



CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD MINUTES

17th January 2022 at 3.30pm

Present:

Councillor Cracknell (in the Chair)
Councillor Beasant, Brasted, Hudson and Patrick

Officers in attendance:

- Rob Walsh (Chief Executive)
- Sarah Blanchard (Integrated Front Door Service Manager)
- Pippa Curtin (Voice and Influence Co-ordinator)
- Keith Nicholson (Headteacher of the Virtual School for Children Looked After)
- Tina Nurse (Foster Carer)
- Beverly O'Brien (Scrutiny and Committee Advisor)
- Petra Pankova (Strategic Lead Safeguarding and Partnerships)
- Angela Rawlings (Designated Nurse Children Looked After/Deputy Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children)
- Jo Spender (Head of Corporate Parenting)
- Alison Smith (Head of Transformation)
- Jennifer Steel (Head of Inclusion)
- Glynis Tinsley (Fostering Service Manager)
- Claire White (Head of Practice Performance and Quality)

CPB.15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Councillor K. Swinburn, Councillor Lindley, Joanne Hewson and Yvonne Shearwood for this meeting.

CPB.16 MINUTES

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on 15th November 2021 was agreed as an accurate record.

CPB.17 ACTION TRACKING

The board received a report that updated them on the action tracking for the Corporate Parenting Board in North East Lincolnshire.

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

CPB.18 UPDATE ON THE CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS/OFSTED IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The board received a verbal update on current arrangements/Ofsted Improvement Plan.

Mr Walsh explained that work was on going and colleagues are working extensively and very hard on the improvement plan. The Commissioner has now been appointed and he was working alongside Officers in terms of helping the Council shape our response. The improvement plan would support the overall Children Services transformation plan and inform the action plan in response to the Ofsted inspection. The plan was being worked on in conjunction with the Commissioner to ensure that it fitted the bill before it went back to Ofsted and then back to the political machinery of the Council.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

CPB.18 CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING REPORT

The board received the Contextual Safeguarding Report.

The Chair stated that they were talking about quite significant numbers of young people within the report. She wondered whether the young people dip in and out and whether this would lead to re-referrals. Ms Blanchard stated that they would only close a case were it was safe to do so, so re-referrals in respect of children at risk of exploitation were minimal. The Chair noted that they've explained how the child received support, but she wondered what support the family get. Ms Blanchard explained that they were very child centred, but they also worked with the family. They work alongside a multi-agency support system which also provided parenting support for any parents involved. The Chair wondered whether the Council were getting the right amount of involvement from partners or was there a need to do some work in other areas. Ms Blanchard stated that there was a lot of good partnership within the organisation, but there were opportunities for more partnership working in respect of contextual safeguarding at a more senior level. Ms Blanchard noted that additional resources would strengthen the service, but acknowledged that this is the case for many services across the children's partnership. She added that she didn't think there was a need to review partners involved as she believed that they already worked with all the key partners and players needed.

Councillor Beasant thought it was an interesting report. He wondered about the trend of the figures submitted. They were quite high. He wondered whether they were beginning to plateau or were they still on the rise. He also wanted reassurance that they weren't missing any young people. Ms Blanchard stated that if there were any sexual exploitation concerns these cases were discussed on a weekly basis. Even the lowest level of concern was looked at every week. She added that North East Lincolnshire was a seaside town and had high levels of deprivation and poverty, which increases the risk of exploitation of young people., However, NELC CSC is aware of these factors and will not overlook any young person needing their help.

Ms Rawling asked a question about GRAFT. She knew GRAFT had had some positive results and outcomes, but her understanding was that the funding for that project was coming to an end. She wondered whether this was correct and if so, what the plan was going forward. Ms Blanchard stated that budget was currently being profiled but the Assistant Director and Director of Children Services were very much aware of the need for this type of intervention and support to continue.

