

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

29TH MARCH 2007

MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Corporate Parenting Board on activities relating to the Every Child Matters outcome, 'Make a Positive Contribution'.

BACKGROUND

2. Members will be aware that within the Every Child Matters outcome of Make a Positive Contribution, there are five aims. This report will outline developments within each of the five aims over the past year. The aims are that children and young people will:
 - Engage in decision-making and support community and environment
 - Engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school
 - Develop positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate
 - Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges
 - Develop enterprising behaviour

Engage in decision-making and support community and environment

3. Children and young people looked after are directly involved in their individual assessment, care planning and review processes. "It's time for your review" is a form, developed with young people, that asks for their views on where they live, families and friends, education, leisure time, health and what they like and dislike generally. They are supported by foster carers, social workers and reviewing officers to participate in their review meetings and have access to an independent advocate if they wish to have one. The level of participation by children and young people in their reviews was 90% during 2005-2006. The aim for the current year is to increase this to 100%.
4. Children and young people are involved in the selection of staff, training for staff and carers and discussions on service developments. During the current year, the Pathways Team had a video-box consultation exercise during Care Leavers week in October 2006. At a different level, children and young people were involved in a national consultation exercise on the Care Matters green paper, reported to the last meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.
5. Children and young people looked after also access opportunities available to all young people. This includes involvement in the Local Democracy Week Youth Conference, the Youth Council and taking part in accredited training in relation to the administration of the Youth Opportunity Fund. They have also contributed to the work of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership.

Engage in law-abiding and positive behaviour in and out of school

6. The ratio of children looked after, aged over 10, with regard to the number of children given a final warning, reprimand or convicted during 2005-2006 continued to be low at 0.9 of the total. The report of the Youth Offending Service to this meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board will address this aim in more detail.

Develop positive relationships and choose not to bully or discriminate

7. As part of the specialist youth provision at the Manor Youth Centre, bullying issues have been addressed as part of the ongoing programme.

Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges

8. Last year we reported on three issues. Firstly, that a specialist session at the Manor Youth Centre had been started. Secondly, staff and carer support on a one-to one basis was in place and thirdly, there was evidence that specialist services (e.g. individual counselling) were increasingly being accessed by children looked after. These three actions continue to operate.
9. The Corporate Parenting Board may wish to receive a report on the work undertaken at the specialist youth service provision at a future meeting.

Develop enterprising behaviour

10. Specialist Personal Advisers within the Connexions Service continue to operate as reported to the last meeting of the CPB. The Employability Scheme for care leavers was also reported to the last meeting. This work has contributed to the significant reduction in the local NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) population in Middlesbrough.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND WARD IMPLICATIONS

11. All the issues outlined in this report are contained within established budget provision. Clearly, the service discussed covers the whole of Middlesbrough

RECOMMENDATIONS

12. It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Board advises the Executive to note the work undertaken relating to enabling children looked after to 'Make a Positive Contribution'.

REASONS

13. To ensure that the Members are aware of actions being taken within the overall Every Child Matters outcome of Make a Positive Contribution.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

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