

## Corporate Parenting Board

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018

4.00pm – 6.00pm

Mandela Room, Town Hall

<b>Present:</b>	Ms Alison Brown	AB	-	Director of Children's Care
	Cllr Mike Carr	MC	-	Elected Member and Chair
	Jean Sharrocks	JS	-	Elected Member
	Jeff Watson	JW	-	Risk and Reduction Manager
	Ms Lesley McGloin	LM	-	MBC
	Geraldine Purvis	GP	-	Elected Member
	Ms Julie Mepham	JM	-	Interim Head Placements & LAC
	Mr Trevor Dunn	TD	-	Virtual School Head
	Ms Alison Ferguson	AF		NHS South Tees Clinical Commissioning
	Beth Bradshaw	BB	-	Voice of the Child Practitioner
	Cllr Janice Brunton	JBD	-	Elected Member
	Dobson			
	Helen Watson	HW	-	Director of Children's Services
	Cllr Dorothy Davidson	DD	-	Elected Member
	Alma Hellaoni	AH	-	Elected Member
	Suzy Kitching	SK	-	Head of Service

### Apologies:

Paul Rudd	PR	-	Operations Manager, Residential
Cllr Zafar Uddin	ZU	-	Elected Member
Mr Tony Parkinson	TP	-	Chief Executive, MBC
Cllr Charlie Rooney	CR	-	Elected Member
Cllr Higgins			Elected Member

### 1. Welcome and Introductions

Welcome and Introductions from Mike Carr.

### 2. Minutes (11.04.18) and Matters Arising

The Regional Adoptions Agency is now live and a Ministerial visit is expected in the near future.

**Action:** Item for the next meeting - Anthony Coulson to update regarding the figures for young people engaging in training and employment.

HW met with CiCC and shared a draft copy of the Corporate Parenting Strategy.

### **3. Declarations of Interest**

None provided

### **4. Children's Homes in Middlesbrough**

PR intended to present a report regarding the 3 Children's Homes and Gleneagles, however, has sent apologies. We currently have 70 staff across the homes.

Following a recent Ofsted Inspection, Gleneagles received an outstanding with Rosecroft and Firtree both receiving Good ratings. Holly Lodge Requires Improvement, which was specifically around matching criteria. This issue has been tackled and a more robust criteria has been put in place.

AB reported that PR is a very experienced manager. He has implemented new training programmes and changes to the staffing rota to better meet the needs of our children.

TD stated that the Virtual School meets with PR and the team every 6 weeks in order to better promote education in Children's Homes.

A project to develop our Children's Homes offer is part of the children's transformation work. A Panel member asked how we would know how much provision to provide. JM stated that the review and development of Children's Homes links to the demand analysis included in the Sufficiency Strategy. Effective demand prediction continues to be a challenge for children's services. There is currently a mismatch between demands for placements for children and the number of placements available. Creating additional Children's Homes may be a way forward, work is currently being undertaken to ensure robust business cases. Analysis of the information we have is that our current Children's Homes are quite a traditional model, the needs developments to meet future demands.

### **5. Sufficiency Strategy Presentation**

The ethos of the Sufficiency Strategy is getting the right accommodation, at the right time, in the right place for our children. We have a number of children in Out of Area Placements due to a lack of foster and residential beds in Middlesbrough. Recent recruitments are IFA conversions. Which means while we increase the number of carers we don't increase the number of beds available.

The Children's Homes Project and Fostering Marketing Strategy have identified spikes in children's age ranges at 7-9 and 13-15 years. The front of strategy is an Edge of Care service to support children to stay at home with their families with additional resources. Universal services will need to be involved to enable consistency throughout the Council and partner agencies.

This can be achieved through:

- Strong leadership, maintaining engagement and secure partnerships with oversight from the Director.
- Working with children and young people.
- Effective partnerships driving this strategy forward.

In terms of fostering there are not enough carers currently for the children and YP we have. HW stated that there is a need for carers to provide different skill levels. JM stated that the Fostering Marketing Strategy will explore this. A Panel Member asked if there is a set number of children who can be with a particular foster carer if this is an emergency placement, is there any legislation? JM stated that this is dependent on the provision. When foster carers are registered they are registered for the number of children they can take. We are working across the region as well as in Middlesbrough.

There are issues with accommodation for young people leaving care in that we don't have enough provision. Work is being carried out with providers to ascertain what tenancies will look like over the next 12-18 months.

- Supported Lodgings - how will we recruit more of these providers? Do young people want this?
- National drivers – Local Placements and working in partnership.
- Local drivers.
- Planning ahead.

AB requested the strategy with data included be presented to the board.

**ACTION:** JM to complete needs analysis and circulate completed strategy prior to next board

## **6. VEMT report (closed session, report circulated)**

JM stated that in the future this will be collected at the end of the board meeting and destroyed due to the sensitive nature.

