

## CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board was held on 22 January 2009.

**PRESENT:** Councillor McIntyre (Chair), Councillors Brunton, Carr, Carter, J Hobson, and Kerr.

**OFFICERS:** J Dalby, T Fewster, S Harker, C Kendrick, S Little, C Murphy and J Young.

**PRESENT AS AN OBSERVER:** Mr B Simpson.

### **\*\*APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dryden, P Rogers and B Thompson.

### **\*\*DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No Declarations of Interest were made at this point of the meeting.

### **\*\* MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 4 December 2008 were taken as read and approved as a correct record.

## **GLEANEAGLES RESOURCE CENTRE**

The Children with Disabilities Team Manager presented a report to inform the Corporate Parenting Board of the Ofsted Annual Report and the recognition of Gleneagles Resource Centre as being an 'outstanding' provider of residential care.

Gleneagles Resource Centre for Children with Disabilities was registered with Ofsted and provided short breaks for families who had children with moderate to severe disabilities, in order to relieve family stress. The Centre was based in the Saltersgill area of Middlesbrough and included a light and sound room, specialist bathing facilities, computers and games, eight themed bedrooms and an extensive garden with play equipment. Gleneagles worked closely with schools, nurses and other professionals, to achieve high standards of care and support for children.

A copy of the letter from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector confirming the 'outstanding' judgement was attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report. This was the second consecutive year that Gleneagles had received this prestigious recognition and was the result of the hard work of the staff and their commitment to close partnership working with children, families and other agencies. Details of the support offered to local families by Gleneagles and other achievements were given in the submitted report. The Joint Area Review Report published in December 2008 had also commented favourably on the support provided by Gleneagles.

In discussion, Members mentioned carrying out rota visits to Gleneagles and commented on how much the service was valued by families. In response to a question, Members were given an explanation of the thinking behind the installation of a 'rising bath' and information about plans to develop further bathing options to promote independence. Members offered their congratulations to the staff on achieving the 'outstanding' judgement of their service.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Executive be advised to note the information in relation to Gleneagles Resource Centre.

## **CONNEXIONS SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER**

The Personal Adviser Team Leader from Connexions presented a report to update the Board on the support provided by the Connexions Service to Children Looked After (CLA) by the Local Authority.

The partnership agreement between Connexions and the Children Looked After Services of Middlesbrough Council was reviewed and re-issued annually in September. The agreement enabled dedicated and specialist Connexions support to be delivered to CLA. There were four Personal Advisers who worked in partnership with the Education Children Looked After and Children Leaving Care Services. Two worked with pre-16 young people and two worked with post-16. The Personal Advisers received joint supervision, training and development and joint management. It was noted that CLA might not receive the same support from families and friends as other young people. The Personal Advisers were there to offer them additional support, help and encouragement to enable a successful transition. In line with legislation, negotiations were underway for Connexions support to be extended to all care leavers up to the age of 24.

The report detailed the different activities that Personal Advisers were involved in to help young people move into education, training or employment. Statistics compiled by Connexions in December 2008 had shown that 82% of care leavers were in education, employment or training, which was a 20% improvement on previous figures. Details of the intended Post-16 destinations for Year 11 Looked After Young People in Middlesbrough for 2009 were included in the submitted report.

More 19 and 20 year olds were now accessing college and E2E (Entry to Employment) than ever before. It was noted that young people in care sometimes developed later in life and were more willing to commit at a later age. A particular area of success was that two young people now attended University.

The Pathways Team, with the support of Connexions, had made an application to the Big Lottery for funding to pay the young people on the 'Make A Difference Programme' an appropriate wage. This nationally recognised programme offered care leavers the opportunity to have work placements within Middlesbrough Council departments.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Executive be advised to note the information in relation to Connexions support for Children Looked After.

## **MIDDLESBROUGH COUNCIL LEAVING CARE SERVICE**

The Team Manager presented the Annual Report of Middlesbrough Council's Leaving Care Service 2008. A copy of the report, which covered the aims and objectives of the Service, the activities, support and facilities provided for young people, staffing, developments and issues for 2009, was attached at Appendix 1 to the submitted report.