Mr Walsh stated that it can never exclusively be about how the local authority funds something. The challenge was to bring together all the different partnerships to bring a system truly together to focus on the things that can make a difference, which may require all organisations in that system to think how it has their own specific priorities to the same agenda as the Council.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CPB.19 CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING AND REVIEWING SERVICE – INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS ANNUAL REPORT

The board received the Children's Safeguarding and Reviewing Service – Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO's) Annual Report.

The Chair stated that there was a shared understanding of the importance of the IRO service. The Chair asked for clarity on the plans for recruitment to ensure the service is staffed to meet the needs of our children. Ms Pankova explained that whilst there was a high percentage of permanent staff within the service, there were still some vacancies which were filled with agency staff to maintain a consistent standard of service. A permanent staffing structure has now been agreed and staffing levels should allow the delivery of a good service to children.

Councillor Brasted wondered whether we were offering the right price in terms of wages. She wondered whether there was something the Council could do to help encourage permanent staff. Ms White explained that if the Assistant Director Safeguarding and Early Help and Director of Children's Services were in attendance, they would be able to inform the Board of the current plans in terms of recruitment and retention. She

advised that there was currently a huge amount of work going on in this area and she requested that the Board agreed to receive a report at the next meeting to appraise on the entirety of work underway in respect of recruitment and retention of social workers. Board Members were happy for this to happen.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the report be noted.
- 2) That a report on recruitment and retention of staff within Children's Services be brought to a future meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

CPB.20 FOSTER CARER RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The board received the Foster Carer recruitment process.

Ms Nurse asked about the Everbright Campaign. She wondered how people knew about it. Ms Tinsley explained that they use various social media channels and the North East Lincolnshire Council website. Ms Nurse said it was helpful to know as she can direct others who were interested in fostering to gain more information from these different channels.

Councillor Hudson asked about the 53 enquiries they had, where only nine had resulted in being assessed. He wondered whether the 46 were not acceptable. Ms Tinsley stated that there was a high percentage that they were not able to take forward. They either change their minds at the enquiry stage or individuals felt that they were not ready to go through the process. Sometimes applicants had been known to children's services through issues with their own children or they'd had some difficulties with alcohol or their mental health. However, with the ones that have said they would be ready in the future, they tend to keep them on the system and make contact with them to see whether it was something they were now ready to go through with.

RESOLVED – That the report be noted.

CPB.21 VOICE AND INFLUENCE SURVEY RESULTS

The board received a report of the voice and influence results. Ms Curtin explained how they used to buy in to a national system called 'Viewpoint' but unfortunately there was a low response rate. Other responses were received from children and young people before or after their review meetings via a paper format. Ms Curtin explained they now use an internal survey tool which had received 107 responses over the last 6 months which is a substantial increase on previous response rates. The feedback they've received about the system has been that it was now so much simpler to use and it was much more effective time wise.

Ms Nurse mentioned about promoting the survey with young people and wondered how this was being done. Ms Curtin stated that their main aim this year was to look at a range of different ways to promote the survey and make sure that people know about it.

RESOLVED – That the survey results be noted.

CPB.22 ‘OUR VOICE, LISTEN UP’

The board received Feedback from Young People on engagement events Board members had attended throughout the year. Ms Curtin gave the young people’s apologies as they were unable to attend. She explained that ‘Our Voice, Listen Up’ have recently been discussing what they’ve been doing and what difference it had made. One point brought up was how the Corporate Parenting Board and young people have come together in several social settings. The young people have stated how it was nice to meet in a less formal setting. Going forward, they were looking at relationships and how part of the corporate parenting pledge was to have consistent positive relationships.

Ms Curtin added that the young people would like to discuss the format of the room when they come to talk to the Board. They would like it to be much less formal so that it doesn’t feel so intimidating for them. Mr Walsh offered to meet with Ms Curtin to explore opportunities for Leadership Team to meet with our young people.

RESOLVED – That the update be noted.

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 5.26 p.m.