

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board was held on 17 September 2020.

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

PRESENT AS OBSERVERS: Councillor G Purvis

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Detective Chief Inspector D Fenny.

OFFICIALS: V Banks, S Blood, C Breheny, S Butcher, S Davison, T Dunn, A Ferguson, L Hunter and J Rowan.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor J McTigue, Councillor L Garvey
M Mohammed and B Butt (Member of Youth Parliament and Deputy
Member of Youth Parliament for Middlesbrough)
B Bradshaw, R Brown, G Earl, R Farnham, R Hamer, R Scott, S Williams
and P Rudd.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None declared

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 30 JULY 2020

The minutes held on 30 July 2020 were read and agreed as a true record.

2 ACTIONS FROM BOARD MEETING- 30 JULY 2020

The Democratic Services Officer details in relation to the actions taken at the meeting on 30 July 2020.

The Chair wished the Board to note that all the meetings for the munciple year had been scheduled and meetings would now take place on a Wednesday.

AGREED- That the actions be noted.

3 UPDATE FROM MEMBER OF YOUTH PARLIAMENT FOR MIDDLESBROUGH

The apprentice from the Council's Particpation Team advised the Board that due to school and College commitments neither the Member of Youth Parliament or Deputy Member of Youth Parliament for Middlesbrough could be present.

The apprentice has recently taken over mentor responsibilities for the representatives and would update the Board at the next meeting meeting once she and the representatives had met. The Chair asked that if teh representatives were unable to attend, a blog/ video or written update would be most welcome.

AGREED- That the update be noted.

4 MULTI-AGENCY LOOKED AFTER PARTNERSHIPS (MALAP) SUB GROUPS- STANDARD ITEM

The Chair outlined to the Board that information regarding the multi agency looked after children partnership (MALAP) sub groups, was a standard item on the agenda.

The Chair raised some concern that no sub groups had met since July and advised there had been some confusion relating to the elected councillor membership on the groups.

Due to this, it was proposed that MALAP be relaunched and a paper be submitted to the next

meeting of the Board. Further discussions with the Executive Director of Children's Services and Director of Children's Care would take place prior to the next meeting.

AGREED- That a paper in relation to relaunching MALAP be circulated to the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board.

5 SOUTH TEES YOUTH OFFENDING SERVICE

The Head of Partnerships and South Tees Youth Offending Service provided an presentation to the Board in relation to South Tees Youth Offending Service and its offer to looked after children.

A report had previously been circulated to the Board, which provided some context. The report outlined that the Youth Justice Board's vision was 'A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society. This would prevent offending and create safer communities with fewer victims'. The Youth Justice Board are clear that the justice system must see 'children as children first, and offenders second'.

Youth Offending Services' have three key strategic priorities on which they are measured;

- To reduce first time entrants to the youth justice system
- To prevent re-offending by children and young people
- Reduce the use of custody for young people (both sentenced and remanded)

The South Tees Youth Offending Service adheres to a National Protocol, which provides a framework to help local areas reduce criminalisation of looked-after children and care leavers. It was co-developed with a wide range of stakeholders to achieve the best outcomes for children in care and care leavers. The Manager outlined that this could only be achieved by strong multi-agency working at a local and national level.

The protocol was developed by leaders in the statutory and voluntary sectors, from across children's social care, justice, police and health, and illustrates the importance that we, collectively, place on helping vulnerable children and young people achieve their full potential.

In order to shape service delivery, the service received feedback from young people, and this is done in a variety of ways including for example, the service receives feedback from young people at the end of every court order/ court disposal. All Youth Offending Service staff have received training on Adverse Children's experiences and Trauma.

The service also are working on resettlement planning , which may move into the Youth Offending Service inspection framework from 2021. The resettlement planning looks at the care for children in custody (sentenced or remanded) and outlines this should start from entering the remand placement or custodial establishment.

The South Tees Youth offending team have also developed a 'working with Looked after children' guide for practitioners in Youth Offending Service and Children's Social Care.

The South Tees Youth offending service was is regulated by HMIP. In 2019, the offending service received an overall rating of 'Good', however work being delivered to children and young people was noted to be 'outstanding, with assessment being a strength'. The work being delivered to children and young people was noted to be 'outstanding, with assessment being a strength'. HMIP stated 'Case managers demonstrated a clear understanding of each child or young person's life and how that affected their current behaviour and risks' and that 'young people supervised by the YOS rated the service they received highly'.

They noted 'strong relationships with partner agencies – in particular, the Police and Crime Commissioner's office, Forensic Child Assessment Mental Health Services, and social care staff'.

There were no specific recommendations arising from the HMIP inspection in relation to Children who are looked after. However, since the inspection South Tees Youth Offending Service have continued to strive for excellence for all of the children and young people they work with, and continue to offer an enhanced level of service outlined above to those who are looked after. It is now also a strategic priority in 20/21.

