcome information provided for children coming into care so this had been put on hold to find out what was currently provided.

An Insight member commented that they found the meeting with the virtual school very useful and it was good to know that there was a meeting for year 14 which may be helpful as they had attended a final meeting in college which then didn't go anywhere. It was positive that there was more support and improved funding around this for care leavers.

The Co-Chair advised that she had attended the Family Justice Council Conference the preceding week.

46. Children's Services Improvement – Moving from Inadequate – One Year on

The Director of Children's Services presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these minutes in the Minute Book. The Children's Services Improvement plan was in place to ensure progress was made at pace in accordance with the ILACs recommendation, Monitoring Visit outcomes and the Statutory Direction notice. The Corporate Parenting Board received regular updates on themes regarding improvement and the report covered overall improvements to date.

The Children's Services Senior Leadership Team presented the overall outcomes for the first year of Improvement through a presentation at the Corporate Parenting Board. They had worked with Corporate Directors to create a pledge on corporate priorities to young people. Key action points included:

- The number of unregistered placements – work was underway to ensure more placements.
- Need to be better at keeping in touch with 17-18 year olds.
- Ninety percent of supported lodgings carers were registered as foster carers.
- The voice of the child was consistently heard but there was a need to evidence the outcomes.

The Board raised a number of points and queries which were responded to, including:

- How many young people there were per PA and social worker. It was noted that this was dependent on the team. Caseloads for the assessment team were set at 25, the children in care team was at about 18 but was currently working in the low 20s. The target for the care experienced team was 25 but it was currently over due to staff shortages. The Council were committed to more recruitment.
- In response to a query about how this worked in terms of balancing the needs of the young people. It was noted that some would not need a social workers presence that often but that there was statutory guidance and requirements for how frequently visits should take place.
- In relation to the AQA launch for independent living skills, it was noted that this conversation didn't suit all young people and the purpose of it need to be made clearer for all young people. Comments were received that the certificate made it feel as if young people didn't know how to do day to day things. There were also concerns that as it was run by AQA, it made it seem like an exam. There was also an issue with housing in that they were not prepared to accept some young people without the AQA skills. It was noted that it would not necessarily suit everyone, but it had been useful for some.
- In response to a query on how the issues being actioned the Director advised that they would be listening and acting upon children's and

young people's views on how services impacted them and developing a culture of accountability.

- It was noted that working with people in post-16 education a number were not fully aware of the virtual school or what a Personal Education Plan (PEP). A number of people were unaware that this was available to year 14. It was noted that these may look different to a traditional PEP and may look more informal depending on the path the young person was on.
- A member commented on the pilot scheme to allow members of public into family courts and the lack of awareness amongst the general public on what the issues were for social workers in court. It was noted that the pilot on these proceeding had not had anything to do with social care
- It was noted that there was a national shortage of social workers. During covid people began to make different decisions about their lives and the social work role. However, there were lots of people doing really good work.
- The government needed to do big recruitment campaign. Members raised the issue of whether the recruitment of social workers was an international issue.
- The Board considered the management of information to care experienced young people. It was noted that there was a shift to ensuring that anything written on a file should be done with the view that it will be read by the child or young person. However, nothing would be edited as from a legal point of view nothing could be changed retrospectively.
- It was noted that the virtual school was doing a great job in the care leavers hub at the moment helping improve and update CVs. Kelly Twitchen undertook to feed this back to the team.

47. CIC Pledge and Care Leaver Offer

The Director of Children's Services presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Board was asked to familiarise itself with the current local offer and the ways in which it could be developed.

It was noted that each Local Authority had a statutory duty to set out in detail how they will support care experienced young people known as a "Local Offer". The Local Offer was co-produced with care experienced young people.

It was noted that work was needed in letting young people in care and care experienced young people know about this document. It was noted that the information around what was actually contained in the offer had not filtered down well. There appeared to be currently different views on what was contained within the offer. Queries were raised concerning when these documents would be reviewed.

There was nothing currently included around driving and driving lessons for young people. There were also issues concerning payments for costs to visit family, which was a particular issue for young people away at university.

The Director of Children's Services suggested that it should be considered how this could be addressed at future meetings.

48. Sufficiency Report

The Head of Commissioning presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. Members were asked to note the key issues within the report including the progress against priorities identified during 2022/2023 and the current position in respect of accommodation sufficiency within BCP. The report provided an overview of:

- National, regional and Local position for children in care
- Local sufficiency data
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children sufficiency data
- Local Priorities
- And the commissioning forward plan

It was noted that there were a number of people turning 18 at the same time. It was noted that some of these were UASC but not all and there were a significant number of children who had come into care at an older age.

The Board commented on the number of unregistered children's home provision. It was noted that these did not follow Ofsted operations and were usually in operation before requirements to register. There had been an increase in beds for this type of accommodation as existing providers had increased their accommodation. It was noted that lots of checks were done with the unregistered providers, and they were being encouraged to register on a regular basis. There were more frequent visits by IROs to those in unregistered placements.

The lack of crisis care and complex care provision was acknowledged and was in the process of being addressed.

In response to a query the Board was advised that the 'Always There' carer scheme was a specific type of HMO for care leavers with support available, including help with laundry, etc. It was noted that this had appeared to have had a positive impact. It was noted that UASC generally came into the system around the age of 16 years. As they had not been granted Indefinite Leave to Remain, there was no responsibility for Housing to provide them with any accommodation and therefore alternative provision had to be made for them. The Board was advised that a 19-bed housing unit for care experienced young people had recently been secured and a needs analysis for single homelessness provision had recently been completed.

49. Unregistered Placements

The Director of Children's Services presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The report provided board members with an overview of children placed in unregistered placements.

It was noted that this was a significant challenge as the actual demand for placements outstripped supply. There were particular issues with those young people who displayed trauma in a way in which was more difficult to challenge and manage. A majority of authorities used unregistered provision due to national shortages. However the number of CIC had risen by 10 percent between 2021 and 2022.

There were currently seven young people in such placements but the young people did have a secured a level of stability within these placements. There was a whole process for the provider to go through in order to be registered with Ofsted. It was noted that a number of young people were doing really well in these placements.

A Member questioned whether finances were an issue with this or whether the inspection regime was part of the issue. It was noted that providers were in a position where they were willing to talk to Ofsted but it was now necessary to get Ofsted to agree to engagement with unregistered providers.

There was lots of work underway around BCPs own sufficiency to see if capacity could be increased.

It was noted that there was also an issue with a number of landlords not wishing to have their properties registered as children's homes. They would also then need to undertake recruitment of a registered manager.

The Chairman commented that it was useful to have received this report to better understand the reasons for unregistered placements. It was noted that the law around unregistered placements was changed in September 2021.

50. Forward Plan

The Forward Plan was noted subject to the addition of the Ofsted monitoring visit.

51. Future Meeting Dates

The dates for future meetings were noted.

It was noted that this was the last meeting of the co-chair. The Chairman thanked her for all her work and noted that he appreciated her support as co-chair, particularly her precise use of language.

52. IRO Scrutiny Report

There were no comments or questioned received on this report.

53. Data and Analysis Report

The report was noted.

An issue was raised concerning 19 percent not participating in their review. Tammy Lawrence undertook to follow up on this issue outside of the meeting.

The meeting ended at 6.44 pm

CHAIRMAN