

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING (FORMAL)
HELD AT 6:00PM, ON
WEDNESDAY, 21 JULY 2021
SAND MARTIN HOUSE, ENGINE SHED, BITTERN WAY, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillor Bisby, (Chairman (Chair), Howard (Vice Chairman), Councillors Ayres, S Bond, M Hussain, Lane, Robinson and Sainsbury.

Officers Present: Nicola Curley, Assistant Director for Early Help and Children's Services
Ricky Cooper - Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering and Specialist
Myra O'Farrell, Head of Service for Corporate Parenting
Fiona Van Den Hout, Head of Service Fostering and Contact Service
Shalina Chandoo, Quality Assurance Lead
Catherine York, Designated Nurse, Children in Care
Dr Aslam, Dr Aslam, Doctor for Looked After Children
Geoffrey Frederick, Independent Review Officer (IRO)
Joanne Banks, Acting Head of Regional Adoption Agency (RAA)
Michaela Berry, Service Manager Corporate Parenting
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Sue Stepney, Foster Carer Committee Representative

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Yasin and Jones.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. UPDATE FROM FOSTER CARERS

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to updates from the Foster Carer Committee. Members were provided with an overview of the responses received from a recent survey conducted.

The purpose of the report was to update the Committee about the activities of the

Foster Carer Committee (FCC).

The Head of Service Fostering and Contact Service and Foster Carer Representative introduced the report and asked Members to note the contents and raise any queries they had with representatives.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members commented that it was important for the foster carers continue with the networking to highlight new ideas.
- Members were advised that the response to question eight of the fostering services survey in relation to recommending the service would be explored to understand why there had been 26% carers who would not recommend the service on to others and then implement improvements.
- Members complimented the Foster Carer Committee for their hard work on the foster care survey.
- Members were advised that there had been a focus group on the training provision and there were some carers that had been involved in that group. In addition, it was advised that there were more opportunities to explore particularly in the form of a foster carer peer support training.
- Members were advised that the reason 60% of foster carers that had not felt fully supported could be due to the service being new and currently under development. There would be a focus on sharing the service vision and statement of purpose to foster carers, in order to tackle this issue. A new website was also being developed to enhance the experience for foster carers.
- The length of time to apply to be a foster carer was six months until their first placement. In addition, there was a performance indicator around fostering assessments which should be within four months.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

1. The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report.

5. UPDATE FROM THE YOUTH VOICE COORDINATOR ON BEHALF OF THE CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the work of the Children in Care Council and the outcome of their discussions at meetings and events organised.

The purpose of the report was to update Members on the Children in Care Council activities and participation services.

The Youth Voice Coordinator introduced the report and asked Members to note the update and raise any queries they had with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that where a young person had no transport to travel to events, an alternative travel option would be offered. In addition, children in care that lived outside of the Peterborough area, would attend their residential authority activities.
- The children's services staff recruitment panel would involve children and

young people in care as young as eight years old. There was a process developed with the younger children in the form of development of the questions to be asked and ice breaker sessions, however, the older recruiters would attend an interview panel for a perspective staff candidate.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

2. The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report.

6. APPOINTMENT OF CHAMPION MEMBERS

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the Champion positions and nominations to those roles.

The purpose of the report was to set and approve the Corporate Parenting Committee Champion roles and positions.

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and asked Members to appoint to the relevant Champion positions.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimous) to the appointment of Corporate Parenting Committee Champions.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to:

- I. Note the content of the report,
- II. Confirm the Corporate Champion Roles, and
- III. Confirm the appointment of Corporate Parenting Champions

The following positions were confirmed:

- I. Housing, Finance and Benefits - Councillor Sandra Bond
- II. Education Employment and Training and Access to Higher Education – Councillor Ishfaq Hussain
- III. Health - Councillor Robinson
- IV. Recreation and Leisure Activities – Councillor Ishfaq Hussain
- V. Effective Care Planning - Councillor Jones

7. ANNUAL FOSTERING SERVICE REPORT

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the Annual Fostering Service Report.

The purpose of the report was to inform Members about the activity of the fostering service in 2020- 21.

In addition, Members noted that there had been an impact on resignations of foster carers and this was a result of the pandemic and elderly carers retiring.

The Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering and Specialist Young People's Services introduced the report and asked Members to note the content and raise any queries they had with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that some of the foster carer applicants had been approached again following their departure from the recruitment process in order to encourage continuation of the application process.
- Members were advised that the improvement for recruitment had identified how to target potential carers. In addition, the new recruitment of a media team and the promotion undertaken on the website and visits to potential candidates with current foster carers had assisted the recruitment process.
- It was also advised that the allowances for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough had been made the same and this was hoped to encourage potential carers to put themselves forward.
- Although there was a shared front door foster carer service which was separated for Peterborough and Cambridge foster carers, the recruitment and training was a combined offer.
- There was work being undertaken to explore the diverse opportunities for the recruitment of foster carers through Think Communities, social media campaigning and radio. In addition, the team received recommendations on perspective foster carer candidates, which had been another recruitment tactic used by the team.
- Members were advised that in some cases there had been a delay experienced about allegations of foster carers and that the investigations had taken more time to resolve due to staff absence and information collation. In addition, Members were advised that practice standards and household routines were in place and monitored to ensure that the timescales were met in future. Furthermore, no delay in investigation had detrimentally impacted any child in care. Foster carers had also been provided with independent support during the process through the foster care network.
- Members were also advised that during the foster carer investigations, the Social Worker would assess and decide whether the child would remain in the foster home during the process.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

3. The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report.

8. ANNUAL ADOPTION REPORT

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the Regional Adoption Agency (RAA) annual report.

