



**Minutes of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held at the
Bourges/Viersen Room - Town Hall
on 9 November 2016 6.30pm**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Bisby (Chairman), Ayres, Bull, Coles, Johnson, Harper, Hussain, Bond and Lane.

Also in Attendance: Councillor Stokes, Cabinet Advisor for Children's Safeguarding and Education

OFFICERS PRESENT:

Nicola Curley, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care
Myra O'Farrell, Interim Head of Service Children Looked After and Leaving Care
Jenny Weeden, Senior Youth Engagement and Participation Officer
Jessica Palmer, Youth Engagement and Participation Worker
Belinda Evans, Customer Services Manager

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Philip Gilbert M.B.E, Foster Carer Forum
Sarah Purvis, Foster Carer Forum
John Harris, Local Government Association
Andy Pallas, TACT
Andy Elvin, TACT

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Holdich, Sylvester and Saltmarsh, Councillors Stokes and Hussain were in attendance as substitutes.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Ayres declared an interest in item 7 Children's (Social Care) Services Statutory Complaints Process Annual Report 2015/16 due to her consultancy business and the contracted work with Hunt and Coombs solicitors in relation to child in care cases.

3. Minutes of the Meeting Held on 8 August 2016

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 August 2016, were approved as a true and accurate record.

4. Update from Children in Care Council

The Youth Engagement and Participation Officer introduced a report to Members, which outlined the progress of recent meetings and events of the Children in Care Council (CiCC). Members were also provided with an update from the CiCC on discussions held at the Informal Corporate Parenting Committee on 5 October 2016.

Key points raised included:

- The redesign of the CiC pledge and fold out cards were underway and anticipated for launch in December 2016;
- The monthly celebration of CiC achievements process had been developed, and it had been planned for a letter to be sent to all achievers from the Cabinet Member for Children's Services;
- The CiC Christmas party has been postponed;
- Members of the CiCC attended a regional event focussed in children in care issues. The event was organised by the Children's Commissioner and a number of workshops were planned. Feedback would be provided to the informal meeting of CPC.

The Youth Engagement and Participation Officer responded to comments and questions raised by Members. In summary responses included:

- The CiC Christmas party was proving difficult to organise due to the identification of suitable dates and time of year; and
- The best time to hold the informal CPC meetings in order to encourage higher attendance from young people was around the school holidays.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Participation Officer share the design of the Children in Care Pledge contact cards with Members prior to the print and distribution process.

5. Update from Foster Carer Forum

Representatives of the Foster Carer Forum (FCF) introduced the report to Members which provided an update on the events and recent meetings held.

The key points included:

- The Adolescent and Children's Trust (TACT) and new arrangements on how foster carers would fit into the system;
- Foster carers awards evening recently held;
- Foster carer Christmas party arrangements were underway;
- Pantomime tickets were being organised; and
- The FCF was liaising with the YMCA to explore the provision of improved events for looked after children.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee to note the update.

6. Recommendations of the Informal Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee

The Assistant Director for Children's Services introduced the report to Members which outlined the Corporate Parenting Champions roles and the new structure of both the formal and informal meetings, as adopted by the informal meeting of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on 5 October 2016.

The Assistant Director for Children's Services responded to comments and questions raised by Members. In summary responses included:

- The Corporate Parenting (CP) Champion process would be supported by a lead officer and there was a responsibility of a report back on progress to Committee;
- A succinct business scorecard would be used to report CP Champion progress to the Committee and it was envisaged that the information would be collated and presented at the end of the municipal year.

AGREED ACTION

The Committee formally approved the:

1. Appointments to Corporate Parenting Champions;
 - a. Housing - Councillor Coles
 - b. Employment and Training Opportunities within the Council Departments and Partner Agencies - Councillor Holdich OBE
 - c. Health - Councillor Ayres
 - d. Education Attainment and Access To Higher Education - Councillor Holdich OBE
 - e. Recreation and Leisure Activities - Councillor Sam Smith
 - f. Finance and Benefits - Councillor Bull
2. The new structure of the Formal and Informal Committee meetings; and
3. The Work Programme 16/17.

