

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING (FORMAL)
HELD AT 6:00PM, ON
WEDNESDAY, 20 JULY 2022
SAND MARTIN HOUSE, ENGINE SHED, BITTERN WAY, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillor Yasin, (Chairman (Chair), Councillors Ayres, Barkham, Bisby, S Bond, Howard, Knight, Robinson and Sainsbury.

Officers Present: Jenny Goodes, Assistant Director Early Help and Social Care
Shalina Chandoo, Quality Assurance Lead
Tessa Bilson, Lead Nurse, Children in Care
Marie Saunders, Independent Review Officer (IRO)
Helen Card, Independent Reviewing Officer
Despina Kaoura, Fostering Service Manager
Sue King, Service Manager, Fostering Household Review & Practice Standards
Michaela Berry, Service Manager Corporate Parenting
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Glen Crossland, Foster Carer Committee Representative

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jones and Lane.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 MARCH 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. UPDATE FROM FOSTER CARERS COMMITTEE

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 Fostering Service Manager 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 complimented the Foster Carers Committee for their contribution to Foster Carer retention.
- The Skills to Fostering four-day training course was delivered to prospective foster carers. The training course had become a little stale, so the decision was made to change supplier to Journey2Foster and a transition process was applied. The foster carers had been consulted and the decision was made with them to appoint the new training provider.
- There were inconsistencies across the country in terms of passport issuing for children and young people in care and there was an application back log of two and a half years. A task and finish group had been set up by the Fostering Service to explore the issues. The work would be incorporated into the Promise to CiC and YP in care. The task and finish group would look to start the passport application process when children or young people come into care. Members were also advised that the groups' findings would be reported back to Committee and support would be sought from Members to move the findings forward.
- The transport issues highlighted within the report were being reviewed and work was underway to launch a new transport booking and tracking application in September 2022, which was hoped to provide the foster carers with additional delegated authority and information on the whereabouts of their children during a taxi journey.
- Members were advised that the transport booking and tracking technology was available, however, tasks were being undertaken to ensure that all systems were synchronised and would work to the benefit of all parties.
- Members commented that they were aware of the issue of missing documents for passport applications and in some cases children in care had to attend interviews to prove that they were in care, which was felt to be distressing for the child.
- Members were advised that there had been several reasons that foster carers had switched to agency companies which included the level of allowances paid and a series of system frustrations they had experienced. In addition, it was advised that foster carers that had switched to the private fostering agencies had not realised that there were hidden costs involved such as mileage or set up costs for a child, which would not be met by the agency.
- Some foster carers had supported other carers during investigations and the transition to adoption. There would be training provided for them to support the foster parents.
- Members were advised that it was a difficult decision to place a child that had no passport into respite care during a family holiday. Often the respite care would be placed with another foster family known to the child or young person in care. The issues had arisen when a holiday had already booked before a child had arrived at the foster carer home.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that the Assistant Director Early Help and Social Care would provide Members with a briefing note on:

- I. The work undertaken to improve the passport issues being experienced by foster families and to outline the progress of the task and finish group to date. In addition, the briefing note should include information on the delays experienced in retrieving documents required for passport applications and the actions being undertaken to rectify this.
- II. The transport issues being experienced by foster families and progress of the software application launch. The briefing note should also include the progress made on the delegated authority provision to foster carers to control transport arrangements for their foster children.

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 Quality Assurance Lead 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 there had been a report circulated which outlined the young inspectors feedback following the Contact Centres. In addition, it was advised that the young Inspectors would conduct a future visit to the Contact Centres and provide feedback. Some Members would also attend a visit to the Centres, which was to be organised following an action point raised at the informal meeting held on 15 June 2022.
- Each Councillor would receive a concertina cards, which outlined the Promise to Children and Young People in care. This had been arranged for a forthcoming Council meeting.
- The CiCC had undertaken several projects to support mental health issues for children and young people in care. The CiCC meetings would talk to professionals and foster carers with the aim to assist in the development of posters and other tools to raise awareness of the issues. The achievements in promoting support for mental health issues would be recognised through the Children and Young People in Care award events.
- Communications in relation to the award events would be sent through various contact opportunities such as the Foster Carer Team, IROs, strategies, conferences, and the feedback received had highlighted that foster carers felt somewhat overwhelmed by the amount of information they received.
- There had been 60 confirmations received for the CiC and CL award event.
- Members commented that the report had reflected the young people's confidence had grown. In addition, it was felt positive that the CiCC wanted to take on more ownership of the informal Corporate Parenting Committee meetings going forward, which Members welcomed.

- Some CiCC events offered were virtual, however some CiC and YP had been overwhelmed by the virtual environment at schools and similar activities, so would tend to avoid them.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that the Quality Assurance Lead would provide the Committee's positive feedback to the CiCC and CLF about their involvement in informal meetings.

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** (Unanimously) to the appointment of Corporate Parenting Committee Champions and roles.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to appoint the following Champion roles and Councillors to those positions as nominated:

- I. Support for Care Experienced Young People (Housing, Finance and Asylum Issues) - Cllr S Bond
- II. 0-25 Education, Employment and Training (including the Combined Authority and Partners) - Cllr Sainsbury
- III. 0-25 Physical and Mental Health and Emotional Well Being - Cllr Robinson
- IV. Citizenship, Participation and Leisure activities - Cllr Barkham
- V. Placement Sufficiency and Care Planning - Cllr Jones
- VI. Fostering: Cllr Knight.

