

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board was held on 18 June 2020.

**PRESENT:** Councillors L Garvey, A Hellaoui, T Higgins, M Nugent, J Platt, Z Uddin, J A Walker and C Wright

**INVITEES:** P Dwyer, DFE Commissioner  
C Snowball, Foster Career  
M Mohammed, Member of Youth Parliament for Middlesbrough  
B Butt, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Middlesbrough

**OFFICIALS:** V Banks, S Blood, S Butcher, R Brown, B Bradshaw, C Cannon, S Davison, T Dunn, A Ferguson, R Hamer, C Lunn, B Morley, C Parry, R Scott, S Williams

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** None

**DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

None declared

20/1 **MINUTES FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 JANUARY 2020 AND 19 MARCH 2020**

The minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 16 January 2020 and 19 March 2020 were submitted and agreed as a true record.

**AGREED- That the minutes be approved.**

20/2 **WHAT IS A CORPORATE PARENT?**

The Chair outlined that all Members of the Board, would have received a copy of the 'What is a Corporate Parent ' toolkit. As a way of an introduction the Chair read out the following statement from the document.

*Looking after and protecting children and young people is one of the most important jobs that councils do and when a child, for whatever reason, can't safely stay at home, it is up to us as the local authority to step in and give them the care, support and stability that they deserve.*

*This isn't just up to the lead member or director of children's services – we need everyone looking out for our most vulnerable children and young people, and every councillor has a role to play in embedding the principles of Corporate Parenting and in doing all we can to support children in care to live meaningful and successful, fulfilling lives.*

20/3 **INTRODUCTION FROM MIDDLESBROUGH'S MEMBER OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT, MUSKAAN MOHAMMAD AND DEPUTY MEMBER OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT, BATOOL BUTT.**

The Chair welcomed Muskaan Mohammad, Member of Youth Parliament for Middlesbrough (MYP) and Batool Butt, Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Middlesbrough (DMYP) to the meeting.

The representatives provided a brief overview of their role as Elected Members, advising that they were elected on 14 February 2020 and were there to represent the views and concerns of young people across Middlesbrough.

One of the priorities from the Member of Youth Parliament for Middlesbrough was to increase recycling across schools in Middlesbrough. The MYP and DMYP had been consulting with young people asking whether they felt there was enough opportunities to recycle in their

schools. This evidence will be the basis of their proposal to help schools in their area. The proposal is to work alongside a school ensuring they have enough recycling bins and monitoring their progress as well as selecting student recycling champions who will take part in a workshop with the MYPs and the Boro Youth Climate Action Team (a student led group who approached the MYP and DMYP).

The Board were advised that the representatives have weekly virtual meetings with Beth Morely, Participation Officer and have a great social media presence. The MYP publically thanked officers for their support.

The Board Members welcomed the representatives to the Board, outlining that their contribution was valuable.

**AGREED: That the MYP and DMYP be invited to all meetings of the Board to provide an update.**

20/4

#### **OUR APPROACH TO COVID- 19**

The Director of Children's Services provided the Board with an overview of their approach to working through Covid- 19 for Looked after Children.

The Director firstly defined vulnerable children as those who have a social worker and, or an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which the latter is up to the age of 25.

At the beginning of Covid-19 there were 2,700 children open to social care and of those 1,300 had a EHCP.

Right at the start of Covid- 19, the service area divided the children into 3 cohorts:

Cohort 1: New referrals, Child protection enquiries, children on care plans and or in care proceedings, children on care orders placed at home and those children with complex needs.

Cohort 2: Children with disabilities (health needs), Edge of Care children or recently returned home, at high risk of harm, looked after children and care leavers.

Cohort 3: Children with a EHCP.

Middlesbrough decided to carry out safety plans on all vulnerable children, which started immediately. Of the 2882 open referrals, 2,700 safety plans were carried out. with risk assessments being carried out on cohort 3.

The safety plans were audited and quality varied in these plans, and where this had occurred support to practice was out in place. There was some criticism from schools, however officers worked in collaboration to resolve these issues.

The Director advised that at the beginning Covid-19, the impact it would have on services was unknown and no one anticipated what would happen. Statutory duties towards our vulnerable children remained and there key areas which the service worked on which were greatly impacted.

