

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board was held on Wednesday 27 April 2022.

<b>PRESENT:</b>	Councillors C Hobson (Chair), B Cooper, D Davison (Vice-Chair), A Hellaoui, M Saunders, Z Uddin, J Walker and C Dodds
<b>PRESENT BY INVITATION:</b>	Councillors
<b>ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:</b>	D fenny, Peacock (Participation People) and Glew (Thirteen Group)
<b>OFFICERS:</b>	V Banks, S Blood, S Butcher, Davies, T Dunn, James, P Jemson, C Breheny and G Nicholson
<b>APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:</b>	Councillors T Higgins, R Brown, R Farnham, R Hamer, Jefferson, T Parkinson, P Rudd, N Ayres and Dunning

21/1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

21/2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received at this point in the meeting.

21/3 **MINUTES- CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD- 30 MARCH 2022**

The minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 30 March 2022 were read and accepted as a true record.

21/4 **COVID-19 UPDATE**

The Director of Children's Services advised the Board that there had recently been an outbreak of covid 19 in one of the children's homes, and although this did not affect the overall running of the home, it has had some effect on staffing.

In terms of Children's social workers, Middlesbrough were required to fill a return to the Department of Education and the last return outlined that Middlesbrough was in the 0-10% absence rate, however in 11-20% in residential homes due to the recent outbreak.

In terms of further information, the Children's Education Scrutiny panel had requested information on vaccination of children 5+ and 12+, and the Director would be returning with further information, the Board advised they would also like to receive this information.

Covid 19 updates to the Board would also return to a monthly basis.

Agreed- That the updated be noted

21/5 **PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Kathy Peacock, Youth Voice and Influencer Contractor from Participation People and Xavier Davies, Apprentice Youth Training & Development Officer were in attendance and provided the Board with an update regarding participation.

Kathy provided an update in relation to the care experienced groups which were being supported by participation. Participation were currently supported two groups:

- Children in Care Council- 10-17 years, which will meet on a fortnightly basis at Easterside Hub
- Care Leavers Forum- 18-25 years, which will moved to a fortnightly basis.

Updated from the groups were as follows:

## #YouthVoice Update April 2022



Children In Care Council (currently six members)

- The two OFSTED inspectors visited their group on the 29th March. They asked the young people questions about their care support and received positive examples of current support at school, from their social worker and knowing their plans. The young people did raise the issue that they wanted less changes of social workers and the inspectors said they would raise this issue in their meeting with the Children's Director the following morning. The inspectors heard about what the CICC had been doing and joined them in an activity to identify what they needed to reach their goals.
- Sue Butcher joined their group on the 5th April. She told them the inspectors really enjoyed their time with the group and that they had spoken to her about their issue of having too many changes of social workers. She explained what work was happening to bring experienced social workers into the Council and the incentives offered to ensure they stayed.
- The group met Keith from the Middlesbrough Football Foundation to plan a football themed activity day on the 28th July for care experienced young people. Part of the day will involve asking the young people questions about their support experiences.
- The group choose to have a fun activity instead of their group on the 12th April. We all went bowling.
- The group will continue working on the issues they have identified and will give feedback to key decision makers.

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Kathy advised that the football themed activity day would now take place in the first week of August. Once details were confirmed, details would be forwarded to the Corporate Parenting Board. Likewise, she outlined that if Board members would like to attend the Children in Care Council, to contact her directly.

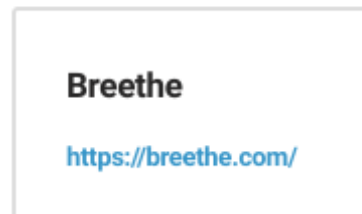
In terms of the Care Leavers forum, the following update was provided:

## #YouthVoice Update April 2022



### Care Leavers Forum (Currently two members)

- Numbers have decreased due to several members moving out of the area, one returning to work and one being heavily pregnant.
- We have one care leaver who attends every meeting and is very committed and enthusiastic. She is keen to grow the group and has been instrumental in organising the Care Leavers Brunch that will take place on the 14th April (10.30-1pm at the Folk in the Road). We plan to market the group during the event.
- We are working with the Pathways Team and every two weeks the social group they run will be taken over by Participation People to run engagement activities.
- The Children's Commissioner Office has given the CLF 200 free membership codes for Breethe – a wellbeing app.