7. ANNUAL FOSTERING SERVICE REPORT

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

The purpose of the report was to inform Members about the activity of the fostering service.

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

The Service Manager, Fostering Household Review & Practice Standards, 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:

- It was advised that Covid 19 had also impacted carer retention due to ill health and lost employment. There had also been a mix of retired carers and family commitments, that had also impacted the issues of FC retention.
- Members commented that there had been a focussed visit a year ago from Ofsted which received a positive outcome. Members also congratulated the Fostering Team on their successful work.
- Members were advised that the LGBTQ community, Christmas and Easter Fostering recruitment campaigns had been very successful.
- There were ways of knowing where the target audience was in order to recruit FCs; and the LA had commissioned a good public relations team to attract more enquiries. In addition, the Fostering Team would respond to enquiry emails from prospective carers immediately.
- If a foster carer was subject to an investigation, they were entitled to legal advice and could access the LA's Employee Assistance Programme.
- The Government had made a decision to receive unaccompanied Ukrainian children up to the age of 18. The LA would manage care for children up to the age of 16 under private fostering legislation. The older children between 16 to 18 years would be assessed under the child in need process. The children would need to be placed with a family in the UK that they had a link with.
- Peterborough had not received unaccompanied minors from the Ukraine however there had been 20 received in Cambridgeshire.

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

8. ANNUAL IRO REPORT 2021 - 2022

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the Annual Independent Reviewing Officer Service 2021-2022.

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 were advised that the Independent Care Review was quite daunting for the team and discussions were currently underway but it was hoped that the role would continue.
- Quite often children and young people in care would raise issues such as contact, with their IRO instead of their Social Worker. This was thought to happen because children and young people had either experienced changes in Social Worker, or would be more open with an IRO, due to the stronger relationship. Members commented that this highlighted the importance of the IRO role.
- Members were advised that it was difficult to obtain feedback from service users in relation to the IRO service. Creative ways were being explored to obtain feedback such as the use of QR codes to make forms more accessible.

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

9. 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 May 2022 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 there was an error in the report and the information should state that there were 124 children placed with in house foster care instead of 138. In addition, the health assessments completed figure was inaccurate and this was due to system synchronisation, and plans were underway to improve this.

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 commented that the wording in the report on page 72 at paragraph 4.1 in relation to step down to foster placement should be reviewed.
- When children were ready to move from residential care into foster care, meetings be held with the step down to foster care group to ensure that the most appropriate placement was found. This had provided children with complex needs, the opportunity to enjoy a family environment.
- Members complimented the service in relation to the successful adoption placement figures.
- The Local Authority (LA) had performed to a high standard for adoption placements nationally.
- Members raised concerns in relation to an issue reported with Bear Care Services, there had been unregistered facilities used for independent living.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that the Service Manager Corporate Parenting would:

- Review the use of step down to foster care descriptions and replace the term with appropriate wording;
- Provide Members with clarification over the timeliness of adoption placement target figures used within the performance report; and
- Check and confirm to Members whether there were any children placed in care with Care Fostering Services.

10. 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. Members were advised of the services that were given priority such as dentistry.

Regular meetings were being attended by the Lead Nurse, to tackle the issues of dental care. Dentists were being approached to volunteer their services for children and young people in care. Members were also advised that improvements had been made on the strength and difficulties questionnaires such as training for foster carers and an update would be provided at a future the Committee meeting in due course. Initial Health Assessments and leaving care health passports were also being focused on.

The Lead Nurse, Children in Care 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 there was a dental emergency service offered through the dental access in Midgate Peterborough that could be accessed for children and young people in care. In addition, there was a mouth care tool available for Health Care Workers or Social Workers to identify dental issues and refer on priority cases as necessary.
- There had been opportunity to identify mental health issues within the initial health assessments, and young people were asked to rate their mood on forms. Mental Health Services and information would also be made available to children and young people in care should it be required.
- Members felt that the dental costs for children and young people in care should not be met by the Local Authority as the National Health Service (NHS) was adequately funded to do so.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report and agreed that the Lead Nurse, Children in Care would:

- I. Ensure that Mental Health assessment statistics would be included within the health performance reports going forward.
- II. Provide Members with information about dental health costs being met by the Local Authority and the reasons why the NHS was not meeting the costs.

11. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2022 – 2023 AND REVIEW OF WORK IN 2021 - 2022

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the draft work programme for 2022-2023 and the review of work in 2021-2022.

The purpose of the report was to enable the Committee to discuss its objectives and priorities and approve the draft work programme for 2022/23.

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and asked Members to review work conducted in 2021 – 2022 and highlight any areas for continued review and agree and set its priorities for 2022-2023.

- Members commented that the education items to be presented to the Committee would need to include information on the education services for children in care with disability needs.
- Members were advised that there was a requirement for co-opted members to originate from a specialised background in order to assist the Committee with their work. In addition, any suggestions would need to follow a recruitment and ratification process in order to adopt a co-opted member onto the Corporate Parenting Committee.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents and agreed the Work Programme for 2022-2023

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that the Head of Virtual Schools would include information in future education reports to Committee about services provided to children and young people in care with disability support requirements.

12. 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.

CHAIRMAN
END 8:01PM