

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

A meeting of the Corporate Parenting Board was held on Wednesday 21 April 2021.

PRESENT: Councillors A Hellaoui (Chair), T Higgins (Vice-Chair), M Nugent, Z Uddin, C Wright and J Walker

PRESENT BY INVITATION: Councillors

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

OFFICERS: S Blood, V Banks, K Dargue, T Dunn, R Farnham, P Jemson, P Rudd, R Scott, Myrie and Chouhan

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillors A High, J McTigue, M Smiles, C Dodds, R Brown, S Butcher and N Ayres

20/82 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for Absence

20/83 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

20/84 **MINUTES- CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD- 17 MARCH 2021**

The minutes of the Corporate Parenting Board meeting held on 17 March 2021 were read and accepted as a true record.

AGREED- That the minutes be approved.

20/85 **CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD ACTION PLAN**

The Democratic Services Officer provided an update on the actions taken from the meetings of the Corporate Parenting Board and updated the Board accordingly.

AGREED- That the action plan be noted.

20/86 **COVID - 19 UPDATE**

The Director of Children's Social Care provided an update in relation to Covid 19. The Director advised that schools returned on 8 March 2021 and have now returned from the Easter break and are learning and teaching.

The impact of bubbles collapsing in schools due to covid-19 was currently low, however there were plans in place in case a third wave of the virus. Testing in schools across Middlesbrough was also working well.

From a social care perspective, the service had seen an increase in demand in terms of front door contact and referrals since 8 March 2021. In March, there were almost 300 more contacts than in February 2021. This was a similar trend to September 2020 when restrictions were eased, so there is a continuation and this was being monitored.

Sickness levels within the service remain stable and relatively low. This information is recorded to the Strategic Improvement Board and other parts of the Council

Children Looked after and school attendance

The Director handed over to the Virtual School Head who advised the Board that since schools returned 90% of looked after children were in school and this percentage was in line with Redcar and Cleveland.

As the Virtual school was an improvement journey, they would like attendance to improve and were working with families/ looked after children to address this. The Virtual school was also working alongside the Head of Looked After Children and Corporate Parenting to address this at a strategic level. The Head advised that they have systems in place whereby they will receive daily information from schools on attendance levels of looked after children. This data will indicate whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised. They have set up weekly meetings which consists of the Virtual School Head, a manager from the looked after children team and representatives from health and they use this as a triage system. Within these meetings they will discuss all the barriers which prevent children from attending school (from health needs etc) and we complete this information into a decision making tool, which is sent forwarded to the Team manager and social worker and from there, they will make a choice as to whether action needs to be taken.

From these meetings, the Head of Looked after children and Corporate Parenting Board outlined that they have been able to identify a number of looked after children who require targeted intervention to get them back into school.

In terms of additional work, any actions agreed are included within the personal education plan (PEP) , so that the young person and school are aware of these steps.

The Chair asked whether Welfare call could be explained further as she was aware Middlesbrough utilised this system.

In response, the Head of Virtual Schools outlined that Middlesbrough contracted Welfare Call in 2016 and they will ring schools and ask whether Middlesbrough's looked after children are in attendance d if not, the reasons behind this. This information is then uploaded onto an icloud , where the Head of Virtual schools has assess too. It was also discussed that welfare call may also be rolled out to use for Middlesbrough's children in need and child protection cohort.

The Chair thanked the Director and officers for their update.

AGREED- That the information be noted.

20/87

VOICE OF THE CHILD/ PARTICIPATION UPDATE

The Head of Strategic services was welcomed to the meeting and started by providing a background to the importance of participation. The Board were made aware that the Improvement plan was currently being revised and there were 5 key priorities, participation being one of these. This was a key step in children services' roadmap for improvement for the next 6 months.

Within the next 6 months the service aimed to show Middlesbrough children that they matter. The service was doing this through engagement with young people and their families to try and shape services. Once the improvement plan had been signed off by the improvement Board there would be further updates to the Board.

Recruitment changes

The Board were advised that Marcus Myrie, was now in post as the Participation officer.

Marcus would be developing the social care participation element of the operational plan and children in care council. Both Marcus and Laurie Hunter had been working with

colleagues within social care to develop the council's future running of the participation groups/ children in care council and have been looking at ways they views can be sought from young people who do not wish to attend these groups and how the service can use these in a meaningful way. The Participation officer was also working with social care and early help to ascertain views of those children elsewhere within social care, for example those children on child protection plans and ensuring their voice is heard within our participation work. The proposal will be presented to the Children's Care Management Team and Directors of Children's Care and once approved, the proposal and roadmap would be presented back to the Corporate Parenting Board.

