

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL
Tuesday 20 June 2023

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

82. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

83. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

Minute 90 (Looked After Children Council Update) was exempt from the press and public. The Chair moved the following resolution:- That under Section 100(A) 4 of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 2 and 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of such Act indicated, as now amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 (information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual/financial information).

Resolved: - That members of the press and public be excluded for this item.

84. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Arising from Minute No. 71 (Looked After Children's Council Update Report), clarification was sought on how young people's identities and personal details could be protected should they wish to attend a meeting. The Strategic Director for Children's and Young Peoples Services advised the following:

- Reports containing the identities of Looked After Children and Young People would not be published publicly.
- The reports were published internally. This was currently under review.
Discussions on the status of the Corporate Parenting Panel were on-going, with two different models under consideration.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting held on 28 March 2023, were agreed as a correct record.

85. HOUSE PROJECT UPDATE

The Assistant Director for Children's Services gave an update on The House Project and outlined the following:

- The House Project would close on June 30, 2023, this was a result of required savings throughout the next financial year.
- The House Project had assisted over thirty children within a five-year period to transition into independence.
- Any young people who would have received the support through the House Project and would be supported by the Leaving Care Team on other available programmes.
- The final year's cohort would still be offered support through their personal advisor's and would not be disadvantaged as a result of the project ending.
- There were only two children who required support that were remaining in the project and the service is working with Housing Services to find suitable accommodation.
- Any young people who were in a property would be able to take over the tenancy.
- Housing Services had agreed to provide the same level of properties each year to ensure that the service would be able support the same number of children. It was noted that this was a good example of cross-directorate working.
- Young people would continue to receive priority housing status, although there was limited choice in areas of higher demand. The aim was to give as much choice to young people as possible. As part of the process, young people were provided with pathway plans to identify any additional support needs, alongside social worker visits, increased personal advisor visits and finance groups.
- In addition to existing support needs, those young people who had experienced trauma required further support, The service was committed through the local offer and the wider health offer .
- There was an ambition to work with Housing Services to ensure properties were available for young people in areas close to their homes, so they were able to remain in the community they had previously lived in.
- All accommodation sourced was only suitable for young people wanting single occupancy and as a result shared accommodation was not offered. Although sourcing different types of properties was a challenge.
- Regular meetings with Housing Services were held and the aim was to work in conjunction with the service to obtain more step-down properties and consider accommodation provision for unaccompanied asylum-seeking children under the age of eighteen and those 18plus
- The panel considered if a Care Leavers Charter would be provided to the Panel once it had been developed. It was noted that the Charter was not legally enforceable but did outline a commitment .
- The Care Leavers Charter would be co-designed with care leavers and would include the local authority's promise and commitment to care leavers.
- There was currently a gap as there was no specific Care Leavers Forum and the service would like to invite care leavers to attend

the Corporate Parenting Panel.

Resolved: - That the update be noted.

86. STAYING CLOSE AND OTHER GRANT FUNDING UPDATE

The Assistant Director for Children's Services gave an update on the Staying Close Funding and outlined the following:

- A bid was submitted for the Staying Close Funding following encouragement from the Department of Education. The funding would have provided additional finances to provide children with accommodation within their communities. Unfortunately, the bid was unsuccessful, due to higher demand from other local authorities.
- It was noted that the local authority received feedback on its positive journey and the progress made.

Resolved: - That the update be noted.

87. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL STRATEGY UPDATE

The Assistant Director for Children's Services gave an update on the Corporate Parenting Panel Strategy and outlined the following:

- The previous Corporate Parenting Panel Strategy covered the period of 2017 to 2020. After it ended in 2020 there had not been a revised strategy produced. It was shared that significant work had taken place during 2021/22 that would support this activity
- There was a draft strategy completed, however this was not completed as it was felt that it was not co-produced with key stakeholders including Care Leavers, Looked After Children and 'Corporate Grandparents'.
- Within the interim period, the Local Authority would provide a statement of intent for Corporate Parenting Panel at the next meeting in September. The statement would outline the mission and priorities of Corporate Parenting Panel.
- All other core documents were already in place, such as the Looked After Children's Strategy Action Plan, the Sufficiency Strategy, the Care Leavers Action Plan, the Fostering Update Action Plan and Sixteen Plus Regulation.
- The revised Corporate Parenting Panel Strategy would include all of the above documentation. It was noted that young people, stakeholders, and care leavers would be fully engaged throughout the development process.

Resolved: -

- 1) That the update be noted.

- 2) That an update on the Corporate Parenting Panel Strategy be provided to the Panel in September 2023.

