



CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD MINUTES

2ND NOVEMBER 2020

Present:

Councillor Cracknell (in the Chair)
Councillor, Beasant, Cairns, Goodwin, Wheatley and Swinburn

Officers in attendance:

- Joanne Hewson (Deputy Chief Executive/DCS)
- Megan Dennison (Assistant Director for Children & Family Services)
- Lisa Arthey (Interim Assistant Director of Early Help, Assessment and Safeguarding Services)
- Karen Linton (Assistant Director Skills)
- Jill Alderson (Safeguarding Unit Manager)
- Keith Nicholson (Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After)
- Claire White (Business and Improvement Programme Manager)
- Kerrie Scraton (Service Manager)
- Pippa Curtin (Voice and Influence Practitioner)
- Beverley O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)

Also in attendance:

- Councillor Ian Lindley (Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Young People)
- Debbie Cook (YMCA)
- Murray MacDonald (Lincolnshire Housing Partnership)
- Angela Rawling (Designated Nurse Children Looked After)
- Representatives from Our Voice, Listen Up Group

CPB.6 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received for this meeting.

CPB.7 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on 15th June 2020 were agreed as an accurate record.

CPB.8 ACTION TRACKING

The board received a report that updated them on the Action tracking in North East Lincolnshire.

RESOLVED – That all completed actions be removed from the Action tracker report.

CPB.9 PROGRESS AND PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHT REPORT

The board received the Progress and Performance Highlight Report from Claire White. Ms White informed the Board that the Care Leavers performance report for Young People aged 17 & 18 was incorrect. She explained that when the report was being analysed, Ms White queried the drop in number for the last couple of months. Ms White stated that it was due to a reporting window for care leavers and that the data had not been included by the service. However, this was done immediately and has now been updated on the system. She stated that it would be included in this report at the next meeting.

The Chair congratulated the team on how the report had been presented she stated that it helped understand things a lot easier and was well put together.

Ms Hewson stated that over the forthcoming months the Board will see a reduction in the number of children looked after, as a lot of work was currently going on and a lot of focus on this particular group of children was taking place. She advised the Board that they would bring back more information to the next meeting to give the board assurance on the permanency achieved for these children which reflects the reducing numbers of children in care.

The Chair asked about the data for dentistry and children's oral health due to the closure of dentists during lockdown. This had been raised previously as an issue in terms of children coming into care with poor oral health and she wondered how that would be tackled. Ms Rawling stated that this has been highlighted and were waiting on feedback from NHS England. She reassured members that whilst data and performance around looked after children (LAC) being registered to have annual dental checks had fallen, she could confirm that they were still taking place and that LAC were able to get emergency dental care if needed.

Councillor Goodwin asked that if the numbers of children in care were dropping quickly was it safe for the children to leave. Ms Rawling reassured members that there was a very detailed assessment for young people leaving care. It was very measured and very child led. Ms

Hewson added that Ofsted would also be providing external scrutiny on the same matters' members had raised.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CPB.10 INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICER ANNUAL REPORT

Ms Alderson presented the annual report for the Independent Reviewing Officers.

Councillor Wheatley stated that she was pleased with the report and how it had been received. However, she mentioned giving the reviewing officer feedback from the young people and how beneficial that would be. She thought it was a very good move to see the voice of the child and giving officers open and honest feedback that they need to improve.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CPB.11 VIRTUAL HEAD ANNUAL REPORT

The board received the Virtual Head Annual Report from the Headteacher of virtual school for Children Looked After.

The chair thought that the objective was clearly laid out so hoped they came across in 2021. Councillor Wheatley asked about the exams and wondered if LAC do English Baccalaureate (EBacc) exams as this would help rather than just doing GCSE's. She also wondered when Officers informed about trying to get young people back into secondary school, why it was a challenge. Mr Nicholson stated that the EBacc qualification was ideal for some children looked after and based on calculated grades, the youngsters that achieved that did help with overall performance.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CPB.12 INSPECTION REPORTS OF LOCAL AUTHORITY RESIDENTIAL HOMES

The board received the inspection reports of the Local Authority Residential Homes.