#### Keeping in touch during lockdown

In terms of Children, Young people and their families, the service used new ways of communication, including for example, social media (whatsapp, facetime as skype). The service ensured all foster parents had a mobile phone for this to take place. In terms of social worker visits were imaginative, for example, over the fence chats and social distance dog walking. Initially there were some issues surrounding personal protective equipment but these became easier as measures eased.

In terms of care leavers, this group proved to be the most vulnerable and most live alone and in some cases were self isolating and therefore it was important to ensure contact with social

workers took place weekly.

From feedback received, foster carers have felt listened to and supported to care for the children. They have been kept informed throughout the whole of this uncertain period and social workers have maintained contact, either through door stops but mainly through WebEx and telephone discussions.

### Family Time

Due to the Government guidance provided, all contact with birth families, relatives was suspended. However with statutory duties in place, it was paramount to ensure contact. Parents were kept informed and contact was made through social media. In some ways contact with birth families has increased during this period, however it has been difficult for all parties informed.

The service is however undertaking risk assessment and it hoped that when it becomes safer for children and parents to have direct contact, this will be reintroduced.

There has been some concerns in relation to the reintroduction of contact from some foster parents, especially when there may have relatives shielding.

The Director also advised that they had a young people on the Covid-19 Recovery Group for Children's Services who had brought a new approach to the department's views. For example, the impact reintroducing direct contact would have family members who are shielding and the mental health support that needs to be put in place to help vulnerable children post Covid-19.

### Education

The Board were made aware that 10% of vulnerable children had been attending school regularly of the Covid period. Attending school had been encouraged however there had been understandable concerns. The service have been working with schools to ensure oversight of vulnerable children and to ensure safety plans were in place for all those children. Joint working had also been undertaken with schools (e.g. schools performing weekly welfare checks).

The Director praised the Virtual Schools team, who had been working tirelessly through the Covid period to provide education to our vulnerable children. The team had provided online classes, provided additional contact and had supplied reading books.

In addition to the Virtual school, the Literacy Trust had donated 2,000 books which social workers had delivered to vulnerable children, as well as magazines and Easter Eggs. A local business had also donated make your own pizza boxes and sweet boxes which had been delivered to our care leavers. The feedback has been wonderful including for example:

*LF- Yeah it was mint, scanned it all!*

*LS- It was lovely. Was i supposed to get sweets and pizza :)*

This had undoubtedly been a very difficult and trying period and Teams have worked above and beyond to ensure our vulnerable children have had some 'normality' amongst the 'uncertain'.

A Head of Service made the following comment:

I would like to say that residential staff have shown an absolute commitment to their role. Initially we had lots self-isolate, however the majority returned to work quickly and have been extremely flexible in ensuring that the young people in our residential services have been cared for by a familiar face. Other staff who work in my area have gone out delivering mobile telephones to foster carers, they have supported fostering social workers to complete assessments and they are supporting parents where it is safe to do so in the sw teams. I have seen an absolute commitment from the majority of workers who despite their own

vulnerabilities have worked and completed whatever they can to keep children safe and 'business as usual' I am proud of them all!

The Chaired thanked the Director for her presentation.

Following the presentation the Board made a number of comments were are detailed below:

School closure and local 'r' rate- it was outlined that school governors make the decision to close schools and head teachers carry out daily risk assessments, looking at local cases and track and trace.

Response from parents- Response from parents in relation to the new means of communication have been positive.

Support for young people during lockdown- A Board member personally thanked the local businesses for their support , however queried how resilience could be improved.

In response, it was outlined that through the Recovery plans, prevention and support to all children would be required post Covid. Some, especially our most vulnerable would find it hard to return back into schools and the community. Mental Health assessment for looked after children were undertaken and it was agreed that the Board may like to consider the support provided at a future date of the Board.

Support was also provided through the mental health resilience nurses and school nurses. Significant funding has also been put into Headstart to work with schools, and the Board advised an update on Headstart would be welcome at a future meeting.

#### **Agreed-**

1. **That the update be noted**
2. **That information relating to Mental Health Assessments for looked after children be brought back to a future meeting of the Board**
3. **That an update on Headstart be brought back to a future meeting of the Board**

20/5

#### **CHILDREN CARE/ CARE LEAVERS FORUM**

The Participation Manager provided an update on engagement during Covid-19 with the Children in Care Council and Care leavers.

The Manager outlined that prior to Covid-19, there had been discussions in relation to different engagement mechanisms, and this period has allowed this to happen, be that at a very rapid speed. The Leadership Team has been fully supportive of the strategies established.

