

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

MONDAY, 3RD FEBRUARY, 2020

Present: Councillor Sandra Moore – **Chairman**
– **Vice-Chairman**

Councillor Richard Burton
Councillor Lisa Lewis
Councillor Mike White
Jane White
Sian Thomas, Learning Partnership
Lesley Bond, Foster Carers
Insight Representative, Children in Care
Unite Representative, Children in Care
Unite Representative, Children in Care

27 Apologies

Apologies for this meeting were received from Lorraine Mealings, Penny Earney and Judith Ramsden.

28 Substitute Members

Ben Tomlins substituted for Lorraine Mealings.

29 Declarations of Interests

None were made at this meeting

30 Confirmation of Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

31 BCP Pledges from Insight and Unite

The pledges were introduced by members of Insight and Unite. The pledges as presented are appended to these minutes at 'A'. The Board were informed that of 457 young people invited to participate in the survey 92 responses were received. This represented a very positive response rate. It was noted that on some of the suggested pledges work was already taking place. There were 10 pledges to children in care and care experienced young people and there were 6 pledges outlined concerning the way that BCP works with children in care and care experienced young people. The Board asked a number of questions concerning the proposed pledges including:

- Whether any young people were given bus passes at present. It was confirmed that this was done on a case by case basis as required; currently those working on apprenticeships were provided with them. This would exclude those already provided them through college or elsewhere. The foster carer representative advised that it was difficult to get young people out of the house sometimes and anything that could support this was welcome. It was suggested that it could be broadened out to other forms of transport as preferred/required.
- It was noted that the pledge to support young people with Council tax was already underway but was currently confined to the BCP area and just outside.
- Board Members asked whether there was an emotional health and wellbeing practitioner in place for care leavers? There was a Looked After Children nurse but their resources were focused on 18-21 year olds. The Community mental health services didn't necessarily fit

with the needs of care leavers. The Service Manager for Care Leavers undertook to follow this up with the Designated Nurse for looked after children

- The Chairman asked the Housing Representative about the range of different housing options currently available. It was noted that affordability was an issue. A member asked whether the Board could receive information on the outcomes for young people who were happy with their accommodation and the difference that it makes to a care experienced young person to be living in appropriate accommodation. Information on how life chances were affected by not having the correct housing. It was noted that the safety of housing was key but that currently there was not enough available to meet the different types of housing need. It was noted that both the location and type of tenancy were important. If young people moved on too soon, they often struggled to keep their tenancy. The Chairman suggested that perhaps the new local plan could reflect the needs of care experienced young people. The Housing representative suggested that the allocations process could be looked into as well as having a second chance with Council tenancy as these people were currently disadvantaged.
- It was noted that some of the pledges reflected the differences in practice within the preceding authorities and different areas needed to be harmonised including use or provision of birthday and Christmas allowances.
- It was confirmed that it might be appropriate to have some flexibility in terms of provision of IT equipment to young people.
- In terms of support for young parents and the Council's role as corporate grandparents the foster care representative advised that she had experienced a young person expecting a baby who had not receive any support and there many care leavers having their children removed. It was noted that pathways workers were not always away of the support that may be available, and it was important to ensure that all Pas were aware of services already in place. The Children's Social Care representative confirmed that there should be a package of support in place for young parents, it was noted that sometime children's centres didn't get involved if there was already social care involvement.
- In relation to pledge 4 concerning how BCP works there were questions raised about why a social worker or pathways worker wouldn't say goodbye at the moment and the reasons that prevented this from happening. It was noted that there were standards of practice being worked on at present but that this needed to be better. The participation worker requested to be part of the conversation on what a good level of service should look like and making this BCP standard practice.
- Issues concerning the provision of financial advice and what was appropriate were discussed. Again, it was noted that there were differences in practice between the three legacy authorities. However, there was a meeting the following month to address the harmonising of savings.

The Chairman thanked Insight and Unite representatives for a thought-provoking piece of work. It was also suggested that the presentation could be shared further with social work teams. It was noted that a Bright Spots survey was being undertaken after April and it was important to understand the viewpoint of young people and how this could be moved forward.

Resolved: It was confirmed that all pledges presented would be taken away and looked into and feedback would be provided on each of these issues.

32 Outcome of the Ofsted Focused Visit

The Children's Social Care representative introduced the report a copy of which appears at appendix 'B' to these minutes in the minute book. The Board was advised that the Ofsted visit spent a long time looking at Permanence with front line teams including social workers pathways workers and some young people.

The Board was advised that the leadership team had already recognised the areas of improvement required. The areas outlined for improvement included:

Planning for permanence needed to be better overall.

The quality of some care plans was variable, they needed to be up to date and reflect the child's current needs and recorded on the child's file.

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The Independent Reviewing Officers needed to be scrutinising more. The range and choice of placements available – this was an area of challenge for BCP – recommendations from the report would be incorporated into the corporate parenting and sufficiency plan.

It was noted that 87 percent of children and young people had a permanence plan and the senior leadership team was working closely on the plans already in place to address this. There was a need for more local and specialist placements. Good practice was recognised in that social workers and pathways workers knew the children and young people well. The work with Insight and Unite was highlighted as a positive.

The importance of life story work was also highlighted and a life story champions group would be meeting shortly.

Resolved: It was agreed that an update on the progress of the action plan should come back to an appropriate future meeting.

33 Terms of Reference

The updated terms of reference for the Board were agreed.

34 Forward Plan

The current Forward Plan was noted. The Board was informed of the young person led meeting taking place on 17 March. It was noted that the location for this meeting was still to be determined.

35 Future Meeting Dates

Future meeting dates were noted. The Board agree that it should continue to rotate meeting locations between the three main BCP buildings for the time being.

Duration of the meeting: 5.04 - 6.40 pm

**Chairman at the meeting on
Monday, 3 February 2020**