Ms Dennison stood in for Mr Hale. She informed the Board that these had been done differently due to the pandemic but were still just as effective. The inspections had been done on two residential homes and a couple of minor recommendations were received. There had been a few issues in terms of Covid, but certain measures had been implemented and were now back to working as normal. A new home was now up and running and the children had a big input in decorating their rooms. The pods had now received permission to go ahead with and were on order to be implemented.

Councillor Hudson asked about the new residential home and how the community around this location were negative about it. He wondered whether any feedback had been received from neighbours on how it was going. Ms Dennison explained that everything was going well. The children have settled in well within the community with no issues at all.

RESOLVED – That the updated be noted.

CPB.13 SKILLS AND EMPLOYABILITY

The board received a presentation on skills and employability for Looked after Children.

Mr Ryder explained the work he was doing with Ms Linton and Looked after Children. They had implemented a 16-18-year-old and a 18-24-year-old Creating Positive Opportunity (CPO) traineeship contracts. In agreement with NEETs practitioners it has been advised that this provision was needed. Eight care leavers were currently engaging. He confirmed that they have developed a guaranteed progression pathway on to apprenticeships and Kickstart.

Ms Arthey stated that we currently had 119 care leavers and there was currently only 8 on the programme. She wondered whether there was a plan to increase care leavers attending. Mr Ryder confirmed that they certainly had the capacity to expand and would welcome more learners. Ms Arthey stated that would go back and look at a cohort who would like to attend in February.

Councillor Goodwin said that Mr Ryder said they had 100% on functional skills, how long does the learner attend before they get to functional skills level 2. Mr Ryder explained that initially it was within 6 months, but under the new Covid 19 guidelines it can be up to 12 months. The average time for last year learners was from 7.5 months to 9 months. Councillor Goodwin asked for their drop out rate. Mr Ryder explained that last year 14 people were put through the programme and 2 people dropped out. The new contracts for this academic year were started in September, in which 16 people signed up and 100% retention has been achieved. Councillor Goodwin wondered how they were coping to find placements for learners. Mr Ryder stated that they were struggling in certain sectors, but some settings were still making decisions on whether they were happy to accept learners. However, they were putting additional learning in place to help achieve the learning needed to complete the course.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CPB. 14 FEEDBACK FROM CARE LEAVERS WEEK

The board received feedback on care leavers week.

Ms Curtin explained that care leavers week had now finished for another year, but they would be utilising the stories they had gathered for the

week to be used in a number of different ways. They would be creating a resource that can be used by our teams when working with young people to help inspire and encourage them to follow their dreams and take the opportunities available to them to get where they want to be. They were having the stories designed so they can be displayed on 'the wall' in the civic building and other spaces young people go so they can see lots of positive stories.

Ms Curtin added that they were working with the YMCA to look at utilising community venues for our young people in care and care leavers. Sadly, the second lockdown announcement meant that plans changed and the Children in care and new futures team received delivered lunches rather than them coming into the space together. Plans were being put in place for this and other similar activities in the future but were based around the current restrictions. Ms Curtin also explained that they were going to be training a team of young people in care and care leavers to be involved in interviews for the future so they can work with teams to support the recruitment and selection process. One of the young people had worked really hard recently with interviewing Independent reviewing officers as well as children's social care service and team managers.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

CPB.15 DIGITAL POVERTY

The board received a verbal update from Our Voice, Listen Up Group regarding their thoughts on digital poverty.

The young people attending told Members about how important it was for them to have good access to technology and the internet. They explained about this in relation to their family time, access to virtual group work for 'Our Voice Listen Up', attending their review meetings, connecting with others and for schoolwork. Ms Curtin explained that Care leavers had told them that they often struggle to afford internet access when they have other bills to prioritise and a lack of access to this can restrict their options when applying for work and educational opportunities. She explained that the digital poverty campaign was asking for care leavers to have access to technology and internet for at least the first year of living independently. They would also like to look at ways all children and young people can have access to the right technology and internet to be able to take part in the things they want to such as reviews, family time and groups.

Members welcomed the young people's thoughts and wished them well with their campaign. Members agreed that a more detailed report on Digital Poverty would be welcome

RESOLVED –

1. That the update be noted.

2. That a more detailed report on Digital Poverty be received at a future Corporate Parenting Board meeting.

CPB.16 AOB

Ms Hewson explained to Members that the expected Ofsted Inspection had been deferred due to the current lockdown, but services would continue to improve and make our services better for the young people.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.36 p.m.