These codes will be sent out to care leavers who might find it useful

Kathy advised that, whilst they have the group, to them, it is about meeting as many care experienced young people at possible. They will therefore be visiting childrens homes and looking at other ways to engage. Whilst the numbers were low for the brunch event, Kathy commented that it was a starting point. This will be run again and it doesn't work, another event/ engagement will be explored. A board member also stated that even though the numbers were low, it was a step to show that we care and support care experienced young people.

Following the information, the Director outlined that Ofsted took the views from young people very seriously, which provided a very good loop. She also commanded the survey undertaken by Kathy, as it was done in a fun and interactive.

The issue of engagement was raised, as a care leaver outlined that she did not receive the information on the event until an hour before it was due to start. Kathy advised that in the

future, a piece of work would be undertaken in conjunction with Pathways on ways to engagement. Kathy stated that during the Christmas period, she sent texts to over 200 care leavers and from those, she received 5 responses about interest in joining the care leavers' forum. We want to make sure that young people have plenty of notice.

A board members commended the work of Participation People and that as time goes on, it would be hoped that these become more popular with young people.

AGREED- That the update be noted.

21/6

## **PERFORMANCE AGAINST CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD STRATEGY**

The Head of Looked after Children and Corporate Parenting was in attendance and provided the board with information relating to the Corporate Parenting Board scorecard.

The Head of Service advised that the scorecard was in place for the Corporate Parenting Board to see how our performance was progressing and have the opportunity to challenge. The data was presented slightly differently from previously meeting, and this data set went through every performance indicator for corporate parenting, however the Head of Service had selected the indicators which she thought the board would find most useful.

The updates were as follows:

### **CP1- number of children in care in Middlesbrough**

- Numbers of children and young people open to social care, in particular, children looked after (CLA) have shown significant improvement since February 2021.
- CLA numbers have vastly improved, dropping down below the 500 mark in January 2022, reaching 503 in February 2022- a 2% increase prior to last month.
- In March 2022 there were a further 25 CLA and 12 that ceased to be looked after
- CLA numbers are down 14.2% in comparison to the same point last year.

### **CP2- Gap between Middlesbrough and Regional CiC rate per 10,000- Trend**

- The rate of CLA per 10,000 had steadily declined since February 2021, recently reaching the lowest rate in 12 months in January 2022 at 40.81.
- The rate increased from January to February 2022 by 7.4%- still a 33% decrease in comparison to the same point last year.
- We remain above all external benchmarks, and have fallen below our 2022/21 outturn.

### **CP3- Ratio of children entering to leaving care- trend**

- The number of children starting a period of care remains stable, while those ceasing a period of care is showing a decrease since June 2021. This could be influenced by the decrease in overall numbers of CLA.

### **CP5- FTE caseloads between 15-20 – Trend**

- Board will be interested to know that caseloads have decreased.
- FTE caseloads between 15-20 reveal that peak caseload % was in March 2021 at 63.60%- 18.9% above the 2020/21 target.
- The caseloads have decreased since August 2021, falling below the target in February 2022 by 11.4%

### **CP6- Average number of weeks children spend in care (Ceasing Care in Month)- Trend**

- The average number of weeks children spend in care has maintained below the 2020-21 target in the last 12 months. Highlighting the positive turnaround for children in care. With the exception of October 2021 and September 2021, when the average peaked to 240.30.
- In February 2022, the average number of weeks reached the lowest recorded in 12 months at 78.90.