Children in Care Council

In the meantime, the Participation officer has been keeping in touch with the groups virtually and via weekly telephone calls and encouraging them to get involved with these future proposals. The officer has also been talking to young people who may wish to join and they are looking to hold the first meeting face to face, which would work better for this age cohort.

Care leavers forum

This has continued virtually on a fortnightly service and the officers have been working with the care leavers service (Pathways) to develop this forum and seek views from a range of diverse young people. The service was doing this by improved communication, improving the way the personal assistants work with the care leavers service and looking at how they can set the agenda and work stream so that Middlesbrough young people feel valued and listened too and will help shape services for the future.

The service has also been working with social care colleagues to develop voice and influence champions through the social work force, which was part of the Centre for practice excellence. The Service has been working with the Participation counterparts across the region and developing plans to move from Covid to recovery. The Head of service also advised that they were seeking advice nationally with regard to engaging with hard to reach groups, as predominantly they work with the same cohort of young people from the same background, so they are working at locality level and communities.

Middlesbrough Youth Council

The Middlesbrough Youth Council was developing and going from strength to strength. The Council was now working as team and looking at areas which would bring forward strategic priorities.

- In the latest meeting, the Council focused on team building and had a fun session.
- In the session the members took part in a quiz, played games, and had the opportunity to speak to other young people in breakout rooms, which went really well. These sessions will be done on a monthly basis.
- Session times now last an hour as the young people felt that an hour and a half was too long.
- The most recent feedback form showed that the young people really enjoyed this session, and the majority voted it as a 5/5.
- In the next session, we are introducing Hot Topics suggested young people
- Chair role has changing slightly, with Muskaan (Middlesbrough's Member of Youth Parliament) being a compere and other young people choosing topics they'd like to lead on. They will be called Topic Managers.
- Chair role is changing to involve other less confident young people by them only leading a 10 minute topic rather than an hour meeting as this could be daunting for some.

Staffing of the participation team

In terms of changes within the Participation Team, there was currently a recruitment process taking place for the Participation Team Manager (previously held by Beth Bradshaw) and the advert would be sent out In the next week. The Strategic Manager

and Director of Children Services' have also been speaking to professionals in the field to ensure Middlesbrough attracts the right candidate.

In terms of engagement, the Care Leavers' Forum has had a direct involvement in terms of writing the job description and identifying what they would like the candidates' qualities to be and this would be sent out with the advert.

The Participation Officer offered an introduction to the Board and advised that he was starting to understand his role and how it links to the improvement plan. Following his introduction, a Board member asked how he intended to increase the attendance at groups such as a mini Children in Care Council and Children in Care Council. In response, the officer outlined that they had put in place a plan and we have young people's contacts from the social work team. The officer advised that he was contacting them once a week to maintain contact prior to face to face contact.

The Chair thanked the officers for their update.

AGREED- That the update be noted.

20/88

MALAP SPOTLIGHT- UPDATE

The Chair advised the Board that she had circulated her spotlight report, which was in replace for MALAP sub groups. The report was led by the Chair of Corporate Parenting Board and looked to gain information from other authorities Chairs of Corporate Parenting Board to gain an understanding of their arrangements and to gain good practice.

The Chair spoke and interviewed Chair of Corporate Parenting Boards from five local authorities:

1. North Yorkshire
2. Gateshead
3. Leeds
4. Hampshire
5. Wakefield

From the discussions, the Chair outlined that the discussions were extremely interesting for example, one local authority which was rated outstanding was operating very similar to Middlesbrough and came across the same issues, which provided reassurance.