7. Children's (Social Care) Services Statutory Complaints Process Annual Report 2015/16

The Customer Services Manager, introduced the annual complaints report to Members, which outlined the Children's (Social Care) Services statutory complaints process.

The Assistant Director for Children's Services and Customer Services Manager responded to comments and questions raised by Members. In summary responses included:

- The reduction in complaints from parents and guardians highlighted in paragraph 4.5 of the report was in line with the reduction in complaints overall, an increase in management for CiC support services, the use of the MOMO app and improvements in practice;
- The level of expectation in regards to the conclusion of cases through Family Support for a complainant had been communicated through the complaints guidance and a further exploration of communication improvements was being explored in conjunction with the Quality Assurance Team;
- The figures outlined on page 32 of the report had included all complaints across Children's Services and Safeguarding and were part of the type of service provided such as Family Support that dealt with some CiC cases. Some complaints received had been from members of the public for example questioning whether they should be going through the child protection process at all and the delay with the issue of minutes following a meeting with Family Support;
- The range of issues such as section 47 investigations, were required to be completed within 15 working days with a decision made about whether an assessment was required within 24 hours in order to safeguard a child. A common complaint received had been in relation to where a child was living with mum and there had been a delay in contacting dad.
- The staff conduct and attitude complaints were also in relation to Family Support and First Response; and
- Unless a complaint was urgent, the LA would send an acknowledgement to the complainant within the statutory timeline of three days. All complainants would also

be contacted by the team manager if the complaint was going to take more time to resolve.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report and recommended that the Customer Services Manager and Youth Engagement and Participation Officer would develop a process to link the data in relation to the complaint statistics received through the Mind of My Own (MOMO) application and include the statistics into future annual complaints reports.

8. Adoption Annual Report 2015 - 2016

The Assistant Director for Children's Services introduced the report to Members, which outlined the adoption process and annual performance in successful placements.

The Assistant Director for Children's Services responded to comments and questions raised by Members. In summary responses included:

- The acronym SGO was in relation to a special guardianship order and was an arrangement made outside of the adoption process;
- There were two parts to the adoption process, with part one led by the applicant to pursue with the LA. Part one of the process could be delayed due to a number of circumstances such as whether potential adopters wished to continue with the process, which could lead to the six month statutory timescale not being met. Part two of the process involved the LA adoption assessments with the LA meeting the statutory timelines.
- In some cases the young age group of children in Peterborough adopted had been due to pre-birth circumstances where the LA had concerns and removal would be initiated from a birth family as quickly as possible, where there was a high risk to the child. The adoption rate of older children was challenging and was likely to be due to complex needs.
- Other adoption placement challenges experienced were siblings, boys and mixed heritage children;
- There had been an ongoing debate between the LA and courts around the delay in the adoption process, however, some of the reasons for delay were due to receipt of challenge from birth parents over an adoption placement; and
- Members commented that the adoption team should be congratulated on their good performance.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

9. Permanence Service

Andy Pallas and Andy Elvin from (The Adolescence and Children's Trust) TACT introduced the report to Members which provided an outline the services provided for foster care and adoption services.

Key points raised included:

- TACT was a charity company that had provided foster care and adoption services since 1993 and had been set up by LA social workers;
- Provision of services across 120 authorities in England and Wales with 595 CiC supported;
- Provision of mother and child, sibling groups, older children and mixed heritage placements;

- Campaign currently underway to request the Government to provide free university or apprenticeship placements for care leavers;
- Effective foster carer recruitment services; and
- Solomon O.B was an ambassador for TACT who wrote a poem about his experiences of foster care and currently works with young people to encourage them to open up about their care arrangements and the situations experienced.

