

**CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD**

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

**PRESENT:** Councillors C Hobson (Chair), D Davison (Vice-Chair), T Higgins, M Saunders and Z Uddin

**PRESENT BY INVITATION:** Councillors

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Two member of CICC

**OFFICERS:** S Blood, R Brown, X Davies, R Hamer, L Jefferson, P Jemson, J O'Connor, K Peacock and G Nicholson

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Councillors B Cooper, A Hellaoui, J Walker, M Smiles, S Butcher, T Dunn, R Farnham, James, T Parkinson, P Rudd, D fenny, N Ayres, Dunning and D Coupe

22/1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for Absence

22/2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

22/3 **MINUTES- CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD- 27 APRIL 2022**

The minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board held on 27 April 2022 were read and accepted as a true record.

22/4 **PARTICIPATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The Chair welcomed Kathy Peacock, Voice and Influence Manager and Xavier Davies, Apprentice Youth Training & Development Officer to the meeting to provide an update of events undertaken by the care experienced young people.

The Chair also welcomed Adam and Frankie, two members of the children in Care Council (CICC) to the meeting who along with Xavier provided the Board with the update.

The update was as follows:

## Care Experienced Youth Voice

### We are.....

Care experienced young people between 10-25 years. Who come together, have a voice, create events to hear from more young people/adults. Share what young people want and be heard by key decision makers and professionals, who will act on what we say and positively change services to meet our needs.

### Membership of the Children in Care Council (CiCC) for 10-16 year olds.

- Three young people in the same foster placement
- One young adult in supported housing (Young Leader for the group)
- One young person with SEND in a residential home (he is seen at his home to capture his views)

### Membership of the Care Leavers Forum (CLF) for 16 - 25 year olds.

- One young adult in supported housing (same person who attends the CiCC)
- Care leaver who has a young child

### The groups are supported by.....

- Kathy Peacock - Voice and Influence Manager
- Xavier Davies - Apprentice Youth Training & Development Officer
- Kelly Hammond - Independent Reviewing Officer (CiCC)

### Over the last 3 months...

May

- Started to plan a Brunch event for other looked after young people
- Three of us went to the 'Big Bosses on the Spot' event



June

- We went to a Youth Voice meeting to hear what the Youth Council has planned and to learn about their 'Manifesto'
- One member of the CLF went to the Care leavers BBQ and promoted the group
- We invited Rachel Farnham to come to our group in July
- The CiCC had pizza to celebrate Alfie and Adam's birthdays
- We decided against going to FJYPB Conference in London
- One member of the CLF joined the 'Young Producers' group (meets weekly) to design a music event for all young people in Middlesbrough. Information about all the groups will be shared at this event



# Care Experienced Youth Voice

July

- We held the CiCC Brunch. 15 young people came, nine foster carers and one residential support worker. The young people told us what else they would like to do
- Helped design the Communication and Language training session - first one will be delivered on the 27th July
- Ralph Jordinson from Digiwise (Middlesbrough Council) will come to the CiCC session to speak to them about a piece of work they have done with looked after young people and staying safe on line.
- Re-book Rachel Farnham as she was busy with the OFSTED inspection



## Over the next 5 months we plan to ....

Summer Events

- CiCC/CLF collaboration with Pathways - Hold the Stepping Up Together event. We will promote the groups and the work planned
- 9th August - CiCC and CLF at the Beach
- 10th August - Possibly go to the the Climate Change Conference, Redcar and Cleveland College 10-3pm .
- Friday 2nd September - Picnic in Stuarts Park for All care experienced young people and **Corporate Parents. More information to follow**



Autumn/Winter

- Have a few more members join the groups
- Invite other senior decision makers and Corporate Members to our groups
- Work with Pathways to deliver sessions with Care leavers to look at the Local Offer
- Postcard feedback - asking care leavers about the support they get and what changes they would like
- Work with NEET care leavers to find out what they want re Training/Employment/Opportunities
- Continue deliver Communication and Language sessions
- Look at having specialised BBOTS sessions for care experienced young people
- Be part of the Middlesbrough Town Hall Takeover (see draft flyer)
- Design logo's for the groups
- Finalise our TOR for the groups and know what our budget is, so we can work out what we can afford to do
- Plan a Christmas party for looked after young people
- Plan a Celebration event/party for care leavers
- Have more fun as groups look at swimming/Flamingo Land/Climbing/Cinema



The young people thanked the Corporate Parenting Board for listening to them, outlining it was nice to see decision makers take an interest in young people and make change. The young people were also invited to attend

The Director of Education asked if there were one thing, they as care experienced young people would like to change, what would that be? In response, Adam expressed that he felt

they were supported but to continue to listen to young people. Frankie expressed more funding, however he was made aware this may not always be possible.