Eleven questions were asked at the interviews, as well as general discussion, which covered the following areas:

- Critical aspect of the role of Chair of CPB and of members,
- Training,
- Engagement,
- Governance,
- Accountability,
- Involvement of sub-groups,
- Representation across council areas,
- CiCC and mini CiCC
- Virtual School,
- OFSTED

From the discussions, the Chair compiled a number of recommendations, a number of which are outlined below:

1. Establishing a network for Chairs of CPB
2. Social Workers – retention and recruitment
3. Caseloads
4. Foster Carers - many recommendations for successful engagement and retention
5. Care Leavers
6. Care Ambassadors and Young Inspectors
7. CiCC engagement
8. Voice of the Child
9. Schools and the Virtual School – regular contacts, updates

- 10. social events
- 11. Annual Conference

From the presentation, the Director of Children's Social Care outlined that this piece of work had not been undertaken elsewhere, so Middlesbrough was unique in seeking out good practice in other local authorities. Virtual schools also have an established presence of the Board and provide regular updates, which is a strength in ensuring the Board is regularly kept up to date regarding the education of Middlesbrough's children looked after.

The Chair was thanked for her contributions by the Board.

AGREED- That the report be noted.

20/89

LOCAL FAMILY JUSTICE BOARD

The Chair welcomed the Head of Looked after Children and Corporate Parenting and the Head Legal Services- People to the meeting to provide an overview of the role of the Local Family Justice Board (LFJB) and the role of our legal services in providing support to our looked after children.

As way of introduction, the Head of Legal Services outlined that on a national level, the Family Justice Board was the primary forum for setting direction for the family justice system and overseeing performance and was set up to improve the performance of the family justice system and to ensure the best possible outcomes for children who come into contact with it.

At a local level, Local Family Justice Boards (LFJB) were established to support the work of the Family Justice Board by bringing together the key local agencies, including decision makers and front-line staff, to achieve significant improvement in the performance of the family justice system in their local areas..

The LFJB holds meetings on a quarterly basis and is attended by representatives of those that use the family justice system, including Local Authorities (Legal and Children's Services), members of the judiciary, CAFCASS, private practice, Barristers, and the local police.

There are also subsidiary groups of the LFJB that look at specific areas such:

- Local Public Law Working Group
- Local Private Law Working Group
- Police Disclosure Working Group

The Head of Legal Services, briefly discussed the Local Public Law Working Group, which was a local public law working group which works collaboratively to identify issues that affected the local family justice system in regards to public law matters and to agree practical proposals to resolve.

Representatives from both Legal and Children's Services attend and actively engage in the work carried out.

The Board were made aware of a recent project of the board with regard Care Orders at home, which has been a significant issue in Middlesbrough and regionally.

- The session was aimed at those working within the family justice system across Cleveland and South Durham
- The sessions were agreed as part of the Local Family Justice Board to explore why in the Teesside area we have higher numbers of Care Orders with children placed at home or with connected carers
- The workshop offered 74 places and there were over 200 applicants to attend.
- Aim: To work together to understand when we think Care Order's at home would be appropriate but also when we may challenge each other about this. This allowed others to challenge (without being attached to a specific case) why a care order was considered the best option.

- Understand what the law tells us about Care Orders at home including what can and can't be done under a Care Order
- Consider alternatives and specifically the Teesside Supervision Order policy
- The outcome of the sessions will be fed back to the LFJB group to seek approval/agreement to any recommendations.
- The next project for the Local Public Law working group is to be decided, and will take into consideration the contents of the recent March 2021 paper.

In terms of Middlesbrough Legal Services Children's Team, the Board were made aware that Middlesbrough Council has an in-house team of lawyers who provide legal advice and support to children's services to carry out their statutory responsibilities.

The team was as follows:

Ann-Marie Wilson – Head of Legal Services (People)

1 x Senior Childrens Adviser (Part time)

4 x full time Solicitors

1 x trainee Solicitor

4 x Legal Assistants

1 x Court Progression Manager

The overall objectives in terms of how the Legal Department can support Children's Services are as follows:-

- Be pro active rather than reactive by way of becoming involved in providing timely advice in regards to the decision making process rather than waiting for a crisis to occur
- Work collaboratively together from an early stage to resolve issues and provide support to the department.

Examples of how this achieved were as follows:

- Attendance at effective legal planning/gateway panel
- Provide early advice when issues arise/attendance at Strategy meetings
- Attend early legal planning meetings , and,
- To read draft documents such as assessments, statements, and care plans before they are filed and raise any issues in a timely manner

The Head of Legal Services specifically mentioned a number of examples, which showed the progress made within the legal services team.

Bloom project/ Cynet

The first related to the Bloom Project/ cygnet. There have been issues with increased demand and reduced capacity across the Legal Services Legal Team and as a result, the Council's Leadership Management Team (LMT) agreed to commission a 12 month Managed Project Service to support the team until March 2022.

