

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board was held on 16 January 2020.

**PRESENT:** Councillors A Hellaoui, T Higgins, M Nugent, J Platt, M Saunders, J A Walker and C Wright

**INVITEES:** Councillor B Copper, Councillor J Thompson

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** B Butt (Acklam Grange student)

**OFFICIALS:** S Blood, B Bradshaw, S Butcher, R Brown, J Bromiley, T Dunn, A Ferguson, B Morley, P Rudd, R Scott, H Watson, S Williams and T Parkinson,

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillor L Garvey, Councillor Z Uddin

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None declared

**19/26 HOUSEKEEPING**

The Chair welcomed Board Members, officers and members of the Public to the third meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board and read out the fire evacuation procedure.

**19/27 WELCOME**

The Chair also welcomed Batool Butt, Candidate for Member of Youth Parliament for Middlesbrough. The Chair outlined that it was important to invite young people to attend the Board, not only to show engagement but read out a statement included within the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

One of the Strategic priorities, the Engagement and influence of children was young people states:

*We believe the experiences, views and ideas of children and young people should be captured, responded to, and shared to ensure best practice across services. Outcomes will be improved and enhanced through effective engagement and influence of children and young people and that is why we want to get more of a direct influence and give children and young people the opportunity to see what we do and how we work.*

**19/28 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 7 NOVEMBER 2019**

The minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2019 were submitted and approved as a true record.

**Voice and Influence conference-** The Chair queried whether the 18 March 2020 had been confirmed? In response, the Voice of the Child Participation Co-ordinator advised that the 18 March 2020 was not available so they were now looking to secure a date at the end of March. Once a date was confirmed, save the date would be issued.

**19/29 ACTION PLAN- 7 NOVEMBER 2019**

The Director of Children's Services submitted an action plan in respect to the actions from the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board on 7 November 2019 and 11 September 2019.

In terms of Action 2 from 7 November 2019, the Director of Children's Services advised that for future meetings a written report would be submitted providing updates from the MALAP

sub groups. In terms of item 4, the Voice of the Child Participation Coordinator advised that the Mini Children in Care Council were developing a video, however they were not keen on appearing on the film. Officers were therefore looking at working with Teesside University to develop an alternative format (animation for example).

In terms of the outstanding actions from 11 September 2019, the following updates were provided:

**Action 2 -Offending by Young people**

A report would be presented to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

**Action 3 - Full member briefing**

Date to be arranged by Democratic Services Officer and Director of Children's Services.

**Action 4- Visit to Adoption Tees Valley**

Visit to be rearranged

**AGREED- that the progress in relation to the actions be noted.**

19/30

**MULTI AGENCY LOOKED AFTER PARTNERSHIP (MALAP) - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Interim Director of Children's Care provided a verbal update in respect to the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP).

The last meeting of the Sub groups took place on 15 January 2020 and they were all well attended.

The issue of Member Champion was discussed and how they would be linked with the sub groups in a positive and pro active way.

Currently there was a vacancy on the Placement and Sufficiency Sub group, and during the meeting Councillor Wright nominated himself to the group.

The Interim Director of Children's Care advised that the Sub Group Chairs and Member champions were as follows:

**Health and Wellbeing**

Chair: Alison Ferguson

Member Champion: Councillor Hellaoui

**Placement and Sufficiency**

Chair: Sue Butcher

Member Champion- Councillor Wright

**Participation**

Chair- Bethany Bradshaw

Member Champion- Councillor Saunders

**Leaving Care**

Chair- Stuart Williams

Member Champion- Councillor Higgins

**Education represented by the Virtual Schools**

Chair- Helen Watson

Member Champion- Councillor Copper (As Lead Executive Member)

The Board were advised that each Sub Group had a set action plan and dates of the meetings would be sent to Member Champions in due course. Each Sub Group would look at methods

of working to ensure the best outcomes.

**AGREED-** That a short overview of the Member Champion role for each Sub Group be developed.

19/31

### **FUTURES FOR FAMILIES- TRAILBLAZER- UPDATE**

The Residential Care Service Manger provided an update on the development of Futures for Families (No Wrong door trailblazer).

The Manager advised that the contractors had been onsite in Spencerfield Crescent, in Thorntree since 6 January 2020 and there was a development place in to be completed by mid May 2020.

Officers had spent a lot of time with the North Yorkshire in terms of recruitment and the progress was as follows:

- Hub Manager has been recruited (Middlesbrough staff)
- Deputy Managers have been interviewed (Middlesbrough staff)
- Senior Resource Manager/Resource Manager have been interviewed and appointed. There was a significant skill set , including qualified social workers, those from residential background, qualified teachers, individuals who are drug workers etc to support the families of Middlesbrough . The recruitment has mainly been from internal staff (70/30 split)
- 7 portfolio leads (portfolio leads there is 1 specific for drugs work, promotion of Education, Risk Management, Parent and Parent support, 16+ accommodation) 6 bed in total
- 7.5 interventions workers
- Performance Analyst has been out for recruitment twice. First round there were no applicants, however second time there were 8 applications.
- Partner role recruitment all progressing well- clinical psychologist interviews take place on 29 January 2020. Only one applicant but they come highly recommended.
- Speech and Language Specialist role has gone live for recruitment.
- Police specialist role progressing- further work needs to be undertaken in terms of the HR internal processes and job descriptions.