AGREED

That the update be noted.

22/5

### 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.

Due to the number of slides, the Head of service addressed the key parts to Board:

CP1: Number of children in care:

#### CP1. Number of children in care in Middlesbrough - Trend

Date	Number of children in care
Jul 2021	538
Sep 2021	541
Nov 2021	512
Jan 2022	490
Mar 2022	503
May 2022	519
Jun 2022	526

**Current Value Against Target**  
Green

**Current Value Against Last Month**  
Amber

Numbers of children and young people open to Social Care, in particular CLA, have shown significant improvements since August 2021. CLA numbers have vastly improved, dropping down below the 500 mark in Jan 2022, reaching 526 in June 2022 - a 1% increase prior to last month. CLA Numbers are down 2% in comparison to 12 months prior.

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#### CP2. Gap between Middlesbrough and Regional CiC Rate per 10,000 - Trend

Date	Gap between Middlesbrough and Regional CiC Rate per 10,000
Jul 2021	54.40
Sep 2021	57.41
Nov 2021	53.79
Jan 2022	46.55
Mar 2022	44.13
May 2022	39.91
Jun 2022	43.83
Jul 2022	45.94
Aug 2022	48.66
Sep 2022	50.77

**Current Value Against Target**  
Not Applicable/Awaiti... Data

**Current Value Against Last Month**  
Amber

The rate of Looked After Children per 10,000 has steadily declined since August 2021, recently reaching the lowest rate in 12 months in Jan 2022 at 39.91. The rate increased in recent months, reaching 50.77 in June 2022 - still a 7% decrease in comparison to 12 months prior. We remain above all external benchmarks, and have fallen below our 2020/21 outturn.

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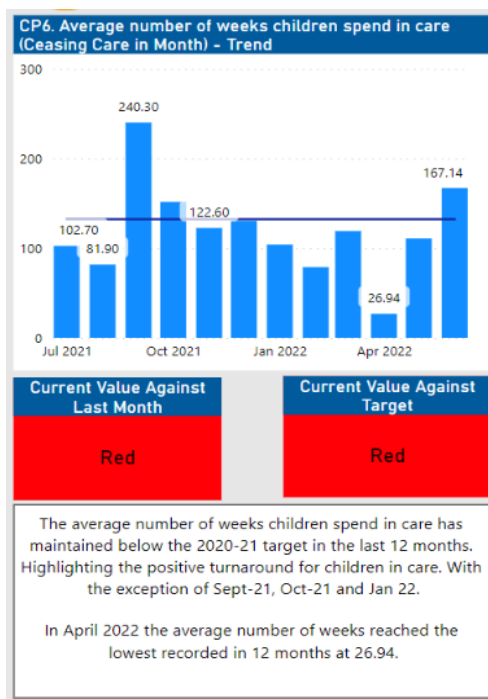
#### CP3. Ratio of children entering to leaving care - Trend

Date	Ratio
01/07/21	0.6:1
01/08/21	0.6:1
01/09/21	0.6:1
01/10/21	0.6:1
01/11/21	0.6:1
01/12/21	0.6:1
01/01/22	0.6:1
01/02/22	0.6:1
01/03/22	0.7:1
01/04/22	0.8:1
01/05/22	0.8:1
01/06/22	0.9:1