88. THE REGULATION OF SIXTEEN PLUS AND DISPERSED ACCOMMODATION

The Assistant Director for Children's Services gave an update on the Regulation of Sixteen Plus and Dispersed Accommodation and outlined the following:

- The service had a dispersed property at Hollowgate, which was a ten-bed property.
- Sixteen plus accommodation was unregulated at this point, however in October 2023, the legislation would change to require all sixteen-plus accommodation to be regulated.
- The Local Authority had notified Ofsted of its intention to regulate all accommodation provided to young people by October 2023 and plans were in place for to work alongside all current providers to ensure compliance.
- Regular updates would be provided to the Panel, however there was no expected barriers to regulating all accommodation provided.
- It was likely that there would be an increase in financial costs to Rotherham Council because of increasing fees issued by accommodation providers.
- All regulated providers would be required to have an employee responsible for the regulation of the related policies, procedures, and behaviours of residents within the accommodation setting.
- All accommodation providers would be inspected, with the aim of most registering with Ofsted by October 2023, with an inspection taking place within a six-month period after registration.
- The regulation rules were the same as the ones currently in place for children's residential homes. This included regulation of tenancies and ensuring staff and managers were appropriately trained.
- Rotherham Council had always quality assured all young people's provision and were assured that all the relevant staff have had safer recruitment training.
- The challenge would be that the new expectations would be very high in standards, and it was quite likely that some provision would not meet Ofsted expectations over time.
- If a provider was deemed inadequate in a single property, the provider would be deemed inadequate across all their properties.
- If an external provider did not meet regulation requirements after inspection by Ofsted, an opportunity to remedy this would be provided. Support and guidance were being provided by Ofsted to all providers across the country.
- If providers did fail regulation inspections, it would be difficult to source alternative appropriate accommodation.

Resolved: -

- 1) That the update be noted.
- 2) That an update on the Regulation of Sixteen Plus and Dispersed Accommodation be provided to the Panel in the early 2024.

89. PERFORMANCE ON A PAGE

The Performance Analyst Officer introduced the report which provided a summary of performance for key indicators across Looked After Children Services for Quarter Four 2022/2023. This included a summary of service performance in comparison to the same period in 2021/22 and trend data, graphical analysis, and latest benchmarking data against national and statistical neighbour averages (where possible). The following was outlined:

- The number of children entering care was slightly higher than the previous year.
- 94.7% of eligible looked after children had an up-to-date plan. This was a slight decrease on the year's performance, with the aimed target being 95%
- 77% of placements were family based, this was a 2.4% decrease on last year.
- 70% of looked after children were in a stable placement for two or more years, this was slightly lower than the previous year.
- There was currently 111 in house foster families, with 11 new approvals throughout the year. There had been 25 de-registrations with 14 less foster families than the previous year.
- It was noted that nine looked after children were known to the Youth Justice Team.
- 24 children had been adopted, which was a decrease compared to the same period in the previous year.
- The overall percentage of looked after children who had an initial health assessment within time scale had improved in comparison to the previous year.
- Dental assessments had also significantly improved compared to the previous year and were now back to levels before the covid 19 pandemic.
- 91.5% of reviews were completed within the time scale set, this was a slight reduction to the previous year. At the end of the quarter, 95.6% of visits were up to date and within time scales of the national minimum standard.
- At the end of quarter four, there were 319 young people in the care leavers cohort which showed an increase of 27 compared to the same point in 2022.
- 74.5% of care leavers had an up-to-date pathway plan at the end of the quarter and 97.2% of care leavers were in suitable accommodation. 69% of care leavers were in education, employment, and training.

The Chair thanked officers for the comprehensive report and for highlighting key performance areas.

Resolved: - That the report and the accompanying dataset be received.

90. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN COUNCIL- JUNE UPDATE

The Chair advised that as the item contained restricted information and as resolved in Minute 83, that the Panel would go into private session for the consideration of this item.

The young people on the Looked After Children's Council, supported by Lisa Duvall, gave a presentation to the Panel on the work of Rotherham's Looked After Children's Council drawing attention to the following:

- The Mayors Civil Service
- The Care Experience Virtual Art Exhibition
- King Charles III Coronation
- The VIP Summer Festival
- The 'Dare to Care' animation project
- The Lil Lac Club Update

The Chair advised that a Bluetooth speaker had been donated by a member of the public to the Looked After Children's Council.

Resolved: - That the panel thanked the young people for their inspirational presentation and noted the updates provided.

91. URGENT BUSINESS

There was one item of urgent business that was raised, this was to discuss the frequency of meetings and future meeting dates.

It was suggested that there should be two additional meetings added within the current municipal year. The following two dates were discussed:

- 23 January 2024
- 30 April 2024

Resolved: - That two additional meetings would be added within the current municipal year on the dates outlined.

92. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

Resolved: - That the next meeting be held on 12 September, 2023, commencing at 4.00 p.m. to be held in the Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.