Middlesbrough has received ongoing support from North Yorkshire not only in terms of recruitment but also in terms of training staff to think differently. The Innovation Unit have provided support including a Theory of Change session and another session will take place later in the year. A Deep Down session will take place to look at case studies of young people who are in private residential to look at things that could have been done differently.

The Strategic and Operational Project Bard meeting takes place monthly to review progresses including governance arrangements, how the service is being developed and communication.

A member raised whether residents had been consulted during the process. The officer advised that all residents within the area had been fully consulted in terms of the development design of the HUB. They received letters and were offered face to face discussions if required. No responses were received.

### **AGREED-**

- **That a further consultation session with residents be arranged prior to the official opening of the HUB.**
- **That the Service Manager and staff be thanked for their continued commitment.**

**19/32 CHILDREN'S HOME- OFSTED INSPECTION REPORT- FIR TREE HOUSE**

While the full details of the inspection was contained within the report, the Residential Care Services Manager provided the Board with an update on the Ofsted inspection carried out at Fir Tree.

The Board were advised that Fir Tree provides care and accommodation for up to three children and young people with emotional and /or behavioural difficulties. All the children in the home attend full time education but are extremely challenging.

Ofsted rated the home as 'good', however Ofsteds comments in relation to the Manager described him as 'inspiring' and members of staff develop well due to the Manager.

The Manager advised that the home has been good for some time, however as the children had not been in the home for a length of time, Ofsted were unable to award the home outstanding and therefore the home has been set a target to become outstanding by the next inspection.

The Children in the home are aged 8,9 and 10, and ordinarily children so young would not be placed in residential homes, however due to the children's' demands and challenges , they needed a period of stability. The Manager and staff will work with the children to stabilise their behaviour before introducing them to pre picked foster families. The families will be supported by the Manger and staff and will only move the children to the families when there is that level of trust. The children deserve to be in families, not in residential care.

The Chair thanked all the staff involved.

**AGREED- that the Ofsted report be noted.**

**19/33 PERFORMANCE DATA**

The Interim Director of Children's Care lead a discussion in relation to a suite of performance data relating to Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

The Interim Director outlined that although the data had been provided to members, she did not wish to go through these in detail, however have a discussion about what Members want to know about their Children Looked After and Care Leavers.

The Panel were asked an introductory question:

*How many children do you have?*

It was outlined that at present, Corporate Parents were responsible for around 560 Looked After Children in Middlesbrough. As an officer responsible for the welfare of those Looked After Children, the Interim Director wanted to feel held to account and challenged to ensure those Children have the very best care.

From this, the Board were asked:

*What do you want to know about the 560 children in your care?*

In response, the Board outlined they wished to know the following:

1. How many Looked After Children are being cared for in Middlesbrough and how many outside the area?
2. How safe are my children?
3. Are they happy?

4. Are they Healthy?
5. When are they going home?
6. What is their education attainment?
7. How are they feeling?
8. Do they feel looked after?
9. What does the child want? and do they understand what is happening?

The Interim Director asked the officers present responsible for key areas to address the Board:

#### Health

In terms of Health, A Ferguson outlined that every child that comes into care receives a Health Assessment. The assessment will address any health need of the child. The need may range from updating the child's immunisations, taking them to a dentist to addressing complex needs, for example, the child's emotional wellbeing. The Health assessments are reviewed regularly and any new needs are addressed.

#### Education

T Dunn outlined that in terms of a child's educational attainment, every child has a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which is developed between the child, school representative, social worker and virtual schools. The PEP allows officers to track a child's progress and attainment at certain levels of their education.

A member queried who was responsible for permanent and fixed term exclusions? In response, it was outlined that Virtual schools work with the schools and child if there is an exclusion. In terms of exclusions, there has been no permanent exclusions in 2 years (better than national average), however fixed term exclusions (2-3 days) are currently above average and the Virtual schools are working with schools to address this and understand the need of the Looked After Child.

In terms of the data set, Members outlined that percentages are useful but sometimes numbers are better as often a percentage can develop a false impression on the levels.

#### Happiness

B Bradshaw outlined that there is the Advocacy service which captures thoughts of children and young people, and officers ensure the children and young people know their rights.

B Bradshaw outlined that the mini Children in Care Council and the Children in Care Councils were a platform to capture children's' views and attendees have expressed how happy they are to be able to meet with others in the same situation and to share how they feel.

In terms of Residential Care, the Manager advised that they spend 1:1 time with the child, discuss progress, support them, track their development and their behaviour and get feedback from all partners involved. A child might express their happiness by their behaviour or they may tell you.