**Current Value Against Last Month**  
Red

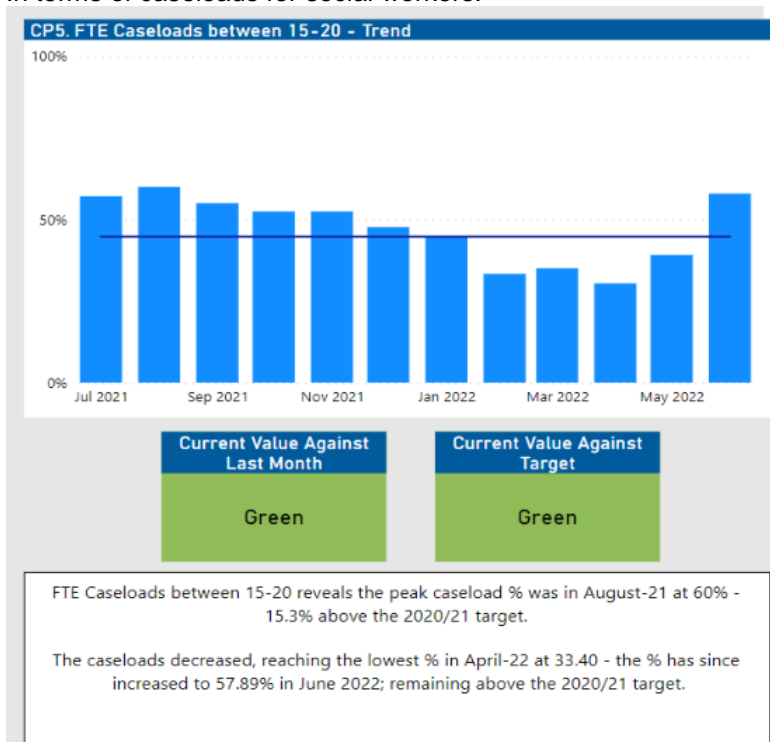
**Current Value Against Target**  
Green

The numbers of children starting a period of care remained stable, until recent months where the ratio increased. This shows in June 2022, for every 0.8 children starting care 1 ceased.

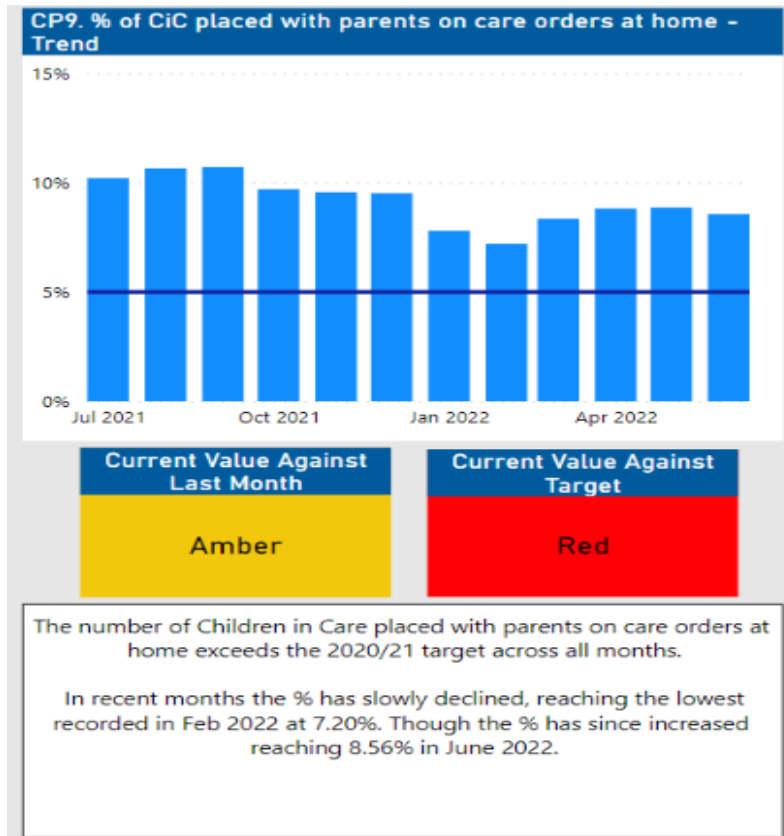


In terms of the Average number of weeks children spend in care, over the past 12 months, the Council has met their target but In June it was above target, however this depends on the children who exist care.

In terms of caseloads for social workers:

