

**MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING (FORMAL)
HELD AT 6:00PM, ON
WEDNESDAY, 24 NOVEMBER
AT THE ENGINE SHED, SAND MARTIN HOUSE, BITTERN WAY, PETERBOROUGH**

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

Officers Present: Nicola Curley, Assistant Director for Early Help and Children's Services
Myra O'Farrell, Head of Corporate Parenting
Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering
Fiona Van Den Hout, Head of Service Fostering and Supervised Contact
Shalina Chandoo, Quality Assurance Lead
Catherine York, Designated Nurse, Children in Care
Dee Glover, Head of Virtual Schools
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Mandy Nicholson, Foster Carer Forum Representative
Jenny Winters, Foster Carer Forum Representative

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Yasin, Knight and Lane. Councillor M Hussain was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Yazin.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

15. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 JULY 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

16. APPOINTMENT OF CHAMPION MEMBERS

Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the revamp of Corporate Parenting Champion positions and the current vacant roles.

The purpose of the report was to ask Committee Members to agree the proposed Corporate Parenting Champion roles and to appoint to the vacant positions

The Assistant Director for Early Help and Children's Services introduced the report and asked members to consider and approve the revised corporate parenting champion roles and appoint to the vacant positions.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously), to approve the revised roles, and appointed to the champion roles and vacant positions as follows:

1. Support for Care Experienced Young People (Housing, Finance and Asylum Issues) - Councillor Sandra Bond
2. 0-25 Education, Employment and Training (including the Combined Authority and Partners) - Councillor Sainsbury
3. 0-25 Physical and Mental Health and Emotional Well Being – Councillor Robinson
4. Citizenship, Participation and Leisure activities – Councillor Howard
5. Placement Sufficiency and Effective Care Planning – Councillor Jones

17. COMMITTEE START TIME FOR 2022/2023

Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the preferred start time of meetings for municipal year 2022 to 2023.

The purpose of the report was to discuss and agree the start times for meetings from the beginning of the Municipal Year 2022-2023. The draft schedule of meetings would be agreed at Full Council on either 26 January or 2 March 2022. Members were advised, that the Children in Care Council (CiCC) had also been consulted in relation to the start times for informal corporate parenting meetings. Members were also advised that the CiCC preferred start time was 5:30 PM for informal meetings.

The Democratic services officer introduced the report and asked Members to consider and agree the start time of meetings for Municipal year 2022 to 2023.

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

- Members asked for consideration of the formal meeting starting at 6:00PM and the informal meeting 5:30PM in order to meet the CiCCs requests and that a balance was maintained for Councillors that were in full time employment.
- Members were advised that an alternative venue for the informal meetings was being explored.
- Members were also advised that the CiCC had requested that the informal meetings would be no longer than an hour long. Members commented that they would be mindful of the request and aim to keep meetings between one to one and a half hours long. Furthermore, technical items would be moved to the end of the agenda for informal meetings, which would allow the CiCC representatives to leave earlier if they so desired.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the report and agreed to the start time for formal and informal meetings.

AGREED ACTIONS

Corporate Parenting Committee **RESOLVED** to that the start time for formal and informal meetings would be as follows:

- Formal 6:00PM
- Informal 5.30PM

18. UPDATE FROM FOSTER CARERS COMMITTEE

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the work of the Foster Carers Committee.

The purpose of the report was to inform the Committee of activity undertaken by the Foster Carer Committee (FCC) and to update on fostering service developments and responses to the Foster Carer Survey.

Highlights from the update included:

- The resignation of Stephen Greene as Chairman of the Foster Carer Committee
- Exit interview for foster carers and a progress update
- Foster carer learning
- Consultation to additional foster carer payments which would finish on 7 December 2021.
- Skills levels for foster carers
- Communications event which received attendance from 40 foster carers.

The FCC Representatives and Head of Service Fostering and Supervised Contact Service presented the report and asked Members to note the update.