Middlesbrough Pathways Team provided a service for young people in care or leaving care from age 16 to 24. The recent Joint Area Review judgement was that young people received very good support from the Leaving Care Service.

The Team Manager highlighted some of the many activities and developments during 2008 which were detailed in the report under the five Every Child Matters outcomes including:

- Production of a quarterly newsletter.
- Continuation of the Aftercare Group.
- Development of the Middlesbrough Pledge.
- Ongoing support with Housing including the creation of the "Crash Pad".
- The Barnados SECOS Project.
- Successful joint working with Connexions.
- The Employability Scheme.
- Continued links with the University of Teesside.
- The Peer Support Programme.
- Development of a Health Promotion Room.
- Participation by one staff member and two young people in the Middlesbrough 10K race.
- Successful bids to the Youth Opportunity Fund.
- Establishment of a Young Mums Group.

In relation to housing for care leavers, it was explained that the effects of the planned changes to the Choice-based Lettings system would be monitored. It was acknowledged that there was a shortage of single person accommodation and that there had been increased use of private rented accommodation,

In response to a query it was explained that the "Crash Pad" had been developed in conjunction with Community Campus in an attempt to eradicate the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation. The Crash Pad was a rented room for the sole use of the Pathways Team and provided accommodation in emergency situations, thus allowing time for a suitable long-term placement to be found. The Crash Pad had been in operation for one month and had been used twice already.

**AGREED** that copies of the quarterly newsletter produced by the Pathways Team with the help of young people, would be forwarded to members of the Corporate Parenting Board.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Executive be:

1. asked to explore ways to provide more training opportunities in Middlesbrough.
2. advised to note the information in relation to the Leaving Care Service.

### **SCRUTINY OF ASPECTS OF CORPORATE PARENTING ACTION PLAN**

The Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel had recently undertaken a scrutiny of 'Aspects of the Council's Corporate Parenting Responsibilities' in the context of the Care Matters agenda. A copy of the final report of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel, and the departmental action plan produced in response to the Panel's recommendations, was attached at Appendices 1 and 2 to the submitted report.

The Action Plan included actions relating to: increasing the number of Foster Carers in Middlesbrough; maintaining and developing training for all Foster Carers; the supported lodgings scheme; reductions in the number of young people not in education, employment or training; and the provision of mental health service support. The value of having dedicated, specialist teams for Children Looked After was highlighted.

It was noted that the report of the Children Learning Scrutiny Panel was an interim report as there were some issues around increased re-numeration for Foster Carers which were not yet finalised.

**AGREED** that the Corporate Parenting Board would review progress at a future meeting.

### **MIDDLESBROUGH PLEDGE – UPDATE**

The Children's Participation Officer presented a report to update the Board on progress made in relation to the development of Middlesbrough's Pledge to Children Looked After.

A report on the Pledge Development Event held in October 2008 was attached at Appendix A to the submitted report. The report reflected the discussions between children, young people, Members of the Corporate Parenting Board and managers, and the key issues identified during the event. One of the most frequent responses to young people was that, following the initial event, their questions would be discussed in more detail by the Corporate Parenting Board and responses provided.

In view of this it was recommended that a further event for adults and children and young people should take place on the morning of 18 February 2009, during half-term week. It was also recommended that separate sessions should be held for adults and children and young people in advance of the joint event to enable each group to reflect on the outcomes of the first event and identify the issues they wished to prioritise for inclusion in the Pledge. The Children's Participation Officer suggested that the Corporate Parenting Board should meet during the week prior to half term in preparation for the joint event.

Questionnaires had been sent out to children and young people seeking their views on what might be included in the Pledge. Different formats were used for different ages and children and young people were asked what could be done to help them achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes. The feedback from the questionnaires was summarised in Appendix B to the submitted report.

**AGREED** that the Children's Participation Officer would organise a meeting and advise the Corporate Parenting Board of the time, date and venue.

**RECOMMENDED** that the Executive be advised to note the progress made in developing the Middlesbrough Pledge.