South Tees Youth Offending Service were not directly involved in the Ofsted inspection which took place in November 2019. However, there was a recommendation to improve the response to children held overnight in police custody. Since the inspection, considerable work has taken place to improve this area of practice. A 'PACE' protocol has been written and signed off by the partnership, practice guidance is available to staff in both the Youth Offending Service and in Children's Services, and a steering group has been established to monitor and scrutinise PACE transfers. A Board member also raised this issue and was pleased with the actions taken to address this.

The Board asked for further clarity of what happened to young people who go to prison. In response, the Manager outlined that a young person may be taken into custody until they are sentenced or remanded in custody. The Youth Offending Service must see a young person within 10 working days if held in custody and 5 working days if remanded. Where possible, the Youth Offending Service Justice Board try to resettle young people back into the community, by use of holistic measures and will look at accommodation as part of resettlement. If a young person remains in custody, there are gentle routes to resettle them into the community, for example, the young person may be given release on temporary license, and can be accompanied to college interviews or accommodated to interviews for work/ housing providers. The Youth Offending Service work with young people aged 10-18 years old. Young people can be sent to a Young Offenders Institute if they are over the age of 15, prior to that custodial sentences would be served in a secure setting.

In terms of caseloads, the Manager outlined that there was approximately 120 young people across the service, predominantly white British males aged 17 (from Ma 2020 statistics). The service has 43 members of staff, 8 case managers per team and 9 support workers. Some staff members may be part time or specialist e.g. Education worker or trauma specialist.

South Tees Youth Offending Service 'offer' to Children looked After

Reducing the number of Children who are Looked after in the criminal justice system is a key priority for South Tees Youth Offending Service. To achieve this South Tees Youth Offending Service offer a range of additional activity for Children who are looked after;

- Work with care home staff and Police to identify appropriate responses to young people who offend in residential settings, including the use of restorative intervention as a solution to challenging behaviours
- Build on current arrangements with Middlesbrough Children's Homes to offer support and advice to care staff and extend this across the South Tees area
- Promote good practice guidance with staff and partners for working with Looked After Children
- Ensure active attendance at all planning meetings for young people with Children looked after status
- South Tees Youth Offending Service safeguarding case managers provide an essential link to Children's Services teams in both Local Authorities as well as providing advice and guidance to colleagues on safeguarding issues and processes.
- Ensure all Intervention Plans for children looked after are shared with young people, their carers and colleagues from Children's Services
- Developed joint supervision arrangements between South Tees Youth Offending Service and Middlesbrough Children's Services offering the opportunity to share decision making and agree strategies to meet the needs of young people known to both services.
- Developed a working agreement between South Tees Youth Offending Service and Early Help to ensure joint planning and supervision arrangements are in place, the aim being to reduce escalation in the criminal justice and / or looked after system by working collaboratively.

- Work with Cleveland Police and Children's Home staff to ensure those young people in Children's Homes who offend have their offending behaviour addressed appropriately, minimising prosecution
- Staff from South Tees Youth Offending Service have now developed a training package and started to deliver this to staff within the Future for families service.

The Manager outlined that South Tees Youth Offending Service recognised the needs to offer an 'over and above' service to our Looked After Children. The Board were made aware these caseloads are monitored to ensure we do not have over representation in the criminal justice system. The new Chair of the Youth Justice Board, Keith Fraser was launching a piece work on disproportionality and there was some focus given to children looked after. The Manager outlined that this information would be circulated to the Board.

The Manager also outlined that systems and processes are in place to robustly manage children looked after within the service; there was collaborative and joined up work with partners – no duplication of planning and young people are offered a good service, appropriate to their need and supported by trained, skilled professionals.

In terms of next steps, the Manager outlined that in normal circumstances, the Youth Offending service was required to produce a Youth Justice Plan each year which also set out in detail local priorities. However due to Covid, the service were asked to submit a covid recovery /service plan to the Youth Justice Board this year.

Within the service objectives for 2020/21, there is the following: 'Responding to Looked After Children - To ensure positive outcomes for Looked after Children who enter the youth justice system', this was due to the there being 20% of children looked after within the Youth offending service.

Following approval from the Youth Justice Board, a plan will be developed to identify and progress actions of how this priority will be achieved, which will be monitored via Youth offending service Management, Youth offending Service Board and Youth Justice Board.

The Manager was thanked for her informative presentation.

AGREED-

- **That the information provided be noted.**
- **That the PACE protocol be circulated to Board members**
- **That the link in respect to the work undertaken by the Chair of the Youth Justice Board on disproportionality be circulated to Board members.**

6 SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 5 - ORDER OF BUSINESS

AGREED - in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No. 5, the Board agreed to vary the order of business as follows: 10, 9 and 11

7 FOSTERING SERVICE REPORT

The Chair welcomed the Team Manager from the Fostering Team to the meeting, to provide the Board with an overview of the dataset 2019-2020 (1 April 2019-31 March 2020). This was a national data collection from Ofsted, which collected data on the following:

- Characteristics of foster carers

- Terms of approval for fostering households
- Capacity
- Use of fostering placement
- Date on complaint allegations, and
- Number of brother and sister placements.