The Manager advised that during Covid-19, the following had taken place:

1. Weekly 'keeping in touch' FaceTime's/Whatsapp calls with Care Leavers forum & The Participation team
2. Monthly FaceTime's with Mini CICC and Children in Care Council
3. Weekly newsletters have been circulated to, Children and Young people, Parents and carers, Care Leavers, and children with disabilities.
4. The Care leavers forum have had virtual introductions with Sue Butcher— Executive Director of Children's Services, Catherine Parry—Director of Children's Care and Stuart Williams—Head of Looked After Children and Corporate Parenting
5. The Virtual Care Leavers forum has been launched. These sessions will run every 2

- weeks
- Councillor Craig Wright was invited to talk about supporting the Care Leavers project with their priorities, which was greatly received.
6. The Care Leavers forum Twitter page has been created and has 35 followers!
  7. One of the Care Leavers has signed up to be a member for the Middlesbrough Children Matter Young Persons Advisory Group
  8. Olivellos donated 290 free 'create your own pizza boxes' & Sweet treats boxes. These were delivered by the personal advisors alongside Mental Health Calendars to our young people.
  9. A member of the Care leavers form and Engagement Manager were invited to speak on BBC Tees Radio about MADLUG bags & Olivellos Pizza donations. This provided a huge boost for the care leaver and she was delighted to have been asked.
  10. #MiddlesbroughChildrenMatter Youtube channel has been launched to provide video updates to children, young people and families during COVID 19.
  11. The Digital Resilience team launched a 'keeping safe online' video which was circulated to our young people
  12. The Participation team created a COVID 19 activity booklet for children and young people.
  13. The 'Get Involved' page on Middlesbrough Council website was relaunched with specific sections for:  
Updates for children and young people; Updates for care Leavers ; Updates for parents; Updates for carers
  14. In addition to this, the MYP and DMYP have proved as an asset for reaching young people and have provided top tips on mental health which was included within the activity booklet.

Councillor Wright praised the dedication of the Manager and thanked her for the work she has undertaken during this uncertain time.

20/6

#### **ACTION PLAN- 16 JANUARY 2020**

The Democratic Services Officer provided a presentation in respect to the actions from the meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board on 11 September 2019 and 16 January 2020.

**AGREED- That the progress of the actions be noted.**

20/7

#### **OFSTED INSPECTION PLAN AND OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD**

The Chair introduced Peter Dwyer, DfE Commission to the meeting to provide an overview following his recent review following Ofsted's report on Children Services.

The Commission outlined that a Commission is employed to Local Authorities when Ofsted judges in a way that requires improvement to a service. He advised that Commissions are Ex Directors of Children Services and he had been Director at North Yorkshire County Council and in York.

The Commission advised that it was his job to form a review following the recommendations from Ofsted and report back to the Minister whether alternative delivery mechanisms should next place.

At the beginning of his review, Covid 19 impacted the way the review was undertaken, however this did not stop the dedication of the Leadership Team and teams to provide information to him.

The Commission outlined that the challenges faced in delivering high quality services to an area with the scale of social and economic challenges as those seen in Middlesbrough, should not be underestimated and that the world faced by many children and young people in this area was extremely daunting and should necessitate the highest quality of support and intervention on a partnership basis.

It was now clear that over many years that has not been the case. Such omissions should not

be viewed as the responsibility of any one individual but are the product of deficiencies across the wider system.

The Commissioners report was submitted to the Minister in May 2020, and the recommendation was agreed by the Minister, which was as follows:

*“there is sufficient confidence in the changes being made to indicate that this is not an LA where we should move quickly to consider alternative delivery mechanisms. There is no evidence of a currently dysfunctional political or corporate environment that would support the case for “freeing” the children’s leadership from local control”.*

The Commission did however advise that Board that given the level of challenges faced and COVID implications, his engagement to support ongoing work would remain 2/3 days per month until Oct/November 2020 and would report at that point and again in June 2021. This was typical where a recommendation was not to introduce alternative delivery.

