

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday 20 September 2022

Present:- Councillor Cusworth (in the Chair); Councillors Burnett, Z. Collingham and Pitchley.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Browne.

45. COUNCILLOR BURNETT

The Chair welcomed Councillor Burnett to his first meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel.

The Panel's thanks were also recorded to everyone who had taken part in the Task and Finish Groups that were held to refresh the Panel.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

47. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items to be considered that necessitated the exclusion of any members of the press or public.

48. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 13TH MAY, 2022

Resolved:- (1) The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13th May, 2022, were agreed as a true record.

(2) That a presentation be made to the next meeting on the Josh MacAlister, Chair of the Independent Review of Children's Social Care.

Further to Minute No. 39 of the previous meeting, it was noted that the changes were still be finalised to the new Integrated Care System. Catherine Hall had made the point that a watching brief should be kept to ensure children and Looked After Children were a priority in the new way of working. The Strategy was currently being looked at to ensure their health needs were met across the system.

49. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL UPDATE

Rosie, Hope, Baron, Paul, Bella, Robert, Bobby and Emil, supported by Lisa Duvalle, gave a presentation to the Panel on the work of Rotherham's Looked After Children's Council drawing attention to:-

- LAC Panel interviews for Assistant Director
- Visit by the Ofsted Inspector on 29th June
- VIP Summer Fest 22

- Mayor's Parade
- Armed Forces Day
- 'Scarbados' – Scarborough day trip
- Queen's Platinum Jubilee
- 2022/23 Campaigns and Priorities – launch of Mental Health and Wellness Campaign on 1st April which would continue for the next 12 months

Bella also reported that she was a Coram Voice Ambassador – a national voice ambassador programme bringing care experienced young people live in England, aged 16-25, together in order to represent young people's voice nationally and develop campaigns or resources to address the issues that they identified. She had been invited to Parliament to raise awareness to MPs of the care system. They had spoken about the cost of living crisis and how it impacted children living in care. She had also attended a meeting with Nadim Zahawi (Chancellor of the Exchequer at the time of the meeting), Simon Blake and the Children's Commissioner Dame Rachel de Souza. She had also been given the opportunity to speak on BBC Radio Newsbeat.

Coram had invited the LACC to an awards night to be held in Manchester on 25th October, 2022.

A regional care councils meeting was to be held in York soon.

The Panel thanked the young people for their inspirational presentation.

50. LEISURE PASS - UPDATE

Monica Green, Assistant Director, gave a verbal update on the current situation with regard to leisure passes. Work was taking place as it was recognised how important it was to young people.

The following was highlighted:-

- A further meeting to be held on 26th September to discuss the matter further
- Conversations with the Big Sister Project with regard to possible inclusion for boys for some groups
- Potential pilot for young people to access Big Sister Project
- Desire to run a 6 months' pilot to ascertain how much usage there was to help decide for the future
- Meeting to take place between the Chair and Strategic Directors of Children and Young People's Services and Regeneration and Environment to further explore the funding implications as well as a meeting with Public Health
- Independent Reviewing Officers and Social Workers to be made aware of the Big Sister Project

Resolved:- (1) That the update be noted.

(2) That a further update be provided to the December meeting.

51. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING - JUNE, 2022 (QUARTER 1)**

Consideration was given to the Quarter 1 2022/23 Corporate Parenting performance report which provided a summary of performance for Key Performance Indicators across the Looked After Children (LAC) Services. Appendix 1 of the report submitted provided performance on a page giving an overview of the Service's performance in comparison to the same period 2020/21 and Appendix 2 provided trend data, graphical analysis and benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages where possible.

The report highlighted:-

- The number of children and young people looked after had reduced to 536, a reduction of 13 since the start of the year (April 2022) and 27 below the same period in 2021/22 (563)
- 36 children became Looked After and 57 children ceased to be Looked After
- There were currently 17 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children that were looked after by the Authority. The Commissioning Team were working hard to ensure that the Authority was able to offer placements/accommodation commensurate to need
- 96.1% of all Looked After Children plans were up-to-date (+1.1%) in comparison to last year (95.0%)
- Continued consistency in the percentage of Looked After Children in a family based setting (80%)
- 120 in-house foster carer households registered at the end of the quarter in comparison to 143 (-23) continuing the reducing trend. There had been 2 approvals so far in quarter 1 creating 4 new placements, however, there had been 7 de-registrations with each foster family having one placement each equating to 3 less placements. At the end of the period there were 5 prospective foster families in the recruitment process all of which had panels scheduled between July and September
- Of the 536 children and young people looked after by Rotherham, 5 were known to the Youth Offending Team
- 8 children had been adopted since April 2022 which was a reduction of one adoption for the same period last year
- Due to the Covid-19 pandemic the number of up-to-date health and dental checks had fluctuated particularly due to the enforced closure of most dentists or emergency are only being available. An improvement was now being seen with up-to-date dental checks reaching 72.1% at the end of quarter 1 in comparison to 30.7% at the end of the same quarter last year. 27 initial Health Assessments had been completed with 17 being in time (63%). This was 2.2% below last year (65.2%), however, more had been completed this year