The purpose of the report was to update Members on the new arrangements for delivering adoption for Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Councils.

The Acting Head of Regional Adoption Agency introduced the report and asked Members to note the contents and raise any questions with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that the success of the formation of RAA in the last six months between Peterborough and Cambridge had been the learning from recruitment and assessment processes.
- Members were advised that there had not been reduction of children in Peterborough and Cambridge placed for adoption. In addition, it was about the team getting the right care plan in place, early in the child's life which could

involve adoption.

- There had been a substantial number of children under two coming into care and being placed for adoption, particularly in the Covid-19 pandemic. In addition, there had been several older children and sibling groups placed for adoption. There was a media campaign being developed to recruit for adoptive parents for the older and harder to place children.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

4. The Committee noted the report.

9. ANNUAL IRO REPORT 2020 - 2021

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the Annual Independent Reviewing Officer Service 2020-2021.

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an overview of the statutory review and analysis of the Independent Reviewing Service

The Deputy Safeguarding Lead and Independent Review Officer introduced the report and asked Members to note the content and raise any queries they had with officers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members commented that the looked after children review meetings were successful and that in the main, the IRO would be of the same nationality of the child in care. Members were advised that there were some IROs that spoke other languages and came from the same ethnic background. In some cases, an interpreter could be used, and it depended on how the child felt about being supported by someone from their own ethnic background.
- Members were advised that the IRO was the most consistent person in a child in care's life.
- Members were advised that the Children and Family Advisory and Support Services (CAFCASS) for children in care would be support for court services, whereas the IRO's would support the child in everyday life, however, the two services had liaised where needed.
- The IROs would liaise with other agencies such as health and education to support a child and young person in care's needs where necessary.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

5. The Committee noted the report.

10a. PERFORMANCE REPORT (PLACEMENTS OF CHILDREN IN CARE AND SCORECARD)

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to performance data for Children in Care and Care Leavers.

The purpose of the report was to update Members in respect of the numbers of

children and young people being looked after by the Council as of 31 May 2021 by providing a breakdown of the types of placements in which they were living. The report also provided information about the age, gender and ethnicity of those children and young people. Members were also advised that caseloads were a little higher than preferred.

The Service Manager Corporate Parenting introduced the report and asked Members to note the contents and raise any queries with officers

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that the number of children in care that go missing with number of episodes of leaving and returning to their care provision, would be repeated episodes. In addition, the increase in March's figures had been due to the Covid pandemic restrictions being lifted, as this had provided an opportunity for more socialising.
- Members commented that it would be beneficial for the performance data to show comparison figures for statistical neighbours and for historical performance.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

6. The Committee noted the report and agreed that the Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering and Specialist would explore whether comparative data with statistical neighbours and historical data could be provided for future performance reports going forward.

10b. PERFORMANCE REPORT (HEALTH)

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to Health Services for Children and Young People in Care.

The purpose of the report was to provide Members with an update on the performance of Initial Health Assessments, Review Health Assessments and the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire. The report provided an overview of the Clinical Commissioning Group's (CCG) activities to ensure robust monitoring and quality assurance systems were in place to meet the health needs of Peterborough's children and young people in care.

The Doctor for Looked After Children introduced the report and asked Members to note the content.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that although the health assessments were being returned face to face, virtual media would be accommodated if preferred, as this was more popular with teenagers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents.

AGREED ACTIONS

7. The Committee noted the report and agreed that the Designated Nurse

for Looked After Children would explore the reasons for delay in relation to receiving paperwork from other service areas which had delayed health assessments being conducted.

11. MEMBERS ISSUES

Members that were not part of the core CPC membership, but held corporate parenting responsibilities, were invited raise issues they had with regard to the services provided to Children in Care (CiC).

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered and **RESOLVED** that there were no issues to raise.

12. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME AND REVIEW OF WORK IN 2020 - 2021

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the draft work programme for 21-22 and the review of work in 2020-2021.

The purpose of the report was to enable the Committee to discuss its objectives and priorities for 2021/22 and to approve the draft work programme for 2021/22

The Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering Specialist and Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and asked Members to review work conducted in 2020 – 2021 and highlight any areas for continued review and agree and set its priorities for 2021-2022.

The Corporate Parenting Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members requested information to be provided in relation to the impact of Covid 19 for Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET) and Health.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents and agreed the Work Programme for 2021-2022

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and:

8. Agreed to note the 2020/2021 year in review and makes recommendations on the future monitoring of these items where necessary.
9. Agreed to the priorities, and approve the draft work programme for formal and informal meetings for 2021/22.
10. Agreed to note the Recommendations and Actions Monitoring Report and considered if further monitoring of these during the 2021/22 municipal year was required.
11. Noted the Terms of Reference for this Committee as set out in Part 3, Delegations Section 2 – Regulatory Committee Functions, 2.4

In addition, Members asked for further information to be included in reports in relation to:

- The impact on young people Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEET) during the Covid-19 pandemic; and
- The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the health of children and young people in care.

CHAIRMAN
Meeting end 19:42