

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING (FORMAL)
HELD AT 6:00PM, ON
WEDNESDAY, 15 MARCH 2023
BOURGES/MIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillor Jones, (Chairman (Chair), Councillors Ayres, Bisby, S Bond, Knight, Lane and Sainsbury.

Other Councillors in attendance: Cllr Bi

Officers Present: Ricky Cooper, Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director, Children's Services
Shalina Chandoo, Quality Assurance Lead
Anita Hewson, Head of Service (Acting) Fostering
Katie Liddle, Designated Nurse for Looked After Children
Dr Aslam, Consultant Paediatrician
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Glen Crossland, Foster Carer Community Representative

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen, Howard and Barkham.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 23 NOVEMBER 2022

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record, subject to the amendment of Cllr Lane's apologies being recorded.

4. Update From Foster Carers Committee

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to updates from the Foster Carer Committee.

The purpose of the report was to update the Committee about the activities of the Foster Carer Committee (FCC). Key points highlighted included:

- Meetings had been held regularly and positions on the committee had remained the same for most.
- Update on the work undertaken for help with the cost-of-living payments for foster carer families.
- Working with the Cambridgeshire Fostering Association on the retention of foster carers.

- Recruitment Ambassadors working on pathways for new carers entering the system.
- Access to Liquid Logic had been provided to foster carers.

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:

- Councillors complemented the foster carer on the report and the progress that had been made over the years.
- Members were advised that the Fostering Service had acknowledged how stressful investigations were for carers and would work as quickly as possible to resolve the issues. In some cases, there needed to be involvement from partner organisations, which could delay the process, however the Foster Carer (FC) payments would continue up to a 13-week period, with further bespoke support negotiated thereafter.
- The Recruitment Ambassadors and drop-in sessions to attract FCs, could be held at a community events, shopping centres and other events such as pride. In addition, Members were advised that there would be virtual information sessions held.
- The Fostering Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Focus Group would feed into Government. The focus currently was to modernise the way the Council interacted with YP to take on board how they wished to be addressed, such as the use of Pronouns. The EDI Focus Group had made good progress, however, there were issues with programming text used on the Liquid Logic software system, which was used to manage the day-to-day care of Children and Young People in Care.
- Children in care were taught from an early age to understand finances, and foster carers introduce budget management, mobile banking and savings, and the cost of living from a very early age. Some activities also entailed taking the children to shops to teach them how to compare food products. In addition, CiC were taught how to prepare meals to include the costs involved. All of these areas of budget management activities were discussed regularly at the FC meetings to ensure that consistency was being delivered across the board with all carers.
- Members commented that the best training providers for EDI Focus groups was the Kite Trust.
- Members were advised that the EDI needs of carers was proactive and, in most cases, learning was provided by the CiC in addition to community groups and the Cambridge Association. In addition, the carers would be encouraged to complete a diversity questionnaire.
- Independent skills had started from birth age by teaching them to self sooth in their cots. The teaching of independents had also been a key area of interests for Independent Review Officers (IROs) and was very much part of a CiCs care plan.
- Members felt that it would be helpful to receive regular feedback on the skills for independent living support, particularly within the briefing notes of the relevant Corporate Parenting Champion.
- Members were advised that the Children in Care Council was working on a money management and financial literacy training programme for children and young people in care. The Head of Fostering Services commented that the training offer should also be co-produced with foster cares to ensure all training was consistent.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents and agreed that regular updates should be provided on money management and financial literacy for CiC and YP in Care.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that:

1. The Children in Care Council would provide and update within their next report on the work that they were undertaking on money management and financial literacy for Children and Young People in Care.

5. CHILDREN IN CARE COUNCIL (CICC) PARTICIPATION REPORT

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.

Key points raised in the discussion included:

- An update provided on the care leaver that had recently been selected as a regional National Voice Ambassador for 2023/24. It was hoped that the young person would attend the next informal meeting to update Members.
- The CiCC continued to be consulted by lots of Council services with the recent being the development of an online support tool known as Squiddle for Virtual Schools, where CiC could chat to professionals that provided support to them.
- CiCC had been working with animators on the mental health campaign.
- The Every Word Matters project and the development of a code of conduct for Youth Club.
- Care Leaver Forum projects and a future update to be provided at an informal meeting.
- Every Word Matters and a podcast led by Care Leavers, who shared their experiences. This was a preferred media platform for CiC going forward.
- The Young Inspectors visit to contact centres and the recent visit to Cherry Lodge. A report on the outcome was being drafted.
- The Young Trainers were working with newly qualified Social Workers (SW).
- Young Recruiters were working on SW recruitment, Anglia Ruskin University candidates for the SW degree programme and interviews for the Executive Director of Children's Services.
- CiC and YP activities, joint activities with Cambridgeshire and the summer programme.

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 commented that the Care Leaver that had become the Voice Ambassador could consider sharing this success on media such as TV and Radio. Members were advised that the CL Voice Ambassador had featured in a newsletter, which

was distributed with other CiC and CLs.