### **CP9- % of CiC placed with parents on care orders at home- trend.**

- The number of children in care placed with parents in care orders at home exceeds the 2020-21 target across all months.
- In recent months the % has slowly declined, reaching the lowest recorded in February 2022 at 7.20%- a 41% decrease in comparison to 12 months previous.
- Currently have 45 children in total looked after by a parent.

### **CP12- % of children placed outside of 20 miles from home postcode- 12 month trend.**

- The % of children in care placed outside of 20 miles of home postcode remains above the 2020-21 target, 15%. We do however need to consider the type of placement e.g. securing a plan of permanence or with family members.
- CLA placed more than 20 miles from their home postcode has stayed at a steady % in the last 12 months, at 20% in February 2022. This is a significant improvement in comparison to the highest recorded % in August 2021 at 26%.

**CP13- % if CiC placed in in-house foster placements- 12 month trend**

- The % of in-house foster carer placements had remained relatively stable in the last 12 months.
- The % exceeded the 21% 2020/21 target in January 2022 and has remained above the target in February 2022 reaching 22.27%- a 12.4 % increase in comparison to 12 months prior.

**CP19- % of CiC/CL placements breakdowns in last 12 months.**

- The % of children in care/ care leaver breakdowns on the last 12 months shows a significant decrease in October 2021.
- The % remains below the 2020-21 target in recent months. In February 2022 the % reached 4.04% , a -4.51% difference in comparison to 12 months prior.
- Date was not captured for December 2021.

**CP22- % of post 16 CiC in EET- Trend**

- The % of children in care post 16 in EET dropped below the 2020/21 target 65% from November 2021 to January 2022.
- In February 2022 the % increased to 70%- 5% above the target. This is a +10% difference in comparison to last month

**CP25- % of SDQ's in 12 months (Age 4-16 and CLA for 12 + months- a 12 month trend**

- The % of SDQ's in 12 months (aged 4-16 and CLA for 12+ months) has steadily increased over the last 12 months.
- In February 2022, the % increased to 88%, a +3% in comparison to January 2022 and a +42% difference in comparison to 12 months previous.

The Director of Children's Services added that the number of CLA had risen recently and there were two specific reasons for this:

- With the Future for families Hub, the complexity of cases means that the outreach work hasn't taken place.
- Somerset judgement- we have a cohort of children who have remained looked after due to this judgement. Current time we have 15-20 children who would have been adopted if not for the Somerset judgement.

A board member advised that she had read in the media that there had been a 14% increase in CLA in the North East of England. In response, the Director of Children's Services advised that Middlesbrough, in terms of the trend has been doing very well in terms of our North East colleagues however she was aware that some number of CLA in North East local authorities have gone up quite significantly, however Middlesbrough's trend has gone down.

The Director outlined that they can bring North East figures if desired.

A board member felt it would be useful to look at how we ensure good news stories are published and in response, the Director outlined she would be speaking to the Gazette about how we can be more proactive and introduce features. She also outlined that the recent report from the Ofsted monitoring visit would be published shortly and within this were positives.

A board member also queried the support provided to children who still live with their parents but under the support of Middlesbrough Council.

Children who are supported by parents and by family members. When cared for by extended family members, they become a regulated foster carer and are provided support by the foster teams from supervision, support, training to financial support. When children are placed with parents they received a support from the social worker and from the intervention workers who will provide training and they also go out to the wider community to look at additional support to help integrate them in the local communities e.g. specialised training, early help (group settings).

Each child has a care team around them e.g. mental health, drug and alcohol services, to support parents in all areas of life and that wraps around the child and the Head of service would bring a package to a future meeting for information.

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

21/7

**FOSTERING- QUARTER 4 2021/22 DATA**

Jennifer Rowan, Acting Service Manager was in attendance to provide the Quarter 4 fostering data- January 2022- March 2022.