### **Key findings from the review**

The Commissioner outlined the key findings of his review to the Board:

- There have been clear omissions in delivering the consistent quality of collective political and managerial leadership required to embed and sustain improvements in children’s services in Middlesbrough
- Middlesbrough did not have sufficiently credible or consistent social care leadership capacity within the then leadership team
- It appears clear that the Children and Young People service were not viewed and did not operate with a strong corporate ethos. Within the service itself, there were further silos with a lack of a single coherent narrative
- Fragmented knowledge never coalesced into a comprehensive holistic and honest self-assessment. The LA may also have been at risk of a lack of transparency and openness in its earlier improvement work
- Governance of improvement programmes have lacked focus, rigour and discipline. Non-compliance appeared to have limited consequences.
- Pockets of effective practice within a managerial system which lacked common joined up systems and culture
- The care population appeared out of control - a lack of confidence exists that young people are on the most appropriate orders or in the most appropriate placements
- Internal performance challenges for all agencies means that work to enhance shared system leadership is underdeveloped
- The culture has certainly been one of high support but apparently without consistently high levels of required professional challenge
- The organisation and partnership historically appears to have needed external criticism and reputational damage to point it into the right direction collectively

### **What is the quality of the Local Authority Led response?**

- There has been an impressive response to the inspection outcome. All including Mayor and Chief Executive have accepted findings and concentrated on the delivery of improvement. The Commission outlined he has never heard any criticism of the Ofsted report and has seen nothing but focus and passion.
- Leaders are invariably highly ambitious and deeply passionate about the place
- Post inspection, significant decisions have been made to fund the local improvement journey and this will need to be sustained
- Previous deficits in practice knowledge and wisdom at a senior level of the children’s social care service appear to have been addressed
- The new Director of Children Services has said to have brought a calm and focused discipline to the organisation. She is already known, visible and respected including on a corporate footing.

- The new leadership have also rightly recognised the strengths and capabilities in place amongst the existing workforce
- The Chief Executive was known and appears respected within the children and young people's service
- the Deputy Mayor who brings considerable energy, potential competence and relevant experience to the role
- The LGA have already been highly engaged to develop a bespoke programme of support to local politicians
- There was clearly a considerable cohort of people within the organisation who care deeply about the place where they work and often live.
- there appears a more engaged and connected mood across leaders in the organisation.
- The workforce is supported in their work by good infrastructure arrangements eg office accommodation/ICT etc.
- Social work caseloads are too high in the current assessment teams. Leaders are rightly cautious about simply adding extra social work capacity at the issue believing it may reflect other factors
- Trade Unions consistently describe current leadership of children's services as providing a level of effectiveness and engagement not previously experienced
- Strategic and Operational Improvement Boards were now in place on a partnership basis with clear membership and terms of reference
- The 12 week compliance plan was well structured with clear milestones/ ownership
- The new Improvement Plan rightly in the Commissioners view sought to ensure that practice improvement is located within a wider approach recognising that to be sustained, improvements in leadership/management and organisational culture on a partnership basis are also required.
- There was a real local appetite for the No Wrong Door (NWD) programme
- Enhanced capacity was in place by investment in 2 additional temporary teams in assessment and in child protection/child in need
- An important priority for new leaders has been improving the approach to quality assurance and subsequent practice learning.

The Commission in summary outlined that the challenges are real and significant however, the Local Authority should be commended for the way both political leaders and senior officers have responded to the very challenging Ofsted feedback. There was no apparent defensiveness at the most senior levels of the organisation with a full acceptance of responsibility and a recognition of the need for change. Current senior leadership of children's services have the confidence of the workforce, are credible and are proven in the delivery of improvement in LAs facing similar challenges. And lastly, Important building blocks of change have been effectively put in place.

In terms of future progress the Commissioner outlined he would like to see:

- Strategic and Operational Improvement Boards need to develop and mature – shared system leadership needs further enhancing
- The Improvement Plan has much to commend it but more detailed evidence of how operational delivery of the programme of improvement is needed
- Evidence needs to grow as to how improved political engagement particularly through corporate parenting and scrutiny functions will be effectively delivered
- Greater clarity around practice expectations and the local social work delivery model needs to consistently impact upon practice and outcomes beyond the anecdotal
- The new investment and approach to Quality Assurance and Performance needs to be sustained and consistently support the embedding of change across the organisation
- The front door arrangements are crucial and specific challenges posed by Ofsted need urgent addressing in whatever operating model
- The Local Authority must prioritise work on its sufficiency and permanency strategies enhancing decision making and capacity to enable only the right children to be in care and that when in care they remain local, and
- Caseload levels must be carefully monitored and reduced particularly in the

## assessment teams

Following the Commissioners presentation, a number of Board members made comment:

1. It was firstly acknowledge that the Board were very pleased with the Commissioners report, but were conscious this was a long term journey and there would ultimately be concerns post Covid.
2. A Board member also made reference in relation to appendix 1 of the commissioners report, which referred to MACH arrangements and what improvements had been put in place. In response, the Director of Children Services advised that it has been agreed to desegregate the partnership of the MACH with Redcar and Cleveland. This was not a reflection on not wanting a joint approach, but merely the best way forward under the circumstances. Since the MACH has been brought back to Middlesbrough, there has been increased partnership working, especially with the Police, Health and Education and there has been further wider partnership working with early help colleagues and lead professionals. The MACH was due to go live on 1 July 2020.
3. A Board member also outlined that they would like input from the police on their approach to our looked after children at a future meeting.
4. It was also commented that a police representative would be a welcome addition to the Corporate Parenting Board and this would be considered.

**ACTION:**

1. **That the Commission be thanked and his presentation be noted**
2. **That the Police be invited to a future meeting of the Board**
3. **That the Police be invited to be a representative on the Corporate Parenting Board.**

20/8

**PROPOSED PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

The Chair presented an action plan with proposed changes for the Board to consider in relation to the operation of Corporate Parenting Board.

The Commissioner welcomed the action plan but also advised that in terms of meeting scheduled, that often quality was better than quantity and that the role of the Corporate Parenting Board, was to act as an Advisory Board and not an improvement Board. There may be different levels of activity from Board members and different working methods would be welcome e.g. an event with young people.

The Chair of the Children and Young people's scrutiny panel, also outlined that he would work closely with the Chair of Corporate Parenting Board to ensure they was no overlap on agendas'.

**Agreed- That the action plan be noted.**

20/9

**UPDATE ON VIRTUAL SCHOOLS**

The Head of Virtual Schools provided the Board with an update on the Virtual schools approach to Covid -19.

The Head outlined that on 18 March 2020, the Government announced that schools across



England would be 'closed' from 20 March 2020 until further notice.

There were a number of challenges across the Board in the repurposing of schools. It was not possible to continue operating the Personal Education Plans (PEP) for Looked after children as it added extra pressure on schools and it was difficult to assess academic attainment and progress in order to create SMART targets. Due to this, the Virtual schools suspended all PEPs but worked closely with the schools, social workers and the SEND team and their foster carers to ensure each child had an education offer and safety plan. Since then every looked after child has a Covid PEP which is monitored.

### Safeguarding Children

The Board were advised that Middlesbrough Council worked closely with every school to ensure that vulnerable children could, where it was safe to do so attend school or college. The majority of Middlesbrough's educational settings remained open and the Virtual schools had ensured that all Middlesbrough's Looked after children, both in and out of Middlesbrough have had the option to attend a school setting and that educational support and safeguarding checks have been in place where children were deemed to be safer at home.

As advised in an earlier presentation to the Board, safety plans were undertaken on all vulnerable children and these have been reviewed by the Leadership team on a daily basis.

The Head outlined that during the Covid period, the Virtual schools has delivered the following:

#### **1. DT Training**

It is the responsibility of the Head of Virtual Schools to ensure that the appropriate arrangements are in place to deliver training needs to those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of Looked after children. This training covers Pupil Premium Plus, SMART Targets and Exclusions.

Due to Covid, the Virtual schools delivered their first virtual bespoke webinar for all DT's on 20 May 2020. This was in conjunction with Sheila Mulvenney and was attended by 50 delegates. The Head outlined that this had been the highest attendee level at training. The training had a broader spectrum and was open to social workers as well as Foster carers.

#### **2. Foster Carer Support**

The Board are aware of the excellent work of the virtual schools and their ethos to keep the voice of the child at the heart of everything that do. However, the virtual schools recognises the importance of listening to parents/carers and supporting them to provide a safe and positive home environment. Like many parents, it was evident from communication that many foster carers were feeling quite isolated and worried that they were not doing enough to support their child. Due to these concerns, the Virtual schools established a weekly Educational support session to allow everyone to share their concerns, most importantly support them and also share our experiences and resource on how to approach home learning. Education by stealth ( education in the moment e.g. counting potatoes and measuring ) was discussed as a really useful way to teach our children without them knowing it.

There was also the first foster carer coffee morning which was very well attended. The feedback from foster carers has been excellent and they have outlined they have felt supported and listened too through this whole process.