Further to a procurement process – the project was awarded to Cygnet Family Law, meaning a number of public law cases will be outsourced to them. The impact of outsourcing means that with increased capacity the Children's legal team can contribute effectively to improving the quality of outcomes and supporting Children's Services as outlined.

This would also allow time for future development work to be completed which will strengthen in-house delivery.

Appointment of Court Progression Manager (CPM)

The second area of progression has been the appointment of the Court Progression Manager (CPM). As part of the improvement work connected to Ofsted, there was an identified need to bridge the gap between the Childrens Team in Legal, and Children's Services, and to improve the quality of court proceedings.

The purpose of this new role is to act as lead officer, working closely with Legal and Children's services, to ensure the timely progression of cases in family court proceedings. Middlesbrough was the first local authority in the region to have this post.

Key functions of the role include:

- lead an effective partnership between Legal and Children's Services
- use expert communications skills to develop a shared understanding of objectives across both Legal and Children's Services
- working externally to develop and maintain relationships with the local judiciary to ensure practice standards are continuously met.
- responsible for a measurable improvement in the quality of court documentation
- to develop, implement and deliver a case quality framework and bespoke practice development to ensure Social Workers have the requisite skills to produce quality evidence
- act competently as a Social Work lead in formal case proceedings.
- manage the progress of pre proceedings cases to identify/take action to deal with any potential/actual exceptions that might jeopardise the achievement of required milestones,

The appointment was part of the Invest to save strategy, as the improvements sought will achieve better outcomes for children in a more timely manner, and therefore reduce costs by way of resources, for example, improving quality of evidence – plans being right first time, reducing the need for further hearings, and saving time for legal and Children's services. The successful candidate has been appointed and will commence the role in May 2021.

The Head of Legal Services finally provided the Board with some context advising that Middlesbrough currently had 118 sets of active proceedings in court involving 118 children.

The proceedings were made up as follows:

- 86 care proceedings (in July /august 2020- Middlesbrough had 140 care proceedings, which shows a decline)
- 12 adoptions
- 15 discharge of care orders
- 2 deprivation of liberty applications
- 1 placement application
- 1 Revocation of a Placement Order
- 1 secure application

The Head of Looked after children and Corporate Parenting finally provided the Board with information of progress to date from the collaborative working between children and legal services. This has led to supporting the reduction in the number of children looked after.

The most significant has been the reduction in the number of children looked after.

702 Children were in Middlesbrough care in August 2020.

In the last six months we had 66 children have become looked after children and 172 Children ceased to be looked after children. There were currently 563 children looked after (as of 21 April 2021)

In the last 6 months social care and legal have worked together to ensure that:

- 36 children have secured permanence and ceased to be looked after through the granting of a Special Guardianship Order.
- 26 children were made subject to adoption orders in the period between August 2020 and 31 March 2021. This is a 62.5% improvement on the full previous year score card. This equates to 5% of the current Children in care Cohort.
- The number of children placed with parents has reduced from a high of 99 children in August 2020 to 68 in April 2021. In the past 6 months 21 children have ceased to be in a placement with parent arrangement due to revocation of a Care Order.

The Council has also commissioned the Innovate service, who are a commissioned social work team that have been commissioned to support children to move on to secure permanence and to move from residential placements to more appropriate placement settings such as foster care and back home to family.

The team began in June 2021 (phase 1) and were allocated 17 placement with parent (PwP). Of the 17 young people allocated:

- 13 children now have secured permanence and Care Orders have been revoked.
- 1 application for revocation has been filed to court and a sibling group of 3 were assessed as unsuitable for revocation.
- (Phase 2) To date Innovate have commenced 10 new placements with parent

placements through work that they have been doing with children in connected carers placements and in residential care. Whilst this has increased the number of children in PWP placements these are positive moves for the children and will be closely monitored through the project and PMG to ensure revocation is progressed swiftly where appropriate.

- Progress will be tracked and there will be ongoing review with the legal services to progress through revocations proceedings in a swift manner

As part of phases 1:

- 35 children were allocated to Innovate and were placed in connected carers placements with a view to progressing permanence through a special guardianship order (SGO) application.
- Of which 30 SGO assessments have been completed
- 30 applications have been made to court to receive care orders
- 22 have had initial court hearings
- 1 child from this cohort has secured permanence to date and ceased to be looked after.
- COVID has impacted on some timescales with this project, particularly in relation to DBS checks and medical assessments.