In terms of the dataset, there was a 3 year comparison. In 2018, there were 137 household offering 251 placements and in 2020, there were 141 households and 267 placements. The households are broken down into short-term placements, long-term placements, connected carers and foster to adopt. Of the placements, 52% provided short term placements, however there was a clear push within the service to ensure stability and place children with carers who they know and trust.

In terms of recruitment, 2020 results in the best ever recruitment of 41 newly approved foster carers, 22 mainstream and 11 connected carers. The Board queried whether the recruitment had been done differently to attract such a positive result. In response, the Manager outlined that there was a lot of competition from other local authorities and independent fostering services, however we have gained staff from these areas which provides expert knowledge. There has been a large social media drive, the service has updated their fostering in Middlesbrough website, updated the Fostering portal (although this is for approved foster carers) , there is word of mouth, good practice and real commitment from our foster carers in Middlesbrough. The Manager also outlined that there conversion rates of prospective foster carers transferring from Independent providers to Middlesbrough Council was increasing.

The Manager also outlined that the Middlesbrough's Foster Carers Association was running effectively, providing peer support, learning exchange and was seen an good practice from foster carers. The association has also worked to discuss and overcome issues associated with Covid and the Director of Children Services has also spoken to foster carers in relation to Covid related matters.

The Manager further outlined that having consultations with foster carers has increased confidence and these are now taking place on a monthly basis.

A board member queried whether kinship carers/connected carers were treated equally to approved foster carers. In response, the Manager outlined that connected carers are either proved through regulation 24 or through family placement panel and receive the same support/ financial support as any approved foster carer.

The Manager finally mentioned 2020 predictions and developments outlining that there was currently:

- 11 form F assessments underway - from these there have bee 5 newly approved foster.
- 11 new fostering households with 12 new Short term /long term placements and 3 Respite placements (Assessment dependent)
- Regulation 24 Assessments, 10 carers and 17 children to place or to be placed
- Temporary approval for 66 Carers with 89 Children placed
- Planned Form C Assessments for 14 Carers with 22 Children placed
- Targeted recruitment: Young people - 11-16 years; Emergency placements; Sibling groups and mother and child placements.

There has also been a recruitment Campaign, to include:

- a brand identity for fostering for Middlesbrough which will be incorporated within the wider Middlesbrough children matter brand family
- a brochure and supporting inserts with case studies of local children and foster carer's
- a bespoke website which incorporates video and an online quiz

- a suite of case studies and accompanying films
- a collection of poster and flyer designs

The Chair thanked the Manager for her presentation and asked whether trend data on foster carer could be submitted to future meetings of the Board.

AGREED-

- That the information be noted
- That trend data in relation to foster carers be submitted to future Board meetings.

8 FUTURE FOR FAMILIES- UPDATE

The Director of Children's Services provided a presentation to the Board in respect to Future for Families. She outlined that this was an extraordinary scheme with positive outcomes for children in Middlesbrough.

The Board were shown the Future for Families Hib model, which contained provocations (key questions we want to know and ask for our looked after children) and non - negotiables e.g. whole family approach.

The Board were made aware that the Futures for Families service provisionally opened on 03 August 2020. The service provided outreach to young people edging towards care.

The service needed to be registered with Ofsted to care for children in the hub and Ofsted completed their inspection on the 25th August 2020.

Ofsted registered the building on the 7th September 2020 and the service is now live and operational and can provide both in reach and outreach support.

In terms of staff development, there is a robust training program in place and this will continue throughout September and October 2020.

All training is linked to relationships and the language we use with and about young people. The service have begun to support newly qualified Social workers to develop their awareness of positive relationships and the language we use when working with and describing young people.

Workshops are planned with newly qualified social workers to develop their communication with teenagers and how Futures for families will support that engagement and preventative work.

In terms of planned intervention, Future for families is supporting 6 young people to return to care of their families or foster placement from residential and the service is working with 11 young people to prevent family/residential or foster care breakdown.

The Director also displayed some images of the Hub and the Board were thrilled with its progress.

A Board member queried whether young people were consulted (whether that be positive or negative). In response, the Director outlined that young people are the heart to the Hub and therefore their views are fundamental to the running of the service. Children's services also have forums for looked after children through the Children in Care Council/ Care Leavers Forum and a Board member felt this would be a good platform for receiving views.

The Director also stressed the importance of language used with children but in particular children looked after e.g. a child who is looked after is not LAC (looked after child). To strengthen this message, the Director outlined a document would be circulated to all Councillors.

AGREED-

- That the presentation be noted
- That the document in relation to positive language be circulated to all Councillors.