- The Youth Club usually attracted 8 to 12 year old CiC, and some continued to attend until age 14. Members were also advised that there could be in the region of 10 CiC at a Youth Club session. In addition, older children tended to help and mentor the younger participants in events.
- Members were advised that there had been CLs that had shared their experience of leaving care further as they had felt so empowered. The CLs had not been updated about the impact they had made for others yet as they had only recently started to share this feedback, however, it was felt that this would be a naturally progression and reported back to them in the future. A good example would be to use the progress of the financial literacy training and the progress CLs could make in the future.
- Members commended the work of the CLs and suggested that Councillors might wish to consider a nomination for the CL Voice Ambassador for Peterborough to receive a Civic Award.
- Members were advised that there were circa 100 young people involved in the group, activities and events such as the CLs Forum, CiCC, Young Trainers and Ambassadors.

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:

1. Councillors would nominate the Care Leaver Voice Ambassador for Peterborough for a Civic Award through the Civic Office.

6. ANNUAL HEALTH REPORT

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

The purpose of the report was to update Members in relation to the health and dental services for children in care. In addition, Members were advised that the Designated Nurse and Doctor for Looked After Children had requested the reasons why assessments had been conducted late for CiC. The Designated Nurse for CiC had also advised of a date correction at 4.8 of the report, which should read 2023 and not 2022. Thanks, were paid to Councillor Knight for seeking the volunteer dental practice in Bushfield, which had assessed eight CiC to date.

The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children 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:

- The Designated Nurse would continue to work on improvements for the health questionnaire, particularly in relation to the wording and communications to build relationships.
- The out of CiC county placement health assessments for CiC, were always assessed after the Authority's own children and this was the stance nationally. The delays were mainly in relation to under resourced Health Teams. Solutions would need to be found for this issue, with the aim to resolve them.

- Members commented that being placed out of the county should not be a factor in delay of any child's health assessment.
- There had been a preference by management to make the health assessments virtual, as it had been felt this would speed up the process however, the questionnaire had demonstrated that CiC preferred face to face appointments.
- One person had stated that they felt alternative therapy had not benefited them, which had skewed the figures and made it seem that the result was 25%. Members suggested that the questionnaire should be taken to the Care Leavers Forum to obtain a wider view of the therapy service.

ACTION AGREED

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that:

1. The Designated Nurse for Looked After Children would include figures about how late the out of county health assessments were being conducted for YP and CiC, to include the reasons why they had been overdue.

7. PERFORMANCE REPORT

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 January 2023 providing a breakdown of the types of homes in which they were living in. The report also provided information about the age, gender and ethnicity of those children and young people.

The Head of 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:

- Family safeguarding caseloads had shown as amber; however, 18 had been an acceptable level. There was an option to call on agency if caseloads were high.
- The caseload figures for Independent Reviewing Officers were at a manageable level despite the high figure.
- There had been a rise in children in care intake figures and this had been due to the increased population of separated migrant children. The migrant population figure used to be calculated at 0.07% and had recently changed to 0.01%.
- Children would not be placed in schools that were not classed as good or outstanding by Ofsted, however, a child would not be moved from a school that had been below the target unless it was necessary, as this would be too disruptive for the CiC.
- Members commented that it would be helpful for the safeguarding team to provide a breakdown by ethnicity for CiC as it could help with recruitment purposes.
- There were some 16-year-olds living in semi-independent accommodation, where they would receive 20 hours of support. It was also advised that a panel would review the support provided to 16-year-olds and the need would be adjusted where appropriate.
- Post 16 accommodation, such as Brinkly House, would be staffed for 24 hours to support occupants.
- Members were assured that 16-year-old children were not placed in houses of multiple occupation.
- There were some neighbouring Authorities that purchased properties specifically

for CiC post 16 independent living accommodation and this option could be explored for Peterborough City Council.

- The current post 16 home arrangements were subject to regular reviews by the Council.
- Some children subject to a Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs), were not looked after and would not show in the performance report.
- There had been children that were subject to an SGO that were not looked after, however would be covered by the safeguarding team systems, whether they qualified under the corporate parenting or the fostering remit. It was advised that it would be beneficial to Members to provide an outline of the volume of children in the looked after system subject to an SGO and what their support offer had included.

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 Head of Corporate Parenting would provide Members with:

1. A briefing note to show the current breakdown of CiC population by ethnic group.
2. Information on the CiC population by ethnicity group within performance reports going forward.
3. A briefing note on the types of semi-independent living accommodation.
4. A plan on how the Council intended to meet the sufficiency need of CiC post 16 semi-independent living accommodation and whether it would be beneficial to continue to rely on the marketplace or invest in properties to supply these provisions in house.
5. A cost benefit analysis of the Council's current post 16 semi-independent living accommodation arrangements.
6. An outline going forward in performance reports to include the volume of children that were subject to an SGO that were not classified as looked after by the Authority.

8. 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).

- Members were advised that the children in care missing report, which was due to be presented as part of the March 2023 work programme, had been delayed because of a change in Corporate Parenting Heads of Service leadership.
- Members were advised that there had been some work to undertake in relation to specialist organisations, such as Parker, that could assist with the health assessments and integration support needed for separated migrant children.

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

CHAIRMAN
END 7:20PM