JW stated that the report is broken down into three areas; Inspection framework, information regarding the structure of VEMT process and stats around Looked after Children and those leaving care.

The Inspection framework was introduced in January 2018 and covers:

- Vulnerable adolescents – sexually or criminally exploited.
- Associated with gangs.
- Risk of radicalisation – PREVENT strategy.
- Trafficking and modern slavery.

VEMT – focuses on CSE its strength is in the structure which is Tees wide. This is a high level strategic meeting. Looking at public campaigns, taxi drivers etc.

VEMT Practitioner Group – chaired by JW.

JS asked regarding the significant drop indicated in data for March. JW stated that this is due to a group of 3 YP moving off VEMT. There was also 2 YP who had turned 18.

A Panel Member asked if this represented the extent of the problem.

JW stated that this is not fully representative. There is a strong partnership and intelligence sharing. Operation Stay Safe is active on a Friday evening. Stay Safe work to information intelligence from Police and visit various areas both in and out of the town centre. A Panel Member highlighted that she has reported issues in her area which have not been addressed. JW advised that if there is a particular problem identified then this can be

passed to him outside of the meeting. AB stated that information submitted to the police via any referral route is sent into the VEMT Police team via Operation Shield. JW stated that locations are disrupted to prevent victims and perpetrators coming together.

Looked after children (page 5 of report).

- 12 cases over 12 month period.
- 12 YP are LAC or leaving care. Ages 14-17 years. 8 placed in Middlesbrough. 4 in other Local Authority.
- SECOS have 20 YP in our care system receiving support.
- 609 episodes of missing from care relating to 80 different YP. 303 relate to 8 YP. These are complex and often end up in residential or with a DOLS (Deprivation of Liberty)

Training has been provided to front line staff around reporting missing to police including at what point this should be done.

AB stated that from a corporate parent perspective, training has been carried out with staff in our children's homes over sensible reporting. This has made a big difference as it was found that staff were being over cautious. Police have been involved with the training

Drug and alcohol use:

- 23 concerns about child themselves, 209 concerns regarding a parent or carer, 50 regarding alcohol within the family. Some of the concerns may relate to foetal alcohol syndrome.
- Maternal Infant Child Health (MICH) have a robust guideline which states you should not drink or use drugs at all during pregnancy. Identifies mothers who are a potential risk of passing on those issues to the children.
- Alcohol, drugs and smoking attitudes from children and YP are changing. Energy drinks are becoming more popular and people are not aware of the risk these pose. They are addictive. The number of YP misusing is reducing

No LAC children or leaving care reported for radicalisation.

JW is recommending a policy for digital resilience. Currently there is nothing in terms of the buying of phones and contracts. Board approval will be sought for policy. Rules and regulations are needed around what we purchase as corporate parents.

A Panel Member asked how a 10 year old is identified as being at risk. JW stated that usually children start to talk at school or a parent will report finding something on a phone.

A Panel Member asked if people are encouraged to trust their instinct.

Awareness training is available through Middlesbrough's Safeguarding Children's Board. Parent's workshop has been brought out to teach digital parenting. It has been difficult to get parents on board with this.

JM stated that staff in Children's Home, carers and social workers need to do as we would as a parent when dealing with our own children.

It was agreed by all Panel Members that the digital resilience policy should be developed and brought back to board.

**ACTION:** JW

## 7. Children in Care Council (CiCC) presentation

Children in Care Council delivered presentation.

- Highlighted the need for mental health assessments alongside medical assessments.
- Regional CiCC is made up of children in care and care leavers from across the North East.
- YP highlighted that transport costs are an issue for those in care.
- Care leavers living alone may not have easy access to their network of friends.
- All care leavers should be exempt from paying council tax.
- The benefits of post adoption contact needs to be highlighted in terms of sibling contact.
- There is a need for stability in terms of social workers, allowing a bond to develop.
- The need for a Single Assessment to be completed because the mother is in care herself is stereotyping children in care as bad mothers. This creates stress and has a negative impact on mental health and unborn child's wellbeing.

Chair advised that from April 2018 care leavers in Middlesbrough are exempt from Council Tax.

Panel Member's agreed that poignant issues have been raised which should be discussed further.

AF stated that she would welcome the opportunity to work with the CiCC.

In terms of CiCC meetings format they commence with a brief summary and catch up. The meeting is formal initially to discuss and hopefully resolve any issues. Professionals attend the meetings in order for the CiCC to get their voices heard. Informal chats are held with representatives from services.

The CiCC current directive is "how can they have contact with all children in care".

Discussions have been held around using Survey Monkey, youth clubs and play sessions. CiCC is always in talks with Pathways and social workers.

SK advised that she would like to discuss how to best ascertain the voice of the child.

## 8. Any Other Business

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**9:**

### **Dates of Future Meetings:**

Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2018 4pm – 6pm

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2018 4pm – 6pm