The Acting Service Manager outlined that they had been a significant increase of enquiring coming through the fostering service as they had been due to the extensive recruitment campaign and periodic pushes on these. The Fostering service has continuous conversations with the marketing team regarding the best way to target audience, be that through google ads for social media posts.

Within quarter 4 there had been a 100% increase on enquiries, which was a great achievement (15 enquiries in Quarter 3 and 38 in quarter 4). There had also been significant increase in the number of initial first visits, with just 1 with quarter 3 and 14 in quarter 4. This number is a good sign in that the service are hopeful that these will become future fostering households.

In terms of the fostering families , this number has decreased in quarter 4 (119 ) however there have been a number of contributing factors to this, for example, there has been 5 de-registrations from the mainstream cohort. 1 household had been de-registered by the service area and the other 4 had deregistered as they had not been able to provide fostering for 2 years due to personal circumstances (health and change in work). Practical issues and covid 19 has also been contributing issues to de-registrations. It was also noted that although there have been de-registrations, 3 have continued to foster but under an alternative agency.

Within quarter 4 there had been no de-registrations for connected or foster to adopt. With regards to foster placements available for children that are not occupied, in quarter 4 there were 7. These placements were for babies (0-2) and respite care. In terms of panel activity, the acting service manager advised that there has been a significant increase as 8 connected fostering families had been approved by panel, which would provide connecting fostering for 12 children. Another success in quarter 4 is the number of matches for children and their long term fostering families (their forever fostering home for their childhood), 20 children have gained stability and permanence.

The Acting Service Manager did state that unfortunately there had been no supporting lodgings approved.

After providing the data set, the acting service manager outlined the following to the board regarding the service:

**What is working well**

- Performance was improving across the service in terms of compliance and quality.
- Foster carer reviews are taking place in timescales, over 80% of reviews held have been in timescales. No reviews have been held outside of timescales due to practice.
- Foster carers are receiving monthly supervision which supports the fostering families and the children in our care
- There has been a significant increase in enquiries and initial visits with a further planned recruitment drive in May 2022
- The service have improved timeliness of completion of connected carers assessments which supports plans of permanence for our children, at the time of writing no fostering assessments have exceeded the 24 weeks timescale.
- There has been a significant increase in children matched with their foster carers as their plan of permanence
- The recruitment of a liaison worker and hub carer for the Mockingbird has

commenced – on target for implementation in September 2022.

- We have three social work students in the service.
- Staff morale remains good and they work collectively to support the service, the fostering families and the children in our care.
- We are utilising available foster placements more effectively and have a better understanding of availability.

#### **What are we worried about**

- There remains not enough fostering families for our children in our care.

#### **What makes things more complicated**

- Data performance systems are improved providing greater accuracy.
- There has been a number of deregistration's of mainstream foster carers, one has been due to this being progressed by the service, one as a result of a transfer to an IFA and the others had not provided care to children for extended periods due to their own personal circumstances.
- There were 7 foster placements available at the time of obtaining the data, these were a mixture of availability for babies and respite provision for children

#### **Plan**

- To increase the number of fostering enquiries and increase the number of newly approved carers to 10 in 2022 and 20 in 2023.
- Develop an improved system and tool box for collecting views of children looked after and fostering families birth children. Their voices need to be heard.
- To continue to develop a robust and targeted training programme for staff within fostering service to improve practice.
- Recruitment drive to progress in May 2022

A board member made reference to the comment surrounding Middlesbrough previous partner (North Yorkshire) and sought clarification on this.

In response, the Executive Director of Children's Services outlined that the partnership with North Yorkshire was a government run scheme and undertaken by the Department of Education. The partnership was carefully monitored and was put in place for a specific timeframe. The partnership looked a targeted piece of work, which has now been completed.

The Acting Service Manager also added that the partnership brought about 2 way learning. North Yorkshire have taken information back regarding connected carers and complimented Middlesbrough's performance. North Yorkshire also complimented Regulation 24 assessment (temporary approval for connected carers) and audit (learning conversations) highly praising the level of understanding and accountability about our foster carers who they were supporting.