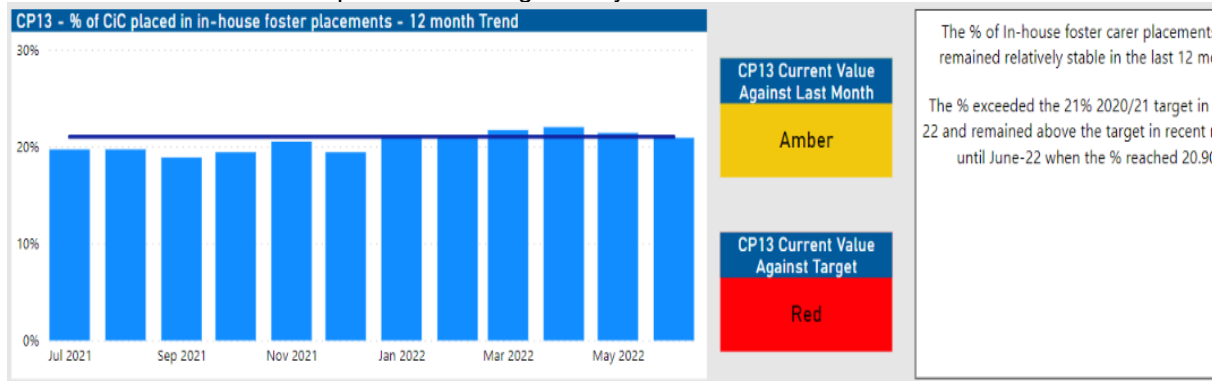


This caseload numbers has been the highest it's been since August 2021 and several factors impact this, for example, the recruitment of social workers. There are a number of vacancies, however there is a workforce development strategy and a recruitment campaign in place to address this. Nationally there are difficulties recruiting social workers, and there is often a reliance on agency staff. A board member enquired about the ratio of agency staff, and this would be circulated after the meeting.

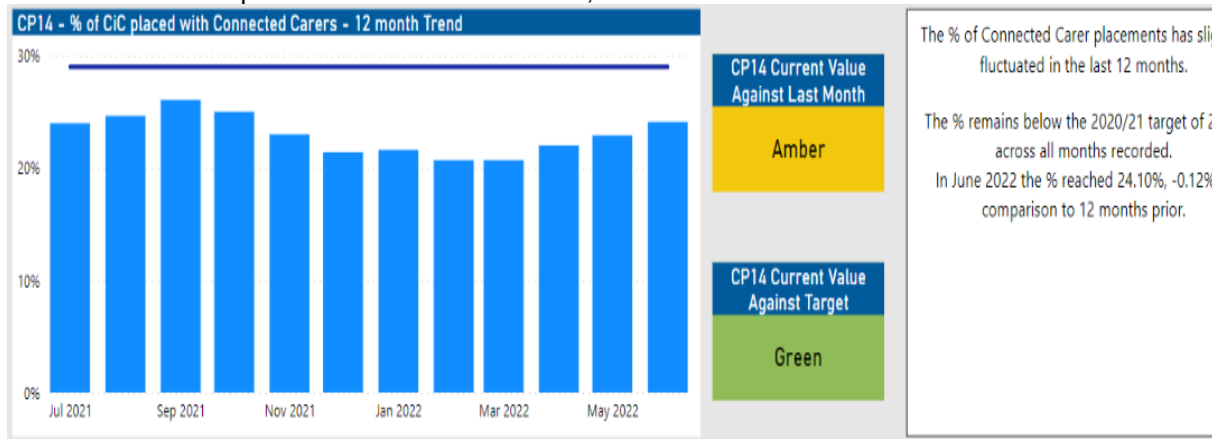


This information was important as it advised that Board that of all the children in care, 8.56% are at home with a placement under a care order.

In terms of those in a foster placement has generally remained stable:



In terms of children placed with connected carers, less is better in this case:



Following the presentation, a Board member remarked that the numbers look good, however questioned whether there were any social workers with caseloads more than 20. In response, the Head of service outlined that in some instances this was the case due to pressures within

different service areas.

A question surrounding the number of social workers and terms of employment for newly qualified / senior social workers (contract hours and time off in lieu) was also discussed. This information was not available at the meeting, however this would be distributed.

The Director of Education and Partnerships, further advised that the recruitment of social workers was not unique to Middlesbrough nor was recruitment to services of frontline staff e.g. school nursing. The Independent review of children's social care by Josh MacAlister was also made reference too.

The Improvement journey was referred too, as it was encouraging to see that now children are on their right plan of permanence.

The Head of service was thanked for her presentation.

AGREED- That the information be noted

22/6

## **FEEDBACK FROM MONITORING VISIT- PERMANENCE**

The Head of looked after children and Corporate Parenting provided the Board with feedback from the current ofsted monitoring visit.

On 29 and 30 March 2022, there was a 2 day monitoring visit, this was the third Monitoring Visit since the last full inspection (plus a focused visit)

There were two Inspectors, and the local authority was given two week's preparation. This was the first 'face to face' visit and areas covered were as follows:

- Matching, placement and decision-making for Children in Care
- Planning and achieving permanence for children.

The monitoring Visit feedback letter was published 6<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and a link to the letter was included within the presentation for members.