Andy Pallas, Andy Elvin (TACT) and Assistant Director for Children's Social Care responded to comments and questions raised by Members. In summary responses included:

- TACT would attempt to complement current safeguarding support provided by the LA through the provision of alternative models to develop the stability of placements, support and training for foster carers and safeguarding services to support CiC, with the aim to lessen the placements for children;
- TACT have also made an application to the DfE (Department for Education) Innovation Fund for additional resources to support further innovation for children in care e.g. around educational outcomes.
- The Permanence Service and the provision to care leavers and looked after children was funded by the LA. The TACT contract was funded by the LA to provide the day to day services for fostering and adoption. The DfE funding applied for by TACT was additional and was aimed to provide creative services on top of the contracted safeguarding provision;
- The LA remained responsible for the whole provision of fostering, adoption and safeguarding services and the Partnership Board would review the progress of TACT in relation to the first two. The LA employees would be TUPEd to TACT services and would continue to record and use the case management system Liquid Logic. The performance data would be accessible by the LA in order to provide returns to the Government and would continue to report to Committees such as Corporate Parenting and Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee.
- Work on Business Objects was under development to provide a suite of performance information, with specialist data being designed for adoption and fostering reports, which would be presented to CPC by LA officers and TACT in the future;
- Effective development for internal fostering agency arrangements were underway by TACT and there were plans to provide positive training programmes such as Fostering Changes, which would be offered to foster carers;
- The Fostering Changes training programme involved interactive training with YP in order to learn about issues such as challenging behaviours in order for foster carers to gain effective skills on how to manage them;
- Local Authorities generally were spending a lot of money on external agency foster care placements and TACT believed that the fostering provision could be provided internally and effectively by the provision of good support and training, which would ultimately save money for the authority;
- Members commented that they had seen evidence at a recent event facilitated by TACT, that children coming into care supported through TACT services, had experienced a positive outcome in their care placement, with some ultimately pursuing an education through university;
- TACT provided effective support to foster carers, which included continuation of support through special guardianship orders for CiC placements; and
- Foster carers commented that they were encouraged by the service that TACT offered and in particular to the training and funding. The support provision offered by TACT around management of challenging behaviours had also been positive, which would hopefully support more young people to remain within a fostering environment.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

10. Performance Report

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care introduced the report to Members which provided an update in respect of the numbers of children and young people currently being looked after by the LA, a breakdown of the types of placements in which they were living and the performance scorecard in relation to safeguarding services. The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care also updated Members in regards to of the progress and status of the Ofsted action plan and forthcoming LA requirements for services for the intake of asylum seeking unaccompanied minors.

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care responded to comments and questions raised by Members. In summary responses included:

- The Government had recently announced that each LA was expected to support 0.07% of unaccompanied minors that were seeking asylum, which had equated to 33 children for Peterborough;
- There were plans under way for the Eastern Region to develop a Regional Dispersal Scheme supported by funding from the Government. The Police would direct the unaccompanied minors to LAs on a rotational basis. In some cases where an unaccompanied minor is collected late at night by the Police, there would be a temporary placement made to the nearest LA until alternative plans could be sought.
- The LA performance targets for safeguarding services were set around national statistics and provided information to monitor the status of the LAs safeguarding provision and its progress. A child at risk would always be safeguarded by the LA regardless of performance figures and the preventative work through TACT was aimed support parents with effective parenting skills and direct funding in the most appropriate way;
- The Care Leavers (+19) not in suitable accommodation outlined on page 90 of the report included young people up to 21, however there was a proposal for the age to move up to 25;
- The unaccompanied children (UASC) procedure for night time recovery would involve the Police transporting the child to Thorpe Wood Station. The Police would contact the LAs Emergency Duty Team and a discussion would be held over whether the UC would remain in Police protection until the morning or whether an emergency foster carer (EFC) placement could be accommodated, with younger children being given priority for a placement; and
- A report on children that go missing had been presented to CPC, which outlined information around types of issues such as length of time children go missing and circumstances including those at risk of Child of Sexual Exploitation; and
- There were occasions of children missing in care that the LA had known of their location and it was rare that the LA would not be able to identify the child's temporary location.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

11. Looked After Children Health

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care introduced the report to Members which provided an overview of the Clinical Commissioning Group's activities to ensure robust monitoring and quality assurance systems were in place to meet the health needs of the looked after population in Peterborough. The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care highlighted that there were plans underway to improve the outcome of CiC initial health assessment performance, dental checks completed on time and the strengths and weaknesses questionnaire, which would be supported by the Designated Nurse for CIC.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the report.

12. Members Issues

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

No issues were raised.

6.30 - 8:25pm CHAIRMAN