#### Safety

S Williams provided a brief background in relation to missing children from care. The Risk and Resilience team work hard to mitigate the risk of children going missing, and keeping them safe. The Board had previously received a detailed presentation on missing children from care and had praised the work they do.

In terms of foster parents, an intense training programme is set, which looks at keeping children safe.

A brief discussion took place in relation to children who are exploited and the Board advised they would like figures on this.

#### Language

The Board lastly talked about the importance of language and how ensuring we don't address Looked After Children as LAC. This can often lead to negative feeling and the Children and Care Council have expressed that being referred to as LAC makes them feel they are lacking in something.

The Board therefore made a promise that they would now not use LAC but use the full title of Looked After Children or Children Looked After.

There was also a discussion in relation to the title 'Corporate Parent ' and what young people feel what a Corporate Parent is. The video from the Mini Children in Council would therefore be welcomed at the next

Following the discussion, the Interim Director asked what else the Board would like to have included within the data set. The Board expressed that although the data is essential, information and narrative would be more beneficial to understanding the wider picture of Looked After Children in Middlesbrough.

The Chair thanked the Interim Director for her excellent presentation.

**AGREED- That the presentation be noted.**

19/34

### **CHILDREN IN CARE/ CARE LEAVERS FORUM- PARTICIPATION WORK**

The Voice of the Child Co-ordinator provided a presentation in relation to the participation groups for Looked After Children and Care Leavers.

The Co-ordinator outlined that there were currently three groups:

#### **Mini Children in Care Council (Mini CIC)**

Age range- 7- 13

Frequency of meeting- Every 3 weeks

Current membership - 7 (aged 8-13)

#### **Children in Care Council (CICC)**

Age range- 14-17

Frequency of meeting- Every 3 weeks

Current membership -1 (1 Care leaver volunteer)

#### **Care Leaver Forum**

Age range- 18- 25

Frequency of meeting- Every 3 weeks

Current membership - 5

In terms of the membership, the Co-ordinator outlined that in terms of the Children in Care Council, the member felt sending a personal letter to other Children in Care , explaining what the group was about, may attract new members.

Activities the participation groups have been involved include for example:

#### **Mini CIC**

- Designed their room, picked their name and designed a logo
- Reviewed documents to make them young person friendly:
- (Foster Carer Family Profile, The Young Persons Guide to Being in Care, Staff PEN profiles)
- Visit from Deputy Mayor to discuss young peoples priorities + follow up work
- Met Executive Director
- Met with Head of Looked After Children
- Met with member of Fostering team to discuss the Fostering panel and how to involve young people

Future work plans include the following:

- Linking with the Corporate Parenting Board
- Review health assessments
- Discuss building relationships between looked after children and the police
- Consultation – Futures for Families Service
- Review the 'Middlesbrough Pledge for looked after children'
- 15 Steps health challenge (National programme where young people take 15 steps within a hospital ward and provide their feedback on how welcome)

CIC future work plans include:

- Linking with the Corporate Parenting Board
- Discuss building relationships between looked after children and the police
- Design an invitation to send to all looked after children to invite them to the Children in Care Council group
- Consultation – Futures for Families Service
- Meet with Mini CICC and Review the 'Middlesbrough Pledge for looked after children'

The Care Leavers Forum have :

- Met with the Executive Director and Residential Care Manager to discuss the 'No Wrong Door' trailblazer.
- Planning the Regional Conference for Children in Care Councils to take place January 2020
- Met with new Head of Looked After Children
- Running the Madlug Bag project – ensuring all Care Leavers have a bag to carry their belongings (the bags are free on condition the Council promote their products)

Future work plans include:

- Support organisation of the Regional event
- Plan Care Leavers Celebration evening
- Involvement in Future for Families Hub Design
- Review Local Offer for Care Leavers
- Consideration of free/discounted bus travel for Care Leavers
- College/training stationary packs for young people

**ACTION-** That the Voice of the Child Co-ordinator have a further discussion with Councillor Wright in respect to discounted bus travel college/training stationary packs for young people.

In respect to wider projects, there are four projects:

1. Youth Council- a briefing session has taken place and a working group has been established to develop an action plan.
2. Young commissioners- Middlesbrough has 7 young commissioners to work with the Advisory Service who are leading on the Tees Wide young person's consultation, which takes place early February 2020.
3. Multi Agency Looked After Partnership (MALAP)- participation sub group
4. Corporate Parenting Board- how do we get a true representation of young people on the Board.

Whilst the Co-ordinator stressed how valuable it was for young people to get involved in

groups, we must also remember that they are young people, who have hobbies.

Information is available through youth voice Middlesbrough, facebook and twitter.

It was also noted that the Care Leavers Celebration would be taking place on 28 January 2020.

The Chair thanked the Co-ordinator for her presentation.

**AGREED- That the presentation be noted**