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

- Members commented that it was encouraging to see how well the foster carers support and peer to peer training had been received.
- Members were advised that the foster care training skill levels and accreditation operated from one to four and was in line with an appraisal system. Foster carers could choose how they wished to take part in the training and at what level they wanted to reach. There was an incentive for foster carers to move up the levels.
- Members were advised that the accreditation was submitted to an agency decision-maker for foster care services and a decision would be made on the evidence presented to them. The evidence would be presented in several ways such as feedback from the foster carer, supervising social worker, independent reviewing officer, child social worker and child in care.
- Members were advised that the foster service had to use an agency decision maker for accreditation as part of the regulations. The decision maker would be the Head of Service Fostering and Supervised Contact Service, and that these assessors understood the business.
- A level four carer would undertake a minimum of four years training and be experienced in foster care. There had been several learning and putting theory into practice opportunities that would count as evidence for accreditation. The training had fitted into day-to-day life, and therefore, this process allowed for more opportunity to provide physical evidence.
- Members commented about the Autism training and were pleased that these learning needs were covered. Members were advised that the Virtual School were involved in how the training was set for foster carers.
- Peer to peer support would take place in the form of a mentorship support programme. The mentorship programme was currently being reviewed to work across Peterborough and Cambridge and had included support from experienced foster carers. Some of the foster carer mentors also gave talks at training sessions. In addition, the foster carer mentor support programme also supported foster carers in times when allegations had been made against them.

- Unfortunately, some children in care had come to an unplanned end of their foster carer placement. The service was working to understand what had gone wrong by exploring the events leading up to the unplanned end to a foster placement in order to stop it happening.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report. It was also agreed that the Head of Service Fostering and Supervised Contact Service would provide Members with the figures of how many people engaged in the specialist learning need training, including Autism.

19. 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. Members also received a YouTube presentation of the recent children in care artwork exhibition.

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 commented that the artwork submitted was of an incredible and mature standard, given the ages of the artists.
- Members were advised that the original artwork would stay with the artist, and scanned images would be taken. In addition, some artwork would be used by PCC staff for goodbye cards. The Participation service was also exploring the possibility of displaying the artwork at the Vine and Sand Martin House for next year.
- Members commented that each time the update report was presented to the Committee, there were different activities attended such as youth voice conference and youth clubs and commended the CiCC and the Participation team on their commitment to exploring a range of activities for children in care to attend.
- Members were advised that the youth clubs and events were easy for the children and young people in care to access.
- Members were advised that there was a profile form to complete for all Members who wished to attend the Children in Care Council. Members were also advised that the Corporate Parenting Champions had been asked to complete a profile form, as the CiCC had wanted to learn more about their Champions.
- The young recruiter's initiative had started in May, and the Participation team would report on how many recruitment sessions had been attended by the young people. The young recruiter's involvement had influenced 25% of the job interview. The Participation team would go through the job descriptions and skill requirements with the young recruiters. Some of the young recruiters had reported that they had benefited tremendously from the process.
- Members commented about the artwork submitted by children and young people in care, particularly one piece that was reminiscent of how some communities lived.

In addition, there was another art piece that had featured colouring and listening to play lists. Members also commented that activities were being explored with the music hub for children and young people in care and that this should involve the new Champion for Citizenship, Participation and Leisure activities.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

1. The Corporate Parenting Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report.

20. ANNUAL REPORT OF PETERBOROUGH VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN IN CARE 2019-2020

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the Annual report of Peterborough Virtual School for Children in Care 2019-2020.

The purpose of the report was to inform Members on the activity of the Virtual School (VS) and the educational outcomes of Peterborough's Children in Care (CIC) for the academic year 2019/20. It reflected on achievements and identified areas in need of development to achieve the best outcomes for this vulnerable group. Data contained in the report was for Children in Care who had been in the care of Peterborough City Council for a year or more on 31 March 2020.

The Head of Virtual Schools introduced the report and asked Members to note the report 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 slight increase in the number of children given a fixed term exclusion from school since reopening to all pupils. Covid 19 had exacerbated the situation as children were used to working in small bubbles with a lot more support whilst schools were closed to all pupils. As classroom numbers increased, some children had found it difficult to cope with larger class sizes and having to share support. In addition, Members were advised that there had also been a small number of children that had displayed extreme behaviour and that the team were working with schools to improve children's skills and confidence and data would be provided in the next annual report.
- Members were advised that primary literacy for a child that needed one to one support, had remained in mainstream schooling and an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP), which included an intense support programme, was initiated.
- Members were advised that the outdoor learning school, which was funded by the Pupil Premium Fund (PPF) had included set up costs of buildings, staff training, employment of an outdoor learning lead, and ongoing improvement costs. Members were also advised that they could visit the outdoor learning facility by appointment.
- Members were advised that there had been administrative costs to budget for during the holiday period, which was also met by PPF.
- Members complemented the Head of Virtual Schools for the ongoing work to support the learning needs of children and young people in care.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report.

21. REPORT ON WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE FOR THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2020-2021.

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to an annual report of the work of the Corporate Parenting Committee for the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee.

Members were also advised of an error on the report, which should have stated 2020–2021 and not 2019–2020.

The purpose of the report was to advise the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee of activity carried out by the Corporate Parenting Committee in the municipal year 2020-2021. Members were also provided with an update on a recent positive focused Ofsted visit.

The Head of Corporate Parenting introduced the report and asked Members to agree that it was a true reflection of the work conducted by the Corporate Parenting Committee in 2020-2021

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 slight rise in children with three or more accommodation placements, however some were waiting for adoption or moving on to other accommodation post 18. There had also been some learning undertaken from placement breakdowns and the challenges which had presented.
- Members were advised that there had been recommendations from a recent Ofsted focused visit, in relation to children and young people out of the boundary placements. However, in some cases there had been more specialist placements required to accommodate some children and young people with additional behavioural or learning needs. Monitoring out of the boundary placements would occur through a meeting during which support services would be held accountable to ensure the appropriate level of support was being provided for every child and young person in care.
- Members were advised that the service had been preparing for the Ofsted focused visit, and there was a good outcome. Although the recent visit had not resulted in a score, a plan had been produced following the visit and that the team would continue to work on tasks in preparation for a future visit.
- Members were advised that the work on the post Ofsted plan would continue, and these would be scrutinised by internal mechanisms. This would also include performance information, reports from the quality assurance services, case alerts, audit reports as well as several checks and balances from commissioning colleagues. Members were also advised that feedback had been obtained from children and young people in care in relation to their care plans, social workers and services received. A complaints report was also fed into the checking process and measured against national and regional figures.
- The Passport to independence, monitor for success was reviewed in at a recent transitions meeting. Work on the pathway plans had been scrutinized to ensure actions were being carried out and issues were being addressed. Care Leavers coming up to 18 had suitable accommodation arrangements, however, there had been a challenge for CLs aged 19, 20 and 21. There was funding from the DFE to tackle the post 18 issues to prevent homelessness.

- Members were advised that as the passport to independence scheme was new, the success impact would start to show in nine months' time. In addition, Members were also advised that the cohort which experienced accommodation issues had not received the benefits of the passport to independence scheme.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to agree the report submission to Children and Education Scrutiny Committee, subject to the addition of information in relation to the independent care review.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee **RESOLVED**:

- I. That the annual report was an accurate reflection of the work of the Committee over the last 12 months;
- II. To submit the annual report to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee for noting as per the Corporate Parenting Committee's Terms of Reference;
- III. The report would include a further explanation on the outcome of the independent care review. The additional information would be circulated to the Corporate Parenting Committee Members once the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee report had been updated; and
- IV. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee report date would be corrected prior to submission.

22. MEMBERS ISSUES

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

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

23. 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 September 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 and young people in care of 361 was considered a lower number compared to the target figure of 370. Figures lower than 370 were considered the right figure for children and young people to be in care statistically. A lower number could raise concerns that children and

young people that needed care were not receiving the appropriate support they needed. The numbers of children and young people in care for Peterborough had ranged between 366 and 380, which was considered stable.

- Members were advised that there were several children and young people placed in schools outside of Peterborough, and some of the education establishments were not all graded as good. This had distorted the performance figures for education.
- Members were advised that reason the figures for health standards were low, had been because there were different approaches with data collection for children and young people in care and those coming into care. It was also advised that there had been some challenges with staffing and timing issues with health assessments conducted. Furthermore, the figures showed that there had been slippage with the 20 day health check requirement for children and young people in care and in some cases this had happened on day 22, however, their needs had been met.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

Corporate Parenting Committee **AGREED** to note the report and that:

- I. The Head of Corporate Parenting would explore the inclusion of a broader and pictorial target indicator to be included within the performance reports to demonstrate that the number of children and young people in care was reflected in a more meaningful way; and
- II. The Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering would explore whether a performance report could include numbers of children and young people in care that were waiting for adoption but had not been placed.

24. PERFORMANCE REPORT (HEALTH)

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report on the performance of the health needs of children and young people in care.

The purpose of the report was to update Members 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 also advised about the data for health assessments and that this had been separated out for the children placed in Peterborough and then out of Peterborough. The data had also explained the reasons why a health assessment had been conducted later than the 20-day requirement.

The Designated Nurse, Children in Care for 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 timescale for health assessments could not be changed as this was a Government requirement. There were many reasons why the 20-day requirement had elapsed, and these had ranged from referral date to the complexity in which a child or young person had arrived in care. There had also

been some staff shortages experienced, which had contributed to the lateness of health assessments.

- Members were advised that support for mental health referrals had been assessed, on a case by case basis and there was no priority service. There had been mental health support through United and some foster carers that were trained. Members were also advised that the United service could direct the children and young people in care to access a range of mental health services in a more robust way.
- Members were advised that there were improvement processes in place for the return of SDQs and this could involve training for foster carers across Cambridge and Peterborough to explain the importance. The returns had improved since appointments were being held face to face and the service area was able to ask foster carers to complete them at the time of the assessment.
- Children and young people with complex needs had different health questionnaires and would have their needs assessed through their EHCPs.
- Members were advised that questionnaires for children and young people in care that were placed out of area were recorded separately. It was the responsibility for PCC to obtain the SDQ returns.
- As the SDQs returns and dental appointments were an issue, particularly for children and young people in care outside the area, the Committee could write to the Department for Health to express their concerns.
- The Foster Carer Committee Representative commented that the SDQ health assessment return issues could be raised as part of the foster carer mentoring service.
- The Foster Carer Committee Representatives raised concerns over the insufficient dental service for children and young people in care and that some were waiting over a year for treatment. Members were advised that there was a mechanism in place to highlight severe dental support for children and young people in care in order to escalate those cases.
- Members were advised that the concerns in relation to health services, which included dental services for children and young people in care were also being highlighted in regional meetings.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the contents and agreed recommendations and actions in relation to SDQ returns and dental services for children and young people in care.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Committee **RESOLVED** to note the report and raised the following recommendations and action points:

RECOMMENDATION

A proposal was received by Councillor Jones, which was seconded by Councillor Bisby, and the proposal was **AGREED** (Unanimously) as follows:

The Committee recommended that a letter would to be written on their behalf to the National Health Service (NHS) England to highlight the concerns raised at the Corporate Parenting Committee meeting about:

- I. The shortfall in the current NHS dental provision for children and young people in care, and ask how it was planned to resolve this nationally and support the local regional efforts to mitigate the issue; and
- II. The national management and prioritisation of initial health assessments and Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaires (SDQs) for children placed outside of

their home Local Authority and ask them to explain how this longstanding issue would be addressed.

The following actions agreed included:

- I. The Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering would highlight issues in relation to the return of SDQs at the foster carer mentoring meeting, with the view to raising awareness through the mentoring programme.
- II. The Assistant Director for Early Help and Children's Services would highlight the dental appointment concerns raised with the Department for Health.

25. WORK PROGRAMME 2021 - 2022

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to the work programme for 2021/22.

The purpose of the report was to enable the Committee to discuss its objectives and priorities for 2021/22 and highlight any further areas for consideration.

The Chairman introduced the report and asked Members to highlight any areas of work they wished to be included in the work programme.

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

- Members commented that it would be beneficial to the work of the Committee to provide detail about the sustainability of placements of children and young people in care with a report to focus on increased tariffs, placements outside of Peterborough, caseloads for social workers and health services and what impact that had on foster carers.

The Corporate Parenting Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** (Unanimously) to note the report and agreed an action in relation to the theme of the next foster carer report.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee **RESOLVED** to note the work programme and agreed that:

The Foster Carer report in March 2022, would be themed to focus on health and other issues such as increased tariffs, placements outside of Peterborough, caseloads for social workers and the impact these had on foster carers.

CHAIRMAN
End meeting 8:06pm