

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MONDAY, 16TH DECEMBER, 2019

Present: Councillor Sandra Moore – **Chairman**

Councillor Richard Burton
Councillor Lisa Lewis
Councillor Jane Kelly
Jane White, Social Care Representative
Kerry-Marie Ruff, Housing Representative
Penny Earney, Health Representative
Lesley Bond, Foster Carers Representative
Insight Representative, Children in Care Representative
Unite Representative, Children in Care Representative

Officers in attendance: Julian Radcliffe, Director of Children and Young People
Penny Lodwick, Service Manager - LAC and Care Leavers Service
Jill Aiken, Senior QA and Improvement Adviser Safeguarding
Lisa Male, Participation Worker
Jeffrey Mason, Children & Young People

17 Apologies

Apologies received from Cllr M White, Judith Ramsden, Lorraine Mealings and Sian Thomas

18 Substitute Members

Cllr Kelly substituted for Councillor White
Kerry-Marie Ruff Substituted for Lorraine Mealings

19 Declarations of Interests

None declared

20 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 October were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21 Update on the Insight and Unite Work Programmes

Updates were received from the representatives from Insight and Unite, in particular, the following details were noted:

Insight

- The previous Care Leaver Forums across the conurbation had merged to create Insight to provide a more powerful voice for care experienced 16-25 year olds.
- So far, Insight had held 3 formal meetings and had focussed on delivering a training course to help understand what it's like being looked after by a Local Authority and positive feedback had been received.

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- Insight would also be holding a consultation for care experienced children over the Christmas period and would be looking at the resulting feedback in February which would duly be shared with the Corporate Parenting Board.

Unite

- Unite would Meet on the first Thursday of each month.
- Its purpose was to explore what worked and what didn't, with the overall intention of seeking to establish improved support for children and young people in or experienced in care.
- Unite was working with Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) to consult with children and young people to establish a top 10 priorities for children in or experienced in care.

The representatives responded to comments and requests for clarification, details included:

- The primary difference between the two organisations was that Insight was made up of young people between 16-25, whereas Unite represented the under 16's.
- Insight often participated in the recruitment process for Social Workers as part of the interview process. Insight also played a part in the training of social workers.

22 Housing - Update on the Housing Strategy 2020

The Strategic Housing & Private Sector Manager introduced the item in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book

She set out current housing profile and issues across the conurbation and the detail for future housing issues and priorities for housing options, including the detailing of a proposed timetable for the adoption of a strategy.

Responses to comments and requests for clarification included:

- Currently the empty properties team only operated in the historic Bournemouth area, although there was an aspiration to expand this across the conurbation following a service review.
- The Housing Team would aim to take into account the requirements of care leavers by working with colleagues in Children's services when developing the strategy, so as to help input and feed into the process, this was imperative to identify future needs which would shape the strategy.
- It was important that this process was done correctly to avoid children in care being placed in Bed and Breakfasts, which was happening on far too a regular basis, particularly for "difficult to place" young people.
- Having appropriate accommodation was key and it would be advisable for a care leaver to be involved in this process to provide input from their point of view – the representative from Insight indicated that he would be happy to assist.
- As part of the strategy, there was an ambition to bring in additional licensing rules to better regulate use of HMO's and ensure that they were of high quality.
- The Council was already playing a part in supporting care leavers aged between 18-25 with its proposals for Council Tax relief, this was due to be considered at the next meeting of the Cabinet, due to take place on 20 December 2019.

23 Health Reports

The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children presented a series of reports, copies of which appear as Appendices 'B' – 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

A video was also shown, which can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hLYyEizwSgE> which showed a group of children in care and care leavers discussing the support that was on offer, what worked well and areas for improvement.

Responses to comments and requests for clarification included:

- One of the most significant challenges was ensuring all procedures were followed within a reasonable amount of time and OFSTED identified that this was an area for improvement.
- Timing challenges were present largely due to limited capacity within the Looked After Children service, this was something that needed to improve through working with commissioning services in the form of a service review, but in the event that a suitable resolution was not found, the service would need to evaluate its options in order to maintain the service.
- It was hoped that a review could be complete in early 2020 and whilst in the interim, assistance was being sought from GP's, this was not considered to be an ideal option.
- It was important that the root of the capacity problem was solved and it had been identified that one of the key reasons for a delay in identifying the apparent capacity issue was the goodwill that had been shown by staff, had hidden this problem for several months, but this was no longer sustainable as staff were now finding themselves close to breaking point.
- Finding an alternative model was very much a work in process and the review would assist in its final shape. The reality though, was that there was a distinct lack of funding and physical resources to provide the desired service and until this changed, the situation would remain challenging.
- October figures were now available and had demonstrated that the situation had been exacerbated further since the September figures had been released. This meant that there was an increased demand on medical advice being sought.

The Chairman thanked the Board and supporting officers for their input and stressed the importance of the service being able to cater to children in care appropriately.

RESOLVED that the risk be added to the CPB forward plan to be monitored until improvement had been achieved, and sustained for a 12-month period.

24 Corporate Parenting Strategy - Development and Sufficiency

The Director for Children's Social Care presented a report, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'F' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Responses to comments and requests for clarification included:

- The strategy put a real focus on adolescents at risk of exploitation including care leavers and other vulnerable young people.
- It was essential to that the right information was shared between partner agencies and that there was not a language (terminology) barrier.
- The development plan could be RAG rated in order to highlight successes and areas for improvement.

RESOLVED that the development plan be RAG rated ready for the next meeting of the Board.

25 Quality & Impact Scorecard

The Director for Children's Social Care presented a report, a copy of which appears as Appendix 'G' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

Responses to comments and requests for clarification included:

- It was hoped that a new framework prepared for OFSTED would reward schools for taking on school children later in their “school career”
- Schools needed to offer a flexible curriculum and work was ongoing to ensure better partnerships between Headteachers and the Local Authority to set the tone within the schools i.e. attitudes and values. It was acknowledged that some schools were too regimental in their approach to delivery of education and that one size did not necessarily fit all, particularly when dealing with children experienced in care, due to issues they may be trying to resolve – punitive sanctions were not always the best course of action and a balance needed to be found for managing behaviour standards.
- Many pupils with additional needs had suffered from reduced levels of support staff in school due to reduced funding being available.
- 10 children with experience in care had been given fixed term exclusions in the school year to date, which represented an amber measure on the RAG rating.
- There was going to be a recruitment campaign in January which would assist in reducing social workers caseloads, which were currently above average, although not excessively so.

RESOLVED that the Board pays particular attention to red and amber measures on the scorecard and that it be reviewed at each meeting of the Board

26 Forward Plan

The Corporate Parenting Board noted the forward Plan and agreed the date for an informal meeting of the Board to take place on Tuesday 17 March 2020.

Duration of the meeting: 5.00 - 6.31 pm

**Chairman at the meeting on
Monday, 16 December 2019**