Following the meeting, a Board member queried, what was meant by a timely manner, for example, would the proceedings be faster?

In response, officers advised that often they are dictated by the court timings (26 weeks), but in terms of what is meant by a timely manner, the Head of Legal clarified by advising it was ensuring that it was about submitting the correct plan first time.

The Board member also queried whether there was monitoring of cases once they had gone through court proceedings. In response, the officers outlined that they look for feedback, be that positive or negative and officers look through these cases for audit purposes. The officers keep a record of cases that have been through the 26 week timeframe as good practice and also would identify cases which are taking longer, and challenge the reasons behind this (which may be circumstances out of the local authorities' control).

The Head of Looked after children and Corporate Parenting also outlined that the improvement plan looks at improving systems, for example, working with Adoption Tees Valley to look at earlier notification of quality of placements, decision making is stronger and timely and once children are subject to full care orders/permanency orders, these are tracked closely.

The officers were thanked for their presentation.

AGREED- That the presentation be noted.

20/90

ELEVATING YOUNG PEOPLES' VOICES IN DIGITAL RESILIENCE

The Chair introduced the Risk and Resilience Manager to the Board, who was in attendance to provide information on a successful funding application in relation to elevating young peoples' voice through digital resilience. The Board had previously received a paper regarding this and the Manager was in attendance to provide further clarity.

In February 2021, a funding opportunity was circulated by Parentzone and Nominet. By way of background, Parentzone is a national organisation which is widely recognised as 'experts in digital family' and Nominet is the UK's official web domain registrar.

Middlesbrough Council submitted a bid under Design Challenge 3, the purpose of which is:

Elevating young peoples' voice to influence the services that impact on their digital safety and opportunity Care experienced young people have invaluable insight which is currently under-used in relation to digital and online safety policy development.

The Manager outlined that Middlesbrough has a lead in digital resilience, in context started in 2016, when a member scrutiny panel challenged a government policy on youth produced imaginary. The recommendations of the scrutiny review set the Council on its journey to help protect young people. Middlesbrough digital model also came about as direct result of the scrutiny investigation.

The Manager outlined that our children are growing up in a world where there is an increasing need for them to flourish in their use of digital devices and where they need to interact in all areas of the digital world –e.g. School and Work based Apps, Social Media and Gaming

As corporate parents, we need to ensure our children can compete for jobs (some of which have not been invented) and guide them appropriately.

At present the approach to Digital Parenting for Children looked after and those leaving care in Middlesbrough is inconsistent.

Middlesbrough has therefore been successful in attracting £35,719 funding to:

“ensure care experienced young people can influence the service policies, process and practice that impact on their digital lives we need to extend participation and diversify and improve channels of communication and feedback .”

The bid links to Middlesbrough’s digital resilience model, which has four pillars ; governance of digital excellence; voice of the child; digital parenting and education and workforce development.

The mission statement of the model was as follows:

“To develop an online world where children and young people can be nurtured, safe, self-confident and compassionate digital citizens”.

Governance and digital excellence

There is a digital and resilience safeguarding network, which has over 170 participants. If therefore, a threat or alert is issued and posing a risk to young people, the Council can circulate a message to the network. Since 1 January 2021, 10 messages have been issued, which is then passed onto all relevant parties.

Voice of the child

Students from Middlesbrough College produced a play called ‘To send or not to send regarding youth produced imaginary and was based on Romeo and Juliet. This was shown to over 1,000 12-13 year olds and attracted media attention.

Young ambassadors have also been trained to ensure young people’s voices are heard.

Digital parenting

A number of parents are unaware how to keep their children safe online and many feel taking their phone off them is the right thing to do. However we need to educate our parents in order to educate our children.

Education and workforce development

Capacity building in school and organisations on how to deliver digital parenting classes, education work to children. Schools can also undertake a self- assessment to be awarded with a digital resilience charter mark.

An application for funding was £30,000 was submitted, however the project scope was attractive and they were awarded £33,000.

