

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday, 4th February, 2020

Present:- Councillor Watson (in the Chair); Councillors Elliot and Jarvis.

Apologies were received from Councillors Cusworth and M. Elliott.

36. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 17 DECEMBER 2019

Resolved:-

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2019 be approved as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

38. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items on the agenda which required exclusion of the press or public.

39. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN'S PROMISES - ANNEMARIE LUBANSKI

The Panel considered an update from the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health in respect of Looked after Children and Adult Care.

This report aimed to dispel misconceptions about the demographic of people served by Adult Care, Housing and Public Health directorate. The demographic was not solely related to housing adults with disabilities, as was often assumed to be the case. Serving the demographic meaningfully required services to be open to expanding on traditional kinds of assessments in order to get outcomes for the people who may not fit the conventional demographic for other kinds of services. This was cited as a response to the changing needs of young people.

In discussion of this report, Members sought to learn more about emerging trends in housing needs. The response was that bungalows and single person housing was in demand because of the implications of the government's policy change in respect of the so-called bedroom tax. Currently, there was a need for Adult Care involvement in placements for young people.

Members sought more information in respect of the age at which the screening process occurred and whether this was responsive to the needs of young people. The response referenced a dataset that provided insight as to how many individuals would be coming into care. Early screening conversations were beginning at an earlier stage with 14 year olds, rather than 16 or 17 years. It was noted that whilst most adults did not reach acute mental health need, the biggest growth trend was in the number of young people who have mental and emotional health needs for care.

It was noted that health and social care services must therefore inform each other. In order to provide earlier identification of individuals with needs. Placements could add stability to a young person's life, but such placements end at 18 years. The trajectory for services needed to be less focused on residential provision and ethos of the service was that "everyone deserves their own front door whatever that looks like."

Resolved:-

That the update from the Strategic Director of Adult Care, Housing and Public Health be noted.

40. CORPORATE PARENTING PRINCIPLES - SHARON SANDELL

The Panel considered a document which sets forth Corporate Parenting Principles developed in consultation with Looked After Children.

Resolved:-

1. That the document be noted.
2. That any comments on the document are welcomed and may be forwarded to the document owner.

41. ILACS SELF-ASSESSMENT

The Panel considered an update on the revised self-assessment based on Ofsted's framework and guidance for inspecting local authority services for children in need of help and protection, children in care and care leavers. The self-assessment identified actions for the upcoming year.

Resolved:-

That the update be noted.

42. LEGALITY AND STATUS OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Consideration was given to an update on efforts to obtain settled status for Looked After Children who are EU citizens. The EU settlement scheme launched last year, bringing with it the need to ensure suitable identity documents are held by the EU citizens currently in care.

In discussion, clarification was sought around the process of applying for Settled Status for the children and young people through to adulthood. Further information was also supplied as to the definition of “nationality” for the children in care. Settled Status does not remove their citizenship in another country other than the United Kingdom. Settled Status prevents the Looked After Children, when they turn 18, from being then deported to a country in which they have never lived and may have no home, family or safety. Even so, Looked After Children sometimes have to return to their country of origin to get the required stamp for Settled Status. For this reason, officers stressed the need to build flexibility into their plans to help Looked After Children receive Settled Status.

Consideration was also given to information regarding the status of two Looked After Children not currently placed at a registered or regulated placement. Officers emphasised that these are the most difficult and vulnerable children and that the lengths to which Children’s Services have gone to find a more appropriate placement are indeed considerable. Although the efforts are great to make emergency arrangements, these are more costly than the regulated ones. These decisions are made in extremis, when there is no other option, and when the risk and safeguarding of the child is great. Officers provided assurance that a written report will be forthcoming at the next meeting of the Panel.

Resolved:-

1. That the information be noted.
2. That a written update on Settled Status for Looked After Children who are EU citizens be received at the next meeting of the Panel.

43. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN UPDATE FEBRUARY 2020

The Panel considered a presentation from the LAC Council that provided an update on recent activities and topics including the Caring Language Campaign, Total Respect Training, Free Leisure Pass for Looked After Young People and Care Leavers, and recent changes to LAC pocket money allowances. The Council also provided an update on longer term projects including the Residential Accommodation Development Project and Corporate Parenting Promises Inspection. These projects aim to improve the experience for all the Looked After Children.

The Panel discussed the latest feedback about the interest in the Leisure Passes: in Partnership Board, a number of members welcomed the raising of the idea. It may be a protracted process, but the idea may grow to be wider than just gyms and swimming passes--to include museums and cultural centres and events.

Resolved:-

1. That the content of the presentation be noted.
2. That the Chair attend the upcoming meeting of the LAC Council to chat about allowances.

44. CORPORATE PARENTING PERFORMANCE REPORT

Consideration was given to the end of December Performance Report. The report's positive low numbers indicate a positive outlook for being able to discharge a number of children in the near future. Figures and statistics regarding care leavers were summarised for the Panel.

In discussion, further information was sought as to the data collection and collation processes used to compile the report.

Clarification was provided around the reasons for the total of 15 recent foster carer resignations, offsetting the total of 15 new foster carers, as well as for the number of social workers leaving the service.

A distinction was made around measures of timeliness in the report: that early permanence plans bring these figures down, and that, although the number of days is slightly higher than our target number of days, the service continues to place more children who are categorized as hard-to-place. Timeliness is measured only in placements that end in adoption. This means that a new placement is Day 1 of the timeliness measure.

Resolved:-

That the report be noted.

45. REVIEW OF LADO PROCESS AND ITS IMPACT ON FOSTER CARER RETENTION

Resolved:-

That this review be tabled until the next meeting so that Cllr. V. Cusworth may chair the discussion of this review.

46. URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

47. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING**Resolved:-**

The next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel will be on 31 March 2020 at Rotherham Town Hall.