overall

- 93.3% of review had been completed with timescales (335/359) and at the end of the quarter 98.9% of visits were up-to-date and within timescale of the national minimum standard
- At the end of the Spring term 97.5% (397/407) LAC had a PEPE compared to 99.1% (413/421) Spring term 2020/21
- At the end of quarter 1 there were 302 young people in the care leavers cohort, a reduction of 10 compared to the same point in 2021 (312) 85% of which had an up-to-date pathway plan (3.4% improvement)
- 96.4% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation. Of the 11 in unsuitable accommodation, 5 were in custody. However, the percentage of care leavers in employment, education and training showed an 11% increase with 72.2% at the end of the quarter compared to 61.2% at the same point in 2021

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- Regular meetings were held to discuss fostering and understand the reasons for any resignations/placement breakdowns
- More could be done to show possible future foster carers what resilience was offered to foster families or celebrate the success they offered to the children of Rotherham
- The recent Ofsted inspection had rated the experiences and progress of children in care and care leavers as Good
- The arrangements put in place for dental checks during Covid were coming to an end, however, there was to be a South Yorkshire approach so that wherever a child was placed they would have the same opportunities to receive dental care. A training package was to be provided for dentists on the additional vulnerabilities of LAC and care leavers. The PAWS project had also been accepted on to the project allowing service users access. A further meeting was to be held in November with the training taking place in December
- Placement stability was a key issue
- The majority of the foster carers were approved for 0-18 year olds
- Need to promote the Fostering Service and the support that was available to prospective foster carers

Resolved:- (1) That the Quarter 1 2022/23 performance report be noted.

(2) That a report be submitted to the next meeting on fostering and fostering recruitment.

52. **ROTHERHAM YOUTH JUSTICE SERVICE MULTI-AGENCY PROTOCOL TO SUPPORT THE DECRIMINALISATION OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN**

Rebecca Wall presented the submitted Multi-Agency Protocol which had been developed in conjunction with the wider partners and agreed at the

Rotherham Youth Justice Partnership Board.

The Protocol aimed to recognise that most Looked After Children and care leavers had experienced adverse childhood experiences and trauma prior to coming into care. With placement moves and education disruption, Looked After Children were less likely to have consistent, healthy, and meaningful relationships with adults who were supportive and loving. It supported the decriminalisation of Looked After Children and had been developed by the Rotherham Youth Justice Partnership. It represented Rotherham's multi-agency partnership commitment to reducing the unnecessary criminalisation of Looked After Children and care leavers and included the contribution of relevant local agencies and staff. Although not an exclusive list, this included Children's Services; Youth Offending Services; Crown Prosecution Service; South Yorkshire Police; HMCTS; the local Youth Panel (Magistrates); Care Services (including, kinship, fostering, and Rotherham and independent sector residential children's homes); Care Leaver services; and any other private or voluntary organisations commissioned to support looked-after children locally.

It reflected the principles and ambition of the National Protocol on Reducing Criminalisation of Looked After Children and Care Leavers which described 'what' needed to happen across the country:-

'A co-developed, whole system approach... That should include prevention, early intervention and appropriate response where children and young people do offend.'

The local Protocol complemented this by setting out 'how' the national Protocol would be implemented locally, and reflected the local structure of services, care populations, stakeholders, governance, and decision-making arrangements. The organisations who had signed up to this Protocol had agreed to the following key principles:

- Diversion from the criminal justice system is at the heart of this protocol
- Children should be seen as children.
- supporting desistance
- Listening to and learning from children and young people
- Agencies asking, 'is this response good enough for my child?'

It was hoped that through this Protocol, agencies would be able to work better together across the Borough, reduce the number of young people who had been within the care system being criminalised and then being further drawn into crime and instead divert them instead towards a more positive future.

Discussion ensued with the following issues raised/clarified:-

- The Authority had worked on Evolve and how to incorporate it within Service support around criminal exploitation which had helped in

terms of how to support children in care

- The Virtual School had been working hard on exclusions and with schools and were not seeing as many exclusions of LAC as previously. Work had also taken place with regard to children from BME backgrounds ensuring cultural diversity and linguistic challenges were part of the work

Resolved:- That the report be noted.

53. URGENT BUSINESS

Julie Warren-Sykes reported that she was a trustee of the Samantha Sykes Foundation Trust which, amongst other things, helped children and young people who were looked after by the local authority and care leavers up to the age of 25 and could help with equipment required to access further and higher education, books, course equipment, travel passes and short courses required to access higher education.

Resolved:- That the Panel receive a presentation on the work of the Samantha Sykes Foundation Trust at its next meeting.

54. ADDITIONAL MEETING

It was agreed not to arrange an additional meeting at the present time but arrangements be made should there be a requirement.

55. DATE AND TIME OF THE FUTURE MEETING

Resolved:- That a further meeting be held on Tuesday, 13th December, 2022, commencing at 4.30 p.m.