They first asked us, how well we knew ourselves:

### **This was evidenced by our**

- Detailed improvement plan
- Accurate Self Assessment (SEF) and this was considered to be 'Spot On'.

### **We know this through**

- Our Quality Assurance processes – It is not just about compliance
- Robust reviewing processes and panels
- Audits – the learning loop is crucial
- Our centre for practice excellence was considered excellent and it is our central focus for collating learning and improvement.

In terms of permanence, feedback was as follows:

- There was a systemic framework for permanency planning – it's less reactive and more forward looking.
- Stronger practice with children who have come into care more recently and more thought about early permanence planning
- Permanency plans now include parallel planning to avoid drift and delay for children.
- Social workers know children need permanence and know what they need to do to achieve it.
- Regular and high quality supervision actively contribute to early permanence planning
- Monthly Permanence Monitoring Group (PMG) meetings track and quality assure both plans and progression towards permanence

Positives from the visit were as follows:

- Children in Care are visited regularly
- Most Social Workers know their children well and have built trusting relationships with

them.

- Good direct work – calibrated to a child’s age and understanding
- Children’s voices are informing their planning.
- Family Time
  - Children benefit from safely assessed family time
  - Family time with wider family members is well considered
  - Brother and sister ‘Together or Apart’ assessments are completed quickly and relationships are maintained if they can’t live together.
- Children are brought into care in a more timely way through better court applications
- Good feedback from the local judiciary and Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service ( CAFCASS)
- Child Permanence Reports are sensitively written
- Social Workers understand the need for children to have life story work so they will understand their parentage and identity as they grow up
- Children’s records are written directly to the child by social workers who know them
- Children will be able to see the thought that went into the planning for their forever homes.
- Care planning meetings, supervision sessions, reviews and legal gateway are well recorded forums for reflective and creative thinking. They provide clear oversight of the plans and actions for the best interests of children. Therefore children experience less delay.
- Independent Reviewing Officers have improved oversight of children’s plans. There is evidence of them carrying out mid-point reviews to consider if these plans are progressing.

The head of service provided the board with the points to consider which were identified from the visit:

- There is still some impact on children from a legacy of absent or poor planning.
- Some children have experienced earlier unplanned placement moves and consequent disruption and instability
- There are a number of children placed with family members who have not been assessed and approved as connected foster carers.
- There is a minority of children with complex needs in unregistered children’s homes awaiting a suitably matched regulated placement. The carer’s ability to meet their needs is undetermined and unregulated.
- However, leaders are aware of these children and all have individual assessments and cumulative oversight to mitigate against risk.
- Senior leaders know their services well
- Social workers spoke positively about the determined efforts to make improvements and create the conditions for good social work practice through clear expectations and standards.
- They value the
  - Support from their team members
  - Training and development programme
  - Growing supportive working culture



There was a further Monitoring Visit that took place on 13-14 July 2022. This focused specifically on the support and services provided within the MACH, Early Help and the Assessment Service. The letter will be published on 17 August 2022.

The next Monitoring Visit will take place in November 2022 and will focus on the support and services to Care Leavers, however this has yet to be confirmed.

Board members welcomed the comments from the visit and thanked all the officer for their work and focus.

A Board member finally queried how long Middlesbrough Children's Services would be expected to be under Ofsted monitoring and in response the head of service advised in normal circumstances it would be 3 years.

AGREED- That the feedback be noted.

22/7

## **REVIEW OF SUFFICIENCY ACTION PLAN**

The Chair welcomed the Specialist Commissioning & Procurement Senior Manager to the meeting to provide an update of the highlight report of the Sufficiency action plan which was devised out the Corporate Parenting Board Strategy.

The Sufficiency Action Plan would be reviewed and updated as actions were completed or as new work was identified in the event of any changes to our sufficiency needs over the 3-year cycle of our plan. The Board last received an update in March 2022.

As with the Permanency action plan, the Sufficiency action plan was broken up into 6 themed areas, with a key accountable officer who works closely with the Manager.

The themes were as follows:

Theme 1 - Strengthening Commissioning for Children and Young People

Theme 2 – Increasing Placements Close to where Children and Young People live and learn

Theme 3 – Growing Early Intervention & Prevention

Theme 4 – Improving Placements & Support for Care Leavers

Theme 5 – Enhancing Learning Outcomes for Children & Young People

Theme 6 – Building Our Fostering Capacity and Adoption Outcomes

The Manager went through each of the priorities and identified what has been achieved since the action plan had been last updated. Full details of these were outlined in the report which had been circulated to the Board prior to the meeting.

The Manager outlined the impact/ data and performance; these being:

- Weekly reporting on residential placement activity continues and is providing greater level of data on placement changes and needs.
- Recruitment continues to be a national issue in a number of areas and work to ensure levels of staffing both internally and externally continues.
- Agency staff are being utilised and internal recruitment campaigns are on-going.

The Board were made aware that in terms of going forward, a full refresh of the Commissioning Action plan was needed and would be completed by November 2022.

Following the presentation, the Board sought clarification on the number of new providers and it was confirmed that there were three. The third was to provide accommodation for children with complex needs which was pleasing. In terms of Daniel Court, there was a greater need above the capacity and the Chair queried whether another home offering the same facilities should be opened. It was commented that this was being discussed as part of the placement planning meetings.

A note of clarification was also sought in terms of external businesses who come to Middlesbrough to open a home and whether they work closely with

the Council to offer places to Middlesbrough children. The Manager advised that a meeting will be established with any new potential suppliers, which would include a member of the commissioning team and future for families and the type of provision they plan to open would be discussed, and if appropriate we would look to put forward a business case with them, if we felt the provision would benefit some of our children's needs. Two out of the three providers are already having in depth conversations with the local authority.

The Manager was thanked for her presentation.

AGREED- That the information be noted.

22/8

### **FUTURE FOR FAMILIES-RELATIONAL PRACTICE SERVICE**

The Chair welcomed by the Rob Hamer, Futures for Families Service Manager and Julie O'Connor Restorative Relational Practice Coordinator to the meeting, to introduce the relational practice service, which is another arm of future for families.

It's an adaptation from the Restorative academy, which has been created in North Yorkshire and colleagues from North Yorkshire are being extremely supportive to Middlesbrough during this set up. North Yorkshire have been very successful with this approach and Middlesbrough are delighted that this will be introduced.

The Relational Practice Service (RPS) is a part of Futures for Families and offers job opportunities for care experienced and service connected young people aged 18 years plus, to allow them to use their past experiences to help other young people.

The Relational Practice Workers offer support and guidance to young people who are otherwise struggling to engage with other services. The workers form a trusted relationship with the young person, as a peer mentor, who they can express their thoughts, wishes and feelings to. The young people go on to achieve qualifications and job roles e.g. within North Yorkshire, a number of young people are now working within children's social work and another has gone onto University.

The missions and values of RPS were as follows:

- ▶ To develop resilience and empathy in young people and young adults through engaging with their personal experiences and those of others;
- ▶ To offer young people an opportunity to be Relational Practice advocates post training to support young people in a range of settings;
- ▶ To offer continued self-development for young people and young adults in effective communication;
- ▶ To offer training, work experience and career development opportunities to those employed within the service;
- ▶ The Relational Practice Workers engage with young people where other agencies have not been successful, and will act as a voice for the young person, encouraging reflection on their own current experience

How does this fit with future for families?

- ▶ Relational Practice Workers will be supported by the Restorative Relational Practice Coordinator within Futures for Families.
- ▶ When employed these workers will be trained in a variety of qualifications - Mandatory Council and restorative / Relational / trauma informed approach
- ▶ The role will deliver Restorative Relational Practice support, complete mentoring work,

and offer Asdan awards if appropriate.

- ▶ Gaining this experience will enable the Restorative Workers to apply for vacant roles within resource and residential teams.
- ▶ Currently looking at young people 18 years, however the service may look at younger as Middlesbrough do have a number of NEETS.

Interventions provided by RRP are as follows:

- ▶ Conflict resolution interventions led by young people and young adults supervised by the Relational Practice Service offering a variety of services
- ▶ Supporting young people with tenancy disputes (supporting Housing meetings)
- ▶ Group and circle work in Residential (supporting Residential meetings)
- ▶ Supporting relationship repair with those around a young person
- ▶ Supporting young people with issues of bullying
- ▶ Supporting young people in Schools
- ▶ Offering training and support to professionals
- ▶ Offering training to other young people and adults

The Board members were very impressed with the RRP and the Manager advised that those care experienced young people already undertaking apprenticeships with the Council, would be able to undertake RRP as a separate role. This would top up their money which they already receive through their apprenticeship.

AGREED- That the information be noted.

22/9

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

No items.