In essence the funding is to develop and implement a ‘digital parenting’ policy and practice guidance for Children Looked After and Children Leaving Care. In general terms the Project would:

- Employ an apprentice to be trained and to assist in this project. The aim is to attract an apprentice who is a care leaver.
- Research and consult on current practice
- Research and consult nationally and regionally for Best Practice
- Develop a draft policy / guidance for Digital Parenting in respect of Children Looked After and those leaving care
- Consult on this draft
- Seek approval for the policy / guidance (Departmental Management Team and Corporate Parenting Board)
- Provide Nominet with the final document
- Implement the final policy / guidance through workforce development

Consultation will include, Children Looked After, Care leavers, Social Workers, Foster Carers, staff in residential settings as well as the Departmental Management Team and the Corporate Parenting Board.

The Manager was thanked for his presentation.

AGREED- That the funding application be noted and that further updates be provided to the Board on the policy/ guidance in due course.

20/91

INTRODUCTION TO THE FOSTERING ANNUAL REPORT

The Head of Residential services was in attendance to provide a brief update on quarter 4 data, a full breakdown and the Ofsted report would be shared further in June/ July 2021.

The Head of Service advised that there were currently 146 foster carers in Middlesbrough offering 227 placements.

In terms of quarter 4 recruitment, there have been 3 mainstream foster placements and 2 connected. Despite Covid 19, within this quarter there had been 59 enquiries to the Foster Team, 10 households had been approved and 6 households are ongoing at stage 1 and stage 2.

In terms of connected carers, 141 requests; 60 have been temporary approved and 24 had been approved at Panel.

In terms of de-registrations of foster carers, there had been 12 in the last quarter. In terms of comparison from 2019-20, there were 16, so numbers are decreasing. In terms of Connected carers, there had been 7 and some de registrations were due to the children being returned to their parents. The number of de-registrations to private foster agencies has been 2 in 12 years.

In of training, the service took on Board view of the foster carers and were aware most courses ran when foster carers were at work. The service therefore commissioned the Fostering Hub to undertake specific training for foster carers and this was launched in February 2021. In 4 weeks Middlesbrough Foster Carers undertook and completed 386 courses due to the flexibility.

The average age of foster carers was between 50-59.

Placements

At quarter 4 there were 161 placements. There were a number of vacant places (31) and this was due to the fact that all of our placements need terms of approval and these may not fit these. There are also a number of foster placements whose terms of approval are for babies and there has not been a need to take these places.

There were also a number of placements that are not available e.g if there is a sibling group of 3 and 2 are found foster placements and the other sibling isn't, that is classed as not available. In addition, there may be some young people when they turn 18 who stay with their foster carers and therefore those places become unavailable or placements may not be available due to the health of foster carers.

A Board member queried how many of the 161 placements were of children in Sibling groups and this information would be circulated to Board members at a later date.

In terms of Ofsted, each year Ofsted asks local authority fostering services and independent fostering agencies for data about their fostering services. This is the only national data collection that provides an overview of the fostering landscape.

Ofsted ask all 151 local authority fostering agencies and around 280 independent fostering agencies (IFAs) to provide data on:

- characteristics of foster carers
- terms of approval of fostering households
- capacity and the use of fostering places
- recruitment and retention of fostering households
- data on complaints, allegations and numbers of brother and sister placements

This provides a unique insight into a sector that affects the majority of children in care.

Following the presentation, a Board member outlined that they were aware there had been

advertising to recruit foster carers and queried how many enquiries had come as a direct result of this. The Head of Service outlined that they had been looking at the recruitment drive of North Yorkshire County Council, who are an outstanding authority. From this, Middlesbrough has been advertising in Foster carer fortnight and at key times during the year e.g New Year and September. A foster carer had recently wrote an article for the lovemiddlesbrough magazine and there were numerous videos on Middlesbrough Children Matter website to promote and recruit foster carers. There was a target of 25 fostering households last year, however covid had an impact on this. However Middlesbrough Council approved 6 placements and have a further 6 who are going through assessment stages.

In terms of recruitment for the next 12 months, the service wishes to recruit another 25 placements, 35 the following year and 45 the year after (including our partners in practice to ensure we have the capacity to recruit the number of foster carers).

In terms of staffing, there was a number of agency staff who supported the foster carer social workers. Staff turnover was also addressed and especially due to covid and the Manager outlined that since March 2020, no members of staff had left the service (bar 1 member of staff who has gone on Maternity leave and asked for a 2 year sabbatical). Breakdown of staff would be brought back to a future meeting.

The Manager was thanked for his presentation.

AGREED- That the presentation be noted.

20/92

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