#### **3. Tuition Provision**

To ensure Middlesbrough's Looked after children had the best possible support with their education, the Virtual schools used an online education platform called Bramble, which is an interactive online classroom allowing for direct teaching to take place, which can be accessed via computer, laptop, iPad or tablet. Each pupil has a bespoke programme of education and

staff can continue to build relationships, carry out safeguarding checks and help bridge educational gaps.

As of 7 May 2020, the Virtual schools were delivering 75 hours (15 young people) of education to those children who were most vulnerable and those who live in care homes.

Phase two of was to support year 10 students (12 young people) and the virtual schools have been delivering 60 hours a week in the core students of Maths, English and Science.

#### **4. Distribution of books, study material and online learning resources**

The well being of Middlesbrough looked after children is vital and therefore although a very uncertain time for them, we did not want them to feel like they had been forgotten. Every child in care of Middlesbrough Local Authority received a parcel containing stationary, a reading book and a letter from the Head of Virtual schools.

The virtual schools also created educational resource packs that can be accessed via the Council's website with everything from Early Years to Year 11. There is also resource for foster carers to help them deliver home education.

The Head also explained that the virtual schools are also running a weekly bitesize draw, where they have to pick a topic, complete a task and take the quiz at the end. When they get all the answers right, they take a screen shot and email the virtual schools, where their names will be entered into a prize draw every Friday.

#### **5. Laptop Provision**

With Covid, it was extremely important to ensure all our vulnerable children had access to a laptop/ computer/ Ipad to access online learning and support. The Department for Education stated that they would provide the a digital device (Laptops and tablets) and internet access to some disadvantaged children and young people who did not have access to them from other resources.

The Local Authority could request a digital device for any child or young person aged 0 to 19 with a social worker. Middlesbrough completed the form forecasting the number they required and it was hoped these would be supplied to the most vulnerable by August.

#### **6. Attendance**

The Board were lastly presented with figures from attendance of looked after child in school for the week commencing 4 May 2020. The average attendance was calculated bt using the total number of days students could have attended school (1668 days) and how many days were actually attended (241), resulting in average attendance of 14.45%.

Out of the 417 students, 68 attended an education establishment (16.3%)

- 4 students attended for 1 day per week
- 7 students attended for 2 days per week
- 5 students attended for 3 days per week
- 52 students attended for 4 days per week

The Foster Carer in attendance queried whether the percentages of those attending were alarming, in which the officers explained that there was no benchmark to compare these percentages by as the DFE do not look at attendance of Looked after children in their own right. Neighbouring Authorities have shared their percentages and Middlesbrough's attendance of Looked After Children was slightly higher than Redcar and Cleveland yet lower than Durham. In Middlesbrough there was roughly a quarter of Looked after Children attending school and those who were not due to shielding or with vulnerable members in the household were being supported by the virtual schools. Staff have been encouraging and ensuring the children, young people and families understand that school is a safe place. It was anticipated that numbers of attendees would increase in September.

In response to the presentation, a Board member queried whether those looked after children receiving digital devices would also be receiving internet? In response, the Head of Virtual Schools outlined that the DFE also provided 4G dongles which contained 8GB data.

A Board member also queried whether the teaching hours offered to Year 10 students are sufficient and what the recovery plan was post covid.

In terms of the teaching hours, the Head of Virtual schools outlined that most of the Looked after Year 10 students were attending school, and the virtual aspect was additional. It was felt the hours initially offered were not enough and therefore were upped to provide more resource.

In terms of Post Covid, the Head of Access to Education advised that plans and strategies were underway, but there were two key areas which were being addressed:

1. Year 6 Transition- this was usually undertaken with a number of transition days, tours, however due to Covid these have not been able to take place. However some schools have offered virtual meeting your teacher and school tours and most schools are devising plans so that there is smooth transition for September.
2. Mental Health Support- Whilst all children and young people have been affected by Covid, this can impact the mental wellbeing of a looked after child significantly. Schools and the Virtual schools along with the children mental health teams were therefore looking at programmes for September to build confidence of our looked after children.

The Chair thanked the Head of Virtual Schools and thanked all the staff from the service for their contribution during this period.

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

20/10

**#MIDDLESBROUGHCHILDRENMATTER**

The Board were shown the video #middlesbroughchildrenmatter, which had been produced by the staff of Children's Services.

The Chair thanked all the staff involved for their excellent work and commitment to the children of Middlesbrough.