AGREED- That the information be noted.

21/8 **FUTURE FOR FAMILIES- SERVICE UPDATE**

21/9 **VIRTUAL SCHOOLS UPDATE**

Victoria Banks, Head of Virtual Schools provided an update in relation to virtual schools.

The Head outlined that every year the Virtual school holds an annual conference, however due to covid the last 2 years have been online, however this year it was held in person, which was fantastic.

The conference was held on 11 February 2022 at the Riverside Stadium. Virtual schools now have a responsibility for all children with a social worker and one of the aims was to gather delegates together to champion the education for our children with a social worker. There were over 150 delegates and it was attended by head teachers/ governors/ designated teachers/ mental health leads/foster carers/ delegates from children's service.

The conference was extremely well attended and the Head expressed a thank you to the senior leadership team. Rob Brown, Director of Education and Partnerships hosted the event, however the event was jointed hosted by Middlesbrough Council and Redcar Cleveland Council. There was a joint address from the Directors of Children's Services and Sue Butcher provided an inspiring speech.

Feedback from the event was excellent, and there were some excellent outcomes and change of practice for our children, for example:

*"It was great to hear from people who have had lived experience of being in care and I was very moved at times. I found the balance of speakers great"*

*"I found it really beneficial and I am meeting with someone this afternoon about Trauma Informed Practice"*

The event was free, however there was a catch for all delegates, in that they were asked to make an Education Champion pledge to become a champion for children with a social worker.

There were over a 150 signatures and the pledge was as follows:

- **I pledge to become an Education Champion for children with a social worker**
- **I pledge that I will promote good educational outcomes for children with a social worker I will raise awareness of the needs of children with a social worker within my daily practice and offer professional challenge to colleagues to ensure that children with a social worker have**
- **access to the best possible education both in school and in the community**
- **I pledge that I will advocate for children with a social worker in my daily practice by keeping children with a social worker in mind throughout my working day I will hold high aspirations and support colleagues to ensure all children with a social worker have outstanding educational opportunities I will have high expectations of the key adults who feature in the**
- **lives of children with a social worker and expect them to be involved in their learning and educational progress**
- **I pledge that I will, within my given roll, swiftly intervene if there is evidence of any child with**
- **a social worker not reaching their full potential I will be mindful of educational barriers and**
- **work collectively with other professionals to remove the barriers preventing a child with a social worker reaching their potential.**
- **I pledge that I will delight in celebrating the achievements of children with a social worker I will encourage the ambition of our children and guide them into the future they aspire to.**

The Head outlined that she would be calling on Councillors and if any Councillors would like to sign the pledge to become an Education Champion for children with a social worker, to get in touch directly.

The Head of Virtual School briefly outlined that data of the virtual school cohort.

The virtual school statutory school age roll has decreased month on month.

- Currently 339 school aged children
- 155 (46%) primary school
- 184 (54%) secondary school
- 53% male



- 47% female
  - 207 (61%) are in-borough schools and 132 (39%) are in out of borough schools.
- As a virtual school we give advice, and therefore the further they attend school, the more difficult it is to influence, however they have excellent partnership working and have a North East virtual schools group to ensure the education of the children is at heart.

In terms of education stability, these were reviewed by the Virtual schools governing body for oversight. The figures were as follows:

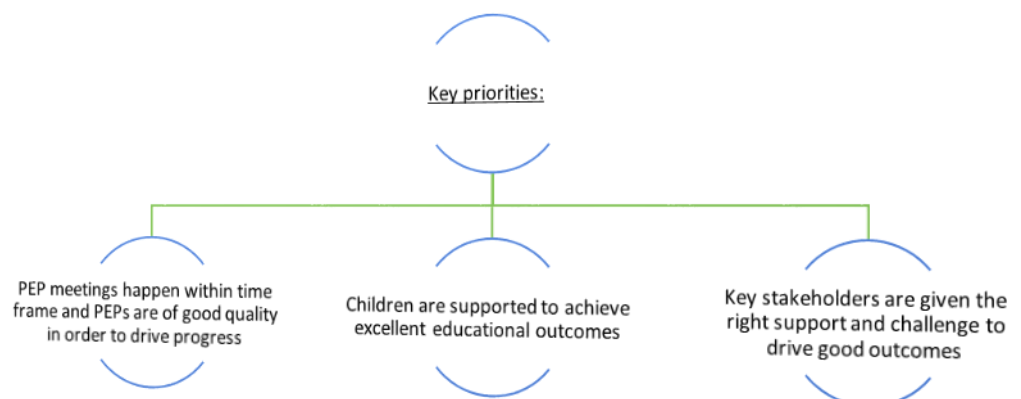
	Sept 2019 – July 2020	Sept 2020 – July 2021	Sept 2021 – April 2022	Projection 21-22
<b>School Moves</b>	85	67	43	57
<b>Permanent Exclusions</b>	0	0	1	2
<b>Sessions lost to Suspensions</b>	843	252.5	349	465
<b>Attendance</b>	74.4%	83.9%	88.1%	86%

In terms of permanent exclusion, there has been 1. However this decision would be going to an independent reviewing panel for challenge.

Next steps and how to sustain improvements

- DFE attendance improvement plan
- Inclusion policy launch
- School inclusion pledge
- PROCLAIM project roll out

The key priorities for the virtual schools for this year is as follows:



Each child with a social worker should have a personal education Plan (PEP) and the virtual schools is responsible for is making sure that the right people are reviewing the PEP- the social worker, the school, the foster carer and the young people.

Where all the stakeholders are in attendance, there are good outcomes and holistic PEPS which support the young people.

One aspects which has been a struggle is the attendance of young people at their PEP meeting. They voices are captured and someone speaks for them, however Tia James, Virtual Schools Educational Champion Apprentice has a list of young people who have not attended

their PEP meeting and asking if there is anything we can do to change this e.g. face to face/ identify barriers.

At the end of each term, using the data we look at the outcomes the PEPs have made. There are over 300 sections of data within a PEP that can be analysed which can be done on a termly basis.

The virtual schools has an intervention centre, which had specialist English, Maths and Science tutors and young people who may require additional support can be identified by the data. Mental health and emotional support is also captured and we can fast track support if required.

The Head of Virtual Schools finally discussed the PROCLAIM project:

### **PROCLAIM**

**Providing Rich Opportunities for Children Who are Looked After In Middlesbrough**

Looked after by the community, who are vulnerable (who have a social worker, have special educational needs or who are young carers).

### **VISION**

Our vision is to ensure that all Middlesbrough education settings are Attachment Aware and Trauma Informed in their practice, for the benefit of their whole learning community, by 2025.

### **MISSION**

Our mission is to have a universal language of attachment and trauma across Middlesbrough, underpinned by training, supervision, support and challenge which will drive excellent outcomes for all children and young people, particularly those who are most vulnerable.

### **PURPOSE**

Our purpose is to address the needs of children and young people in Middlesbrough. In education, we have witnessed further significant increases in children and young people requiring alternative provision, being referred for Education, Health and Care needs assessments, being persistently absent and being subject to permanent exclusions from our education settings. This data highlights an ever growing need to provide environments that are rich in positive and nurturing relationships and where our children and young people can achieve their potential and 'grow and prosper' (SEND strategy 2020-2024).

The Head advised that key individuals from outside Middlesbrough have become interested in our work e.g Luke Rodgers, which is a fantastic achievement for Middlesbrough.

There had been an Easter holiday club, which focused on education, however this was only attended by 3 young people, and therefore further discussions would be held to discover how to engage further with young people.

The Head of virtual schools was commended for her report and presentation.

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

**ANY OTHER URGENT ITEMS WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIR, MAY BE CONSIDERED.**