

**DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING (FORMAL)
HELD AT 6:00PM, ON
WEDNESDAY, 16 MARCH 2022
AT THE ENGINE SHED, SAND MARTIN HOUSE, BITTERN WAY, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors, Howard (Chairman), Councillors S Bond, Brown, Robinson, Sainsbury and Moyo

Committee Members Present Virtually via Microsoft Teams: Councillors Lane and Jones.

Officers Present: Ricky Cooper, Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering
Dr Aslam, Doctor for Looked After Children
Shalina Chandoo, Quality Assurance Lead for Participation and Independent Visiting
Catherine York, Designated Nurse, Children in Care
Anita Hewson, Fostering Service Manager
Micheala Berry, Service Manager Corporate Parenting
Karen S Dunleavy, Democratic Services Officer

Also Present: Glen Crossland, Foster Carer Committee Representative

The meeting was adjourned for 10 minutes to allow time for Councillors to join the meeting, in order to be quorate.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ayres and Bisby. Councillors Brown and Moyo were in attendance as substitute.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

3. MINUTES OF THE COPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 24 NOVEMBER 2021

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2021 were agreed as a true and accurate record, subject to the following amendment:

- The word YOUnited was to replace United throughout the minutes.

4. UPDATE FROM FOSTER CARERS

The Committee received a report in relation to an update on the work of the Foster Carer Committee.

The purpose of the report was to inform the Committee of activity undertaken by the Foster Carer Committee and to update on fostering service developments and in response to the Foster Carer Survey.

The Foster Carer Committee and Fostering Service Manager introduced the report and asked Members to raise any queries they have with officers and note the content of the report.

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

- Members were advised that the Covid 19 lateral flow tests were becoming an issue to acquire from the Government for foster carers. It appeared that people could only order the Covid 19 tests if they were experiencing symptoms.
- Members commented that people were setting up accounts and able to order tests on a frequent basis.
- Members were advised that the Fostering Service was working with Public Health to resolve the lack of flow tests for foster carers.
- The foster carer annual review had been conducted in the home recently for some foster carers and it was believed that this was a trial as predominantly household checks would usually be conducted online. Members were advised that the physical household foster carer reviews would be conducted alongside a supervised social worker visit. It was understood that the visits had been received positively since they were introduced a year ago.
- The Junior Savings Trust Fund was a continuous piece of work and Members would be kept up to date on the progress.
- The Stepping Up booklet would be reviewed by officers who would present their proposals to the Children in Care Council once completed. The updates would be an ongoing process.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report.

5. UPDATE FROM THE YOUTH VOICE COORDINATOR FOR 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 provide Members with an update from the Children in Care Council and Participation Services. Members were also provided with an update in relation to the review of the Children in Care Promise.

The Quality Assurance Lead introduced the report and requested that Members note the contents and raise any concerns they had with officers.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that the Quality Assurance Lead would share the children and young people in care contact centre feedback report with Members at the next informal Corporate Parenting Committee meeting.

6. HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT

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

The purpose of the report was to update Members on both physical and mental health services for Children in Care. 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 in Care including those with a disability.

Members were also advised that the progress had been made in relation to the Committee's recommendations raised in November 2021 in relation to the health assessments for children and young people in care who were placed outside of the area and the backlog in dental checks. Members were advised that the Designated Nurse Children in Care had attended a meeting with National Health Service England (NHSE) to discuss the way forward for health assessments. In addition, the Designated Nurse Children in Care had joined a task and finish group in relation data, to work on the issues around dental assessments.

Work was also underway with neighbouring Authorities, Cambridgeshire and Lincolnshire to reduce the pressure being experienced in relation to Individual Health Assessments (IHA) for children and young people in care placed out of the area.

The Corporate Parenting Champion for Health also advised Members that a meeting had been held with the Designated Nurse Children in Care and praised the work being undertaken to reduce the pressure for IHAs. The Champion for Health would work with the Authority to improve the Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) system.

The Designated Nurse, Children in Care introduced the report and requested that Members raise and queries they had with officers and 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 the SDQ improvements would include work to improve the returns by liaising with the Fostering Team, Supervising Social Workers and training for Foster Carers. The Health Team had undertaken all they could to encourage the SDQ returns.
- Members were advised that the Designated Nurse Children in Care would leave the position in June 2022 and the Committee thanked her for her hard work over the years.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee agreed to note the report.

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

The Corporate Parenting Committee received a report in relation to Performance Report (Placements of Children in Care and Scorecard).

The purpose of the report was to update the Corporate Parenting Committee in respect of the numbers of children and young people being looked after by the Council as of 31 December 2021. The report provided 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 informed about the reduction in performance figures for statutory visits and placement stability. Work was underway to rectify the issues.

The Service Manager Corporate Parenting introduced the report and requested Members to raise any queries they had with officers and note the contents.

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

- It was acknowledged by officers that the 231 out of area placements reported at Children and Education Scrutiny Committee had not matched the performance report for Corporate Parenting Committee and this would be clarified for future meetings.
- The number of children in care had reduced in the past year and had been due to the effective family safeguarding model for Peterborough. In addition, the children that entered care were older children with significant vulnerable needs and sibling groups, which had made placements a challenge. In addition, where children were adopted, the data could look inaccurate as the system needed to catch up with the change in circumstance.
- There had been a rise in child protection cases, which had also impacted the data.
- The family safeguarding model had recently been evaluated and as part of the corporate leadership team, work was underway to publish the outcome. In addition, internal validation processes would be undertaken by Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) to ensure that the right checks and balances were in place for children and young people in care or looked after.
- Peterborough suffered challenges in terms of foster carer recruitment, and this had been a national issue. There were several planned events to encourage recruitment, including foster carer ambassadors that had championed the campaign. Members were encouraged to guide people to the foster carer recruitment advertisements.
- There were 71 enquiries to become foster carers in Peterborough; 15 households had been accepted recently and six households were currently being assessed. In addition, the children that were 10 years plus and sibling groups were usually a challenge to place, however there had been 15 out of 27 recently that had been placed in foster carer and this was thought to be encouraging. The advertisement campaign had comprised the use of TV, BBC radio Cambridgeshire and social media platforms such as TikTok and Facebook.
- Members complimented the Fostering Team on their work for Foster Carer recruitment, and encouragement into the single parent and LGTBQ plus communities.
- The children and young people in care that had remained in placement for several years, had been because of the stable placements they were in.

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

AGREED ACTIONS

The Corporate Parenting Committee noted the report and agreed that:

1. The Service Manager Corporate Parenting would investigate the anomaly with the data in relation to the performance report and ensure that the figures reported in the Corporate Parenting Scorecard going forward would be accurate or provide an explanation within the report for the difference in the figures where appropriate.
2. The Assistant Director, Regional Adoption and Fostering would provide Members with a briefing note on the current audits and checks that ensured a robust process was in place and working effectively to safeguard all children and young people.

8. 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.

CHAIRMAN